



## **Nothing stays the same. The only constant in our lives is change**

*Nancy Snow*

*Skilful Solutions, PO Box 677, Maitland NSW 2320*

### **Abstract**

Change has always been with us but never at such an accelerating pace. With massive social and technological change we have seen huge rises in stress-related illnesses and depression. Underneath each thing we do (or not do) is a belief. These beliefs sit there unconsciously influencing all our behavioural decisions. Behaviour includes how we think, act and feel. We need to bring these beliefs up to the level of conscious awareness so we can decide whether they help us or limit us in coping with and managing change. If we are to solve the myriad of challenges created by inevitable change, we need to realise that the only person that we have any real control over is ourselves. This belief changes the way we view our world and the people in it. It allows us to have personal power and to be creative problem solvers in all aspects of our lives.

---

We often do not manage change very well. It is often unexpected but more importantly unwanted. We have a model of the world in our heads of how we "see" the world and how we want it to be but we know the world is not the same as it was. With accelerating change, especially in technology, we have an information explosion. More information is available to more people than ever before.

We must prepare ourselves for we know not what!  
Success is when preparation and opportunity meet.

### **Stages of learning**

In years gone by, a certain level of education (formal or otherwise) gave us sufficient knowledge and skills to last a working lifetime. This is no longer the case. Things and ways that used to work no longer do or are no longer effective in getting us what we want, but we often hang in there with outmoded ways because we are unconsciously competent in doing what we do. We usually stay at this level until a crisis occurs.

To get to being unconsciously competent we were first:

**unconsciously incompetent**  
then  
**consciously incompetent**  
then  
**consciously competent**  
then  
**unconsciously competent**

However, if you choose to go back through the cycle, painful becomes exciting and equals life-long learning. It is a powerful position in which to be – otherwise you are always waiting for others to do it for you or to you.

We all have a gateway to change and each of us has the only key. No one else can



make you change. We need to focus on what we *are* doing and not on what we *are not* doing.

### **Change**

Change usually equals loss + gain (over time). Governments and organisations speak to those about to be affected by the change, about the advantages, the improvements i.e. the gains, while those about to be affected can only think of the losses.

Losses generally fall into four groups:

1. Developmental – more or less inevitable as we move through the stages and transitions of the life cycle e.g. loss of childhood, loss of hair.
2. Disenchantments – private, less tangible, less easily observable e.g. missing out on a hoped-for job or promotion.
3. Deprivational – not having what we needed e.g. “missing out” in a material or emotional sense, being orphaned.
4. Fortuitous – happening more or less by chance e.g. loss of loved ones, accidents, floods, illnesses, separation/divorce.

All can be stressful but all can produce “gains” over time. Stress is a cognitive act. It is not what happens to us but how we think about what happens to us and how we think about what happens to us will largely depend on our beliefs about ourselves or our world.

We can see ourselves as victims of circumstances or solvers of problems – the choice is ours. It is not until we “see” things differently, that we will think differently and behave differently.

### **Resourceful vs limiting beliefs**

It does not matter whether our beliefs are right or wrong. What matters is whether they help us or limit us. Limiting beliefs deny us our creativity and starve us of opportunities not because the opportunities are not there but because we fail to recognise them. Looking at situations from as many perspectives as possible creates a vast array of choices and possibilities.

### **Listening and not just hearing**

Change usually involves a paradigm shift, a change in mindset. We need to become better listeners and not just hearers. To listen is to entertain that what someone is saying to you, that goes against what you think, may be a better way of seeing or doing something. It involves acceptance and consideration – a withholding of judgement.

### **Are you a “Creature of Habit”?**

Behaviour is a CHOICE. We need many choices. In any situation, the person who has the most choices of what to do – the greatest flexibility of behaviour (doing, thinking, feeling) will be in control of the situation.

Once a response or behaviour becomes habit – we stop learning. Habits can be useful – they streamline parts of our lives that we do not want to think about. But habitual ways of doing things, because we no longer have to think about them, means we have shut down to new possibilities. In this ever-changing world we cannot afford *not* to think and *not* to look at our underlying beliefs so we are flexible enough to take in new



methods, new ideas, new perspectives in every aspect of our lives.

The train of change will continue to make its way through our lives – you can climb aboard or be left at the station. The choice is yours.