

# PEOPLE LIKE CHANGE TRUE OR FALSE?

BY MURRAY R. JANEWSKI

What do you think the answer is? I have repeatedly asked this question for the past 12 years in front of thousands of people. If you think “false,” you are in the majority; but you would be wrong. The real answer is “true,” otherwise we would not be so interested in initiating so much change to make things better, or to improve ourselves.

What is really behind this question? It's not the change itself that people don't like, it's the uncertainty associated with the change, especially if it's of any significance. The fear of the unknown drives a lot of resistant behaviour, often with the initiator as well. When this is observed, the conclusion is that people don't like change. Not liking the change versus the uncertainty is a critical distinction, if you want to be a leader, and manage change well.

If not managed well, the likely outcome is a return to the status quo – in other words “I'll be satisfied to be dissatisfied.” And when that happens, the change is either abandoned, or driven through by other fear tactics, and a lot of resources are wasted. If managed well, however, you can get past the uncertainty which leads to creativity and innovation in addition to the change. Once you see things from a different perspective, that you couldn't see when you were fearful, all sorts of “ahas” occur and a sense of energy takes over. The good news is this can be managed both at the personal level and the organizational level.

Consider this advice from a mentor of mine, Jeffrey Gitomer (author of the best selling books *The Sales Bible*, and *The Little Red Book of Selling*). Imagine being put in a situation where you were asked to become a salesperson – and you had no background in this profession. The fears could be overwhelming, but Gitomer says learning to sell is like learning to ride a bike. “Does a kid learn how to ride a bike the first time he tries? Never. He gets on the bike, falls, gets up

again, and repeats the process until he learns how to ride. Selling is no different. If you keep at it, your fears melt away and you build self-confidence. And you become good at it as well.” The best salespeople will have many ahas and innovations along the way as well, which turns them into stars.

And so it goes with any significant change. As a leader, what are the key steps to managing change well?

1. **Start from within** – this comes from a strong self-belief and a “yes” attitude. For many leaders, this is the biggest change of all!
2. **Offer support** – people will follow your lead if they know you care about them.
3. **Walk your talk** – this old cliché is so important. People are more likely to try if they see you trying.
4. **Perseverance and passion** – it is like learning to ride a bike, and you have to love the journey.

Go ahead, lead yourself and others into some exciting change that will be good for all. Maybe you'll find that most people do like change.

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