

CHANGE

A GUIDE

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The Corporate Fool
by David Firth with Alan Leigh

With thanks to Alan: "The Author leaves Luggnagg and sails to Japan"

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David Firth and Alan Leigh

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*Men like the opinions to which they have become accustomed from youth;
this prevents them from finding the truth, for they cling to the opinions of habit.*

Moses Maimonides

*The management of change is too important
to be left to management alone.*

Harry Donaldson

We face a world of ever-increasing, never-ending change

For many of us, change means pain.

But change is not going to go away.

The wise know they can't stop change - but they can stop being hurt by it.

Our only choice is to take the choice of the wise: not to try to control change (because we can't) but to control how we respond to it.

Managing our personal response to change, stopping the pain, is one of the key competences we will need in our lives and in our careers.

This handbook suggests how we can all become better at responding to change, because, whether we make change a friend or an enemy, change is always with us.

Change is the unknown.

Change is giving old things away - giving up the past, for example.

Change is taking up new things - the future, for example.

Change is giving away what makes us comfortable and taking up what makes us uncomfortable.

Change is like a death. A gateway. A threshold. A transformation. A mystery.

An end of something, maybe, but always the birth of something else.

Change is death and birth.

Change is an inevitability.

But, often, the way we all respond to change does not reflect these truths.

Just listen to what we say...



‘Just hold on - things will get back to normal’

This - in a sense - is true. Things may well get back to normal, but it may not be the normal we were used to.

If the change is a proactive one - one the organisation is instigating - it is doing so in an attempt to improve things: to make a product better for the customer or a process more efficient for the organisation. It is doing it for the benefit of all concerned. It will be investing a lot of time, energy and money into designing and implementing this change. It certainly isn't doing it for want of something better to do.

If the change is 'successful' - that is, the change brings about what the company hoped for - things won't be going back to normal, if only because the normal we were comfortable with will have been shown to be outmoded, or costly, or of poorer quality or efficiency.

If the change is 'unsuccessful' - that is, the change doesn't happen as imagined - things still won't go back to normal. Companies don't go backwards. They learn even from their failures and mistakes, so even out of a failed change initiative, it will have learnt some things - and made some changes - that will prevent things ever going back to what they were.

If the change is a reactive one - one the organisation has been forced into by the current or future business environment - it is doing so to try and ensure its survival. If the organisation doesn't work fast to make the changes, its competitors will.

And the results of *that* scenario will create a new and very uncomfortable 'normal' for us all - second best, inferior, failing.

‘They tell us one thing and then do another. They’re always changing their minds. And they only tell us what they want to tell us.’

Managing an organisation is profoundly difficult and especially so in times of turbulent change.

Change is about the unknown - and just because you are a company director doesn't mean that you are suddenly granted the gift (somehow withheld from the rest of us) of being able to know the unknown.

Leaders may have a plan - but that does not mean that they have all the answers. They may have a strategy, based on anticipating certain market trends, but that does not mean that it's going to be 100% accurate. Circumstances are changing even as the report is coming out of the printer.

As a result the plan or strategy that you hear about may, of necessity, have gaps - chunks of the unknown that we won't be able to fill in until we get further on in our journey.

Management know that the best way to motivate a work force is to give it the best information available, thus enabling it to perform its work to the full. If you are not getting all the information you need, take responsibility: ask for more information, and spell out the cost - to you, your team, your process - of not getting it.

Management would only deliberately withhold information for two reasons:

1. Because they don't trust you. In which case, if you know yourself to be trustworthy, get out.
2. Because they don't, in fact, have the information at all. Help them find it.

It is the job of the leadership to set the direction and strategy as far as they can. It is our job to make that strategy real, even if that means working in an environment that can seem confusing, ambiguous or unsure.

‘These changes are causing more problems than they’re worth’

Take a jigsaw puzzle and pour out all the pieces on to the table top. Turn all the pieces the right way up and have a good look at the picture on the lid. You’re ready to start. Ahead of you lies the challenge of putting all the pieces into the right permutation to recreate that picture on the lid. But, if you keep trying, you will eventually have all the pieces in the right order. You’ll have done it.

Remember, however, you will not be able to complete the puzzle without making lots of mistakes, false moves, fumbblings and poor choices. Those errors are part of the ultimate success. You could only ever reduce your chances of making mistakes by reducing the number of pieces in your jigsaw puzzle, increasing their size and choosing a nice, simple picture to complete.

Organisations are not for entertainment and relaxation in our leisure but they are difficult, complex puzzles. The nature of managing change is such that you are bound to experience mistakes, difficulties, even disaster. You will often wish the organisation were a puzzle, so that when it got too tough, we could just put it away and do something else.

