

Blue Wave of Change



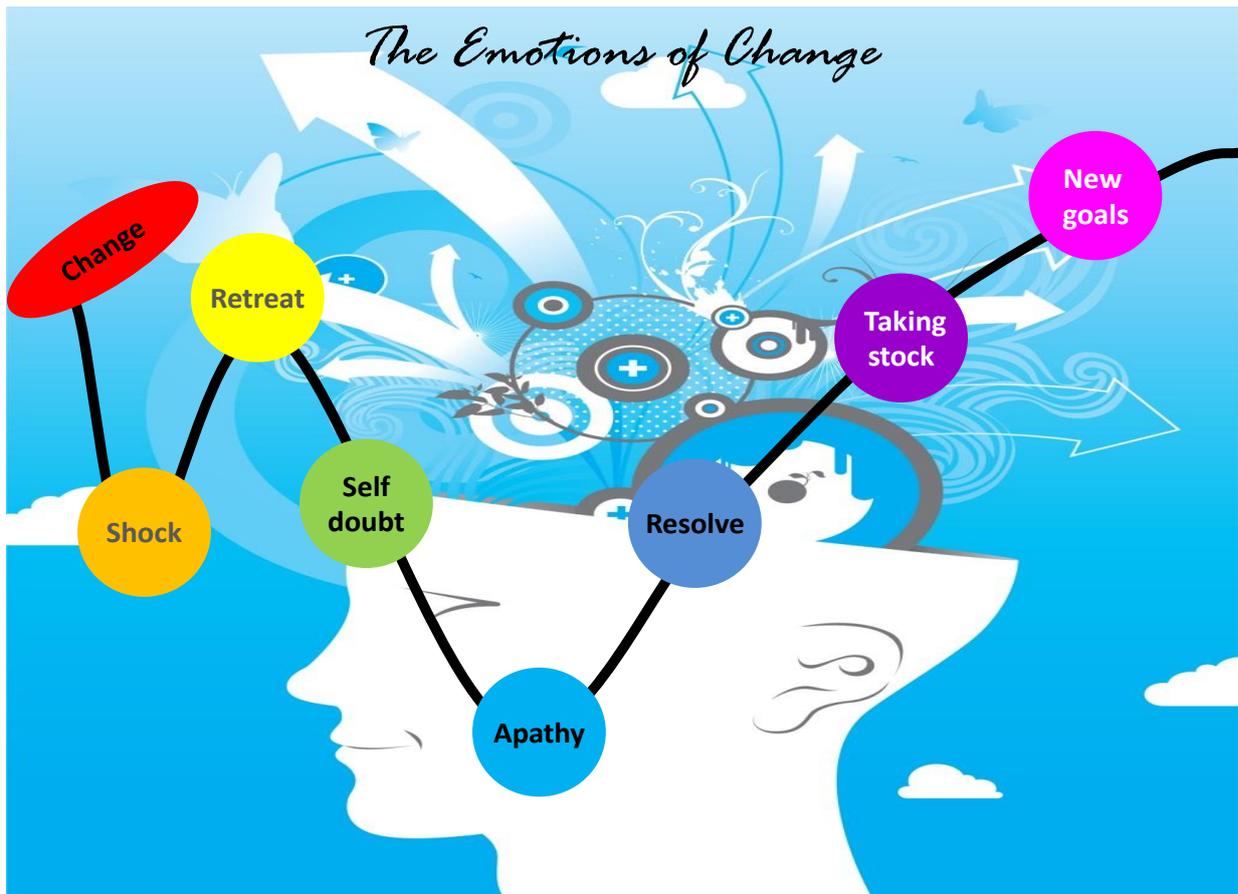
Emotions of Change

This includes information on the Change Curve and Leading Change

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Emotions of Change Overview

The “Change Curve” is a model that has been adapted from the work of the late Elisabeth Kübler-Ross a psychiatrist and the author of the groundbreaking *On Death and Dying*, which included significant consideration of the natural and normal emotional responses to change. Her work has been adapted as a framework to help individuals navigate and lead change in the workplace.



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This version of a “Change Curve” is one that FMA have used for many years and find useful in helping people to see how they might be responding and the associated impact of that response on their wellbeing, productivity and impact on the team. The stages of the curve represent the stages that we may go through, or become stuck at, when change occurs, whether that change is positive or negative. The curve is not a continuum, there is no need to go through each stage in order to progress to the next, indeed individuals may hit the curve at different stages. All of which makes the role of the leader more challenging given the position they may have on the curve themselves.

