

Claim Your Change Power!

Change Is Everybody's Business



PAT McLAGAN

Foreword by Ken Blanchard

An Excerpt From

***Change Is Everybody's Business:
Claim Your Change Power!***

by Pat McLagan

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An important note from the author to you

HAVE YOU EVER eaten an energy bar? It helps you bring your own power and resources to the surface. *Change Is EVERYBODY's Business* is meant to be an energy bar for you in working with change. I'm writing it because in over 30 years of consulting all over the world, I've seen few people fully access their change power. Instead, I've seen disillusionment, fear, blaming, "stuckness," and dependency. I want it better for us.

I want both of us, all of us, to claim our change power—unleash it in ways that help us create a better personal and shared world. It's something you and we CAN do. The question is, "WILL we?"

Whatever role you play at work or at home, you are a force in change. Mail clerk or CEO, salesperson or factory worker, leader or follower, wife or husband, old or young—you are an active participant in the changes around you. And you have choices in the roles you'll play. You can choose how you *think about* what's happening around you. And you can choose your *actions*. These choices are the heart of "empowerment." And empowerment is a gift we give ourselves, not something that others bestow.

Change Is EVERYBODY's Business is about personal empowerment—from the inside out. It focuses on personal power at work, but it is relevant to all areas of life. Chances are that by developing your change power at work, you will become more powerful wherever you go.

My role in this book is to remind you about what you already know but may not be fully acting on. It is to remind you that your actions or indifference help to create the world as we know it. That's your *external* impact. Your thoughts also create the world as YOU know it—your *inner* world. This is a lot of *power*. I'd like to help you learn or ascertain how to access and use that power.

I hope you will find many interesting, provocative, and awakening messages in ***Change Is EVERYBODY's Business*** to help you navigate the churning waters that change inevitably causes. That's my mission. Let me know what happens for you.

Pat McLagan

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Claim Your Change Power

Change Is EVERYBODY'S Business is about your change power at and around work. But you can't really separate your life and work. You've got to focus on both in order to make change your friend. To make it something you revel in and walk into, rather than away from.

This book will help you develop the point of view and the practices for thriving in change. It will help you see its important role in your life and work. You'll be better able to influence its impact on you and on the people you work with and for. *Change Is EVERYBODY'S Business* does the following:

Part 1: **Powerful Beliefs.** Your beliefs drive many of your actions. They also help shape how you view the world around you. You'll examine seven important belief areas, make your own current beliefs more conscious, and commit to beliefs that will best shape your future.

Part 2: **Powerful Character.** Who you ARE is a major part of your impact—of your power. This is why we all agree, “actions speak louder than words.” This section describes four key character traits that support personal effectiveness in change.

Part 3: **Powerful Actions.** The actions you ultimately take are a combination of your beliefs, your character, and your capacity for action. In this section you'll be challenged to develop the capacity for action that will help you be successful as a player in these more open and participative times.

You can read one, two or all three parts, and read them in any order. Follow your needs and interests. You have the power!

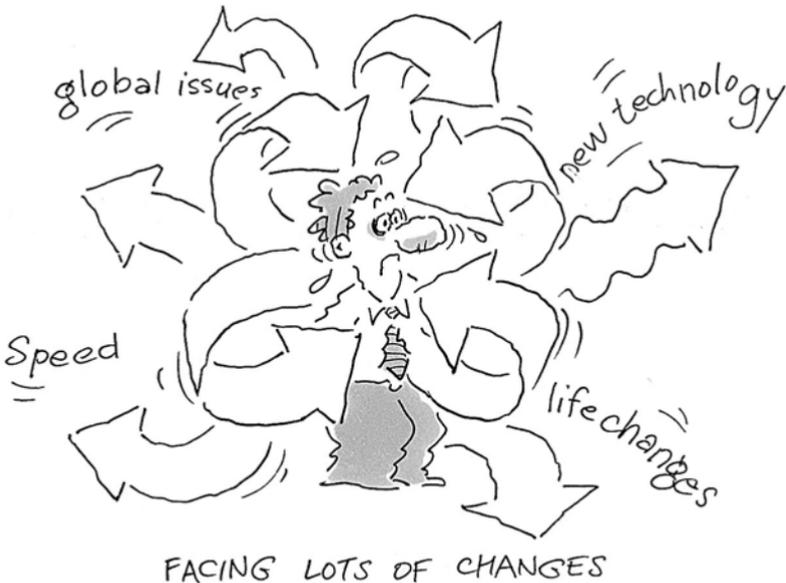
There is a self-assessment questionnaire at the end of each section. I think you will get more benefit if you take the questionnaires *before* you read each section. It's up to you.