But this is serious and this is difficult. We all need to move together in the right direction, constructively and creatively, offering our feedback, support and effort. We may never get to where we thought we were going when we set off, because every step forward towards our destination throws up new challenges and new goals. Most of all, we need to fight against the problems we encounter rather than fighting against each other.

And we all need to remember that the frequency and depth of the problems we face is a powerful reflection of the business environment that made them necessary.

If we worked in an organisation that didn’t face serious and painful problems (if that were possible), then it would not be a good thing. Rather it would be a sure sign that the organisation wasn’t learning or changing, and was stuck doing the same things over and over again.

'It's their fault - the leadership have brought these changes on'

The leadership may well have brought these changes on, but that's their job.

From their position at the top of the organisation, they are paid to see the whole picture - the eyes of the eagle. They are paid to see things as they are - to make sure that the organisation is using all its available resources in the most effective way to meet the needs of the current business realities. And they are there to see things as they might be - to spot patterns, trends, frameworks so that they can adapt to the rapidly changing needs of customers and markets.

From your position it may be difficult to see what they see. You may only see part of the whole picture or you may have access to information that has changed since they communicated with you last. And as a result, the decisions of the leaders may seem curious, even wrong-headed.

But they need your support. If you are genuinely confused, ask for clarity. If you really think that they are wrong, challenge them. In both cases, the leadership need your feedback to make their work more effective. If you are acting with integrity, your actions - asking to have something explained again, or a decision or strategy justified - will be a positive contribution to improving things.

At other times, the best thing to do is drop your doubts, trust your management and put all your efforts into working hard to push through the changes. This is the unavoidable paradox of being part of a team. Sometimes you are there to help the team coaches design the strategy and tactics. Sometimes you are there just to do what they say.

The negative - and damaging - option will be to blame 'them' for everything that happens without attempting to help in any way. It disempowers the individual who does this - it makes them a helpless victim of everything 'they' do or don't do. And it poisons the environment that we all work in - it is exhausting and depressing to work in an environment of blame and unfocused criticism.

‘They’ don’t care about my job’

‘They’ are there to run a business to the best of their abilities. If they don’t, they can lose their job - just like you can. They too have mortgages and families to maintain - and lose.

Running a business is a complex undertaking and the people who do it are performing a balancing act. It’s a constant struggle to balance the short term and the long term, costs and profit, efficiency and effectiveness, care for people and concern for the bottom line. Sometimes they are called upon to balance the needs of the many against the needs of the few - and only those who have had to face such a dilemma will know how painful it is. And the final decision, however it falls, is not going to be popular with everyone.

‘They’ are also human; they make mistakes, and some of the mistakes (because they have more in their span of control) can have devastating consequences.

If you live in fear of making such a mistake, it makes you care *more*, not less about your actions and decisions.

‘They’ know that the best thing for the business is to be using you to your full potential. Only you can provide that. Do everything to increase your performance and work to your potential. As a result, you’ll find you have to have less time and energy to worry about what ‘they’ might be doing or thinking.

On the other hand, if you genuinely believe you are working in a business where management treat you with insensitivity or disdain, you are right to be angry. You deserve to be treated in the way you would treat others. Look elsewhere for a better place to be.

‘It was better before - why can’t we do things like we used to?’

The grass is always greener on the other side. Those salad days. Our hey-days. They were Halcyon times. The good old days.

Our language is full of clichés that describe the human need to see the past as a place of security and comfort. But another cliché may indicate what’s really going on.

Hindsight has 20 20 vision.

Unfortunately, this cliché is only partly true. Hindsight sees things clearly, but selectively. When we look back, we filter what we see to suit our current reality. If we wanted to change we’d look back and remember all those bad things that would justify our changing. The opposite is true when we fear change. When we are faced with a scary future, we try to find ways of justifying not stepping into it. And one of the ways of doing that is by gathering evidence of a better past. We tend to remember the good things - the things that give us pleasure - and ignore the things that brought us pain. In reality, the past probably had as many challenges and difficulties, and as much fear and upset, as face us now.

If the past contained ways of doing things that seem better (and do we really mean by that easier or simpler or less confusing or more familiar?) than what we are doing now, maybe those ways were only suitable for the reality of the past.

Things move on and develop. If your job appears more difficult to do now, maybe it’s because the reality we all face now is more complex - and demands complex solutions.

On the other hand, if you believe your job could be designed in a different way - don’t keep your thoughts to yourself. Think them through. Be specific. Plan your proposal. And share your ideas with someone who can help you implement your ideas.

Statements like these are heard at companies all over the world.