So what does this mean for leaders?

The following section provides some tips and hints that can help at each of the stages in the change curve. These are ideas only and should not be seen as a must do or cure all, each situation is different and unique and everything that we have learned so far in this book can be of value in the right place.

Shock

The verbal communication may be non-existent or aggressive and confrontational. The behaviours that accompany shock are firmly in the emotional zone and may be happening subconsciously.

No matter what is happening for individuals here, it may not be what it seems. It is important not to get hooked into the behaviour. Use questioning to find out where the individual(s) are really coming from and what you can do to support and help them. Lots of listening and not too much talking.

Retreat

The word describes what may be happening for people, a withdrawal, verbally and even physically. Limited verbal communication, internalising of the situation and events.

Team members/individuals are no good to you as a leader if they are not making a contribution. You need to find ways to bring them back from the outside through empathy, encouragement and inquiry really listen to the answers and challenge where appropriate

Self-Doubt

Change brings concern and fear. This naturally gets people to box themselves into a corner where they decide what is going to happen and that there may not be a place for them in the new whatever. Many of the behaviours from retreat are still likely to be evident at this stage, however it is important to recognise that self-doubt sometime presents as over confidence.

Paint the picture for individuals of what the future will look like and the role that you see them playing in that future. Confirm successes and achievements. Provide small incremental milestones for individuals and the team and be proactive with feedback to provide an impetus towards continuous improvement.

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Usually this will bring individuals around, this is about self-belief and worth not about not wanting to be part of the change.

Apathy

Apathetic people are around in the workplace anyway, with or without change. Recent studies reckon that we only get something like 28% capacity from individuals. You will know whether the apathy is unusual and due to the change or just part of the “character” of the individual. This is typified by a “don’t care” attitude, a lack of team-work and generally a lack of personal responsibility and is self-centred. Often leaders spend lots of time and energy with individuals who are in apathy, this often creates time management pressures and resentment from the rest of the team who are trying to get on with things.

Do not reward poor performance/attitude and behaviour by providing the individuals with your most precious commodity, your time. Make sure that you are clear that the person is in apathy and not self-doubt as the strategies for dealing with these are different. Engagement through reference to previous successes and a good Discovery question can help. Finally a wake -up call may be required here regarding the potential consequence of continued inappropriate behaviour!

Resolve

At this stage the behaviour is more positive than it has been up to this time. Even if the feeling is “we have no choice but to get on with it” there is a definite feeling of movement here that doesn’t exist in the previous stages. This presents itself as physical and emotional change as people begin to get on, get going, go with the flow and make a start.

This is the time for the leader to capture the change in mood and set out the vision, influence each individual appropriately and energise the moving forward that has begun. Set out the importance of everyone’s contribution, providing structure and guidance around requirements and communication.

Taking Stock

The next logical stage from resolve, and likely to follow on. An analytical and problem solving area likely to be accompanied by lots of discussions and questions, reflections and predictions.

This is an important time to keep the team with you, it is easy to lose people and they can slip back to the Self-Doubt/Apathy/Resolve Bermuda Triangle! Lots of listening to their ideas and perceptions, a different perspective now can often save a lot of time, energy and team hassle later on. Remember that everyone is entitled to contribute to the vision; otherwise, how will they own it and begin to feel passionate about it?

New Goals

Here are the exciting beginnings of planning to deal with the change. Team members may not all necessarily be delighted, proactive and dynamic about the change and there will still be traces of “because we have to” attitude.

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Enthusiasm may run away with itself and initial excitement may soon wane.

Watch out for the 'bench sitters', the 'underminers' and the 'we've done this before' brigade. Give these people important roles and monitor closely! Make the best use of the team, delegate to strengths, agree ground rules for communication, action planning and feedback.



Where are you on the Change Curve and what does this mean for people that you are leading?

Where are each of your team (plot them on the image) and what does this mean for engagement, performance and service provision?

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What do you need to think about in terms of leading your team now that you have this information?

What Powerful Questions linked to the values could help?

Change Curve	Powerful Questions
Shock	
Retreat	
Self -Doubt	
Apathy	
Resolve	
Taking Stock	
New Goals	