This is a very personal book. I will talk with you as a colleague, a co-learner, and a fellow 21st century citizen. Change is my main interest in life, and I am excited to share what I have learned with you.

It will help if you take a few minutes to anchor yourself in the topic. So, before you read on, take some time to think about the changes that you have faced in your recent past—even face right now.

What is changing around you—and personally affecting you—that you feel you have *absolutely no control over*? (It could be a death, a law that is changing how your organization must work, a downsizing decision, or new technology.)

What is changing around you—and personally affecting you—that is someone else's decision, but is *something you can still*



influence? (Like a shift in allocation of work, decisions about how your team will work together, etc.)

What changes are you experiencing in your life due to just getting older and moving to a *different stage in your life?* (Like a child moving out, dealing with weight problems, or feeling a need to use important skills and pursue interests you put aside years ago.)

What changes are you *trying to make happen—initiating?*

What other changes are coming into your life—from *any source?*

The answers to these questions will help you personalize your insights as you read and think about what follows. Enjoy your journey!!

PART I

Powerful Beliefs

YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT CHANGE have a lot of impact on what you do. Therefore, *beliefs are often more important in change than techniques.* Techniques work when you *think* to use them. They operate situation by situation. Beliefs, on the other hand, influence your entire life and choices—what you see and don't see. They affect whether you even think to or want to use “techniques.”

Stan, a team leader, knew three great techniques for negotiating with people who disagreed with him. But he believed that people



BELIEFS VS. TECHNIQUES

should obey authority. So even though he knew the techniques, he *didn't recognize* many situations where he could use them.

A Recent History of Beliefs

Science in the latter part of the 1900s transformed our view of the world. Since the 17th century, OUR *belief* was that the universe could be understood and controlled by our rational mind. Scientists used to say to themselves, "Once we discover the rules, we can use them to determine our future, to shape what people do, to harness nature for ourselves." This became the hope for organizations. "Understand how humans behave, figure out how to manage that behavior and optimize it. Then design organizations that are highly efficient and predictable. Create the perfect structure, define jobs clearly, with small jobs fitting under the larger jobs in the organization chart. Then, put rewards and consequences in place to keep things under control." This is what management scientists used to say to themselves.

The view as we go into the 21st century is that nature, along with everything in it, isn't as predictable in its behavior as we thought. The dream of perfect control (a kind of stability) is a pipe dream. We can't determine what will happen in the future. We *can* influence it—but not in a way that gives us 100% certainty that what we want will happen. In fact, sometimes our attempts to influence things have consequences we never intended. For example:

- ❖ Executives dramatically reduce staff. This has an immediate positive impact on bottom-line performance because costs are less. But, because critical skills are lost, future innovation suffers. And lower morale reduces what other staff members contribute.
- ❖ Staff members take a "that's not my job" view when customers call with problems. In the short run, job boundaries are protected. In the long run, dissatisfied customers go to competitors. Business declines and staffing and promotion opportunities shrink.

If we dig deeply enough, we'll see the underlying belief in these two examples is flawed. It is the belief that we can control change by just solving the problem at hand.

It's time to examine this and other beliefs related to change—because we live in very complex times where even the very notion of change is changing. That's the purpose of Part I. Use it to help you examine your beliefs and, if necessary, to modify them.

So what do you believe about change? As you read the sections that follow, reach *deep* into yourself to find the beliefs that *really* influence what you do. As you do this, know that there are two types of beliefs:

SAY beliefs: the beliefs you TALK about having

DO beliefs: the beliefs that actually DRIVE YOUR BEHAVIOR

As you think about your beliefs, notice that the beliefs you need today are not the “opposite” of yesterday's guiding principles. Most of the time, they include an old belief and put it into a new perspective.

Before you go on, I suggest that you take the “What Is Your Empowering Belief Quotient?” self-test at the end of Part I. It will help you surface your beliefs and relate your own thoughts to the chapters that follow.



Belief #1

What is 'Normal'

OLD BELIEF:

*Stability is normal.
Change is an exception.*



NEW BELIEF:

*Both stability and change
are normal.*

YOU ARE A BLEND of stability and change. Your genes, your history, your capabilities, all have an ongoing identity that is YOU. An organization is the same way. But you and the company you keep are also constantly changing. The trick is to change fast enough—in a way that keeps you growing and successful, without losing your own center and sanity.

Today, the pace of change is accelerating. This makes it more important to adapt to and influence change. Ironically, it also makes it more important to know and value what makes you, YOU; what makes your organization what it is today.

While change is a popular topic, so are stability topics like “vision,” “purpose,” and “core capabilities.” The irony of accelerating change is that it requires us to see change and stability as two sides of the same coin.

This parallels an amazing scientific discovery of the 20th century: we used to think that energy and matter were different things. Now we know that energy and matter are two expressions of the same thing. A particle (matter) can also be a wave (energy). Think of what happens in nuclear bombs—as small amounts of matter are suddenly broken apart to create all that energy.



LIFE IS STABILITY AND CHANGE

The lesson? Each of us must be both a particle (something stable) and a wave (something changing), whether at work or at home and in the community. Neither change nor stability can exist without the other—for us personally, for us at work, or for organizations.



What are YOUR “DO” Beliefs about “What is Normal?”

If you frequently talk like this . . .

“I can’t wait until this is over so we can get back to business as usual.”

“Let’s go back to what worked for us in the past.”

Then, your beliefs may be holding you back.

Try to shift to a NEW way of thinking . . .

“Let’s use this old system as an anchor while we make these changes.”

“I want to stay up-to-date on the changes going on around us so I can prepare for them now.”

“I’m doing my job well today, but what about tomorrow? I want to stay up-to-date so I can be as good tomorrow as I am today.”

An old shop steward, who had been one of the most vocal resisters in an organization-wide empowerment initiative, stood in front of his peers and senior management. His words? “It’s taken me some time to realize it, but I had—and have—a lot to learn. For the first time in many years, I feel excited to come to work. But I’m retiring in six months. I only hope that others will take some risks and get more involved after I’m gone.”

Belief #2

On Resistance and Negative Emotions

OLD BELIEF:

Resistance and negative emotions sabotage change.



NEW BELIEF:

Resistance is a wake-up call.

RESISTANCE AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSES to change are not bad. They are a signal to pay attention. They are a sign that forces are gathering to shift relationships and move NEW behaviors into the mainstream.

Think of resistance and negative emotions as “persistence energy.” They are stability’s voice crying out to test the value of a change.

Your resistance belief (Belief #2) relates to your “what is normal” belief (Belief #1). It reflects your view of the normalcy of change. When you believe that “stability is normal; change is the exception,” then resistance and negative emotions carry a lot of power. They are a fearsome force: a battle call to protect your ego, to ward off all information and pressures for change, to protect you from annihilation.

However, when you believe that “stability dancing with change is normal,” then resistance is only one voice in an important dialogue. It is neither good nor bad. It says: “Here is what it may be important to preserve.” “Here are capabilities to continue to use.” “Here are strengths I need to leverage.” “Here are essential parts of my identity to look at and bring into the future.” “Here’s a sensitive personal area, so tread softly.”

Your resistance and negative emotions may also be saying: “Develop something new—a new perspective, a new belief, some new capabilities.” “Get rid of some things, clean out your life and your work closet.” “Move away from some old behaviors and beliefs.” “Now is the time to challenge thinking you took for granted as a child.” “Replace old beliefs with something more vital for the future.”

In other words, your resistance and anxiety may be saying, “Now is time for you to take a step into the unknown—to take some risks!!”

For people leading change, resistance from others (including yourself) is a SIGN that something important to people is going on. It is a reminder to respect the strengths and assets that come from the past. Resistance is a call to reframe old qualities and help them serve new purposes. It contains messages about how to design a change so that it can be successful.

“When we shift into more team-focused work, we will lose our high-performing individuals,” the resistance voice says, coming from a “win-lose” belief system.

But there is a lot of good energy under this. The challenge is to create a team environment where performance is highly valued and where people are appreciated and challenged. High-performing individuals can help design it.

If you feel that you are a VICTIM OF CHANGE, resistance and negative emotions are signs to call your will into service—to become really *conscious*. Resistance is a response to feeling threatened. It usually starts as something subtle and unconscious—a feeling, a loss of energy, a disconnection. The natural reaction is to fight and defend, run away, or freeze and comply. You may even try doing more of what you did successfully in the past, faster, with more vigor. In other words, you’ll act as though change is “abnormal.” All of these reactions can hurt you in the long run.

On the other hand, if you believe that “resistance and negative feelings are useful signals,” you’ll see resistance and emotional reactions as wake-up calls. They are signs to appreciate what has worked in the past. But they are also signs to look with fresh eyes at what’s around you. And they may be signals to open up to doing something

new and getting rid of something in you that might be outmoded or dysfunctional.



RESISTANCE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Of course, resistance and negative emotions can be signs that you need to take a stand *against* a change. Some changes may be positive in the short term, but have net negative effects in the future. If you feel this is true, then you might decide to resist change.

There is no formula for when to decide to support or resist a change. The important thing is to explore new information and make your choice thoughtfully. Being this open and aware is pretty tough, but it's the best course of action! To do it, you need to explore resistance and negative emotions and understand them before you act.



What are your “DO” Beliefs about “Resistance and Negative Emotions?”

If you frequently do things like . . .

React without thinking when something changes around you.

Feel inadequate and stupid when something changes, and then think, “I shouldn’t feel this way.”

Look for ways to manage and control others’ resistance to change.

Keep change and conversations about change on a rational, factual plane, avoiding emotion.

Run away from or fight change without taking time to see its future benefits.

Let your emotions and fears take over and run the show.

Then, your beliefs may be holding you back.

Here are some alternatives . . .

Acknowledge signs of resistance and negativity in yourself or others, without judging.

Ask, “What’s really at risk here? What is the resistance (mine and/or others’) trying to protect? What’s the long-term benefit of protecting it? If there is none, how can I/we let go of what’s being protected—with respect and dignity for the person or group feeling threatened?”

Ask, “What is this resistance telling us about things we have to do to make this a long-term success?”

Ask, “Is this change creating dilemmas—for me or others—that need to be addressed?”

Then you’ll be positioned for success as things change in the new world of work.

A Senior Executive in a major corporation initially supported a new Performance Management process that would bring more information and participation to everyone. Her “say beliefs” supported initiatives like this. However, as the program began to roll out, it became clear that she had to become more aware of her use of her rank and power. She also had to take time to educate people about the business, to delegate, and to let go. She was used to being in charge and inventing ideas herself (her “do” beliefs). Her resistance was obvious to others, but not to herself. She tightened up control and found many things to criticize in her teams’ and others’ work. When she was challenged, she used rational arguments: “My people aren’t ready.” “They are very dependent.” “They need close supervision.” “Their ideas aren’t what I would do.”

Faced with her control, the people around her went back to “business as usual.” People were once more dependent, and her beliefs became a self-fulfilling prophecy. She had lost an opportunity to “use” her resistance energy. It may have been telling her to help her staff develop self-management skills. Instead, she killed a process that could have helped both her and her staff to grow.

Years ago, I was privileged to work with a master of production technology in my company. He frequently complained about his equipment: “It isn’t fast enough.” “It’s too hard to train people on this.” But when we decided to purchase a new set of equipment, the production head suddenly became the biggest supporter of the old way. He began to tout the strengths of the old equipment—even kept track of its speed and accuracy compared to the new. Eventually, though, he adopted the new technology and became one of its staunchest supporters. But it took some time. “I was disoriented,” he said. “I thought my job was gone. Now I see that my own fears blinded me to this really powerful breakthrough.”

His resistance slowed his acceptance. But his *persistence* energy—his ability to be committed to a direction—became a strength. He became a strong supporter of the new method once its benefits were clear. AND his concerns helped us adapt the new technology to our special needs.

Executives in a major telecommunications company faced traumatic challenges from new and growing competitors as Internet markets heated up. This changing landscape clearly called for a new, more partnering relationship with the company's major unions. But most of the executives grew up under a "win-lose" union-management ethic. They'd been trained to win by either "sucking the union dry" or by treating it as a necessary evil. Management also let the union manage the frontline people in the business. Their adversaries on the union side had a similar "win-lose" history and supported the 'disconnect' between management and workers. In the meantime, as the entire industry changed, many small companies and some formidable competitors took market share. Global players swarmed into previously protected space. In the midst of a changing landscape, the management-union relationship prevented the company from adopting more modern and participative management methods. Shareholder trust dropped, other companies lured top talent away, and the company launched many painful downsizing programs. Both the company and the union suffered a loss of credibility that may never be restored.

What if either or both management and union had said, "This is a really new era—how can we both win? How can we work together to create a new communications future?" Resistance and fear destroyed an opportunity to move the industry in an entirely new direction. It made it possible for competitors to establish strong roots. And surely, the resistance to change is a key factor in making the company a poor investment bet early in the 21st century.

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