They indicate people struggling to come to terms with rapid and dramatic change. Some of these statements are said with bravado. Others are said with more than a pinch of gallows humour. But all of these statements mask strong emotions - confusion, doubt, resentment, fear.

All of these reactions - and the emotions they mask - are understandable. Change can be frightening. But what is often more difficult to accept is that we have chosen to feel these things - out of all the range of possible things we could feel. And we have chosen to make these responses - out of all the possible responses we could make.

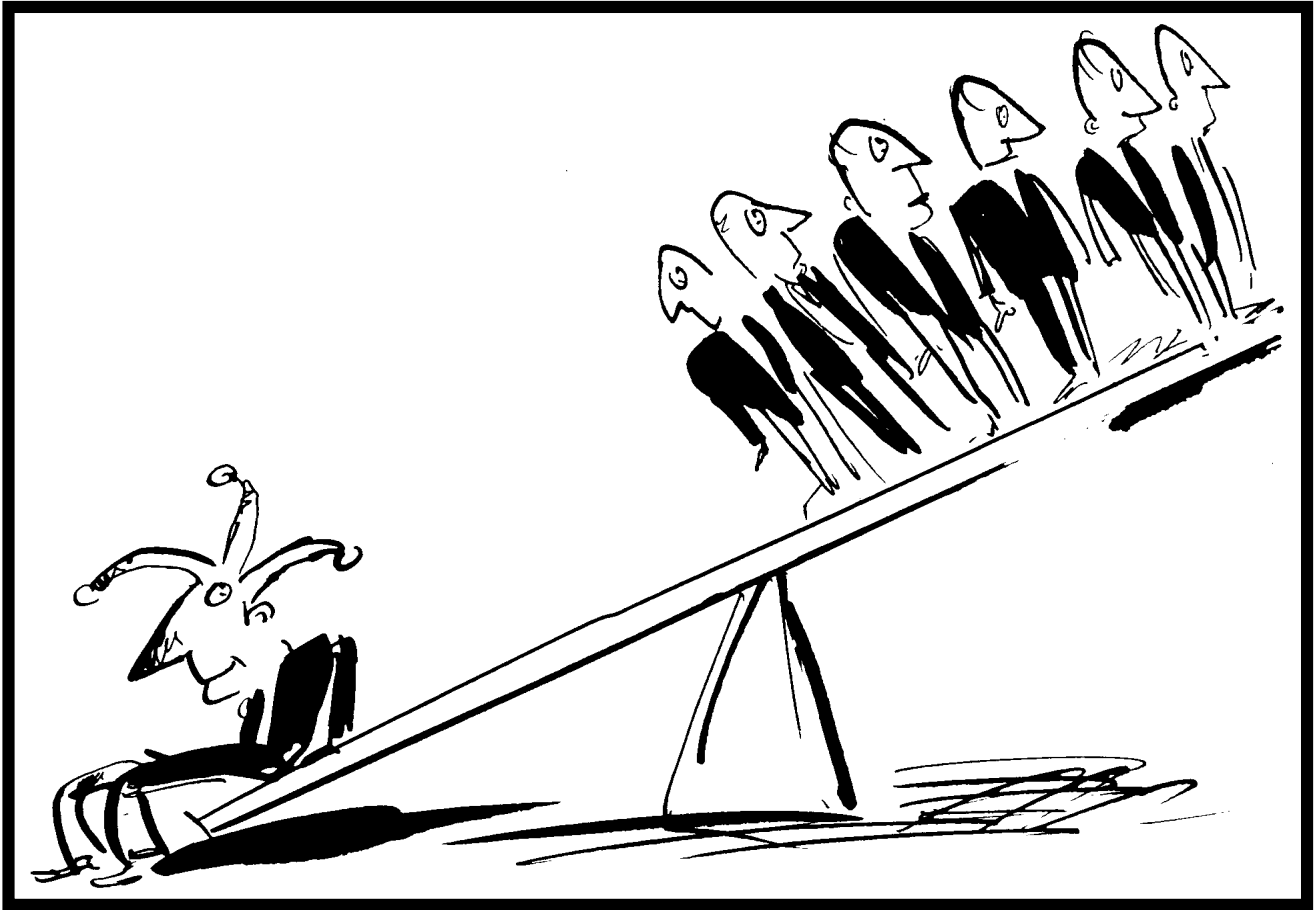
If the responses outlined over the last few pages are left unchallenged, left to become the common currency of the organisation, then they will produce a groundswell of pessimism, or apathy, or doubt, or cynicism, against which it will be almost impossible to move. The organisation will become sluggish, and any changes it does attempt to make will be even more protracted and irritating than need be. It will not be good for the organisation as a whole - but nor will it be good for the individuals who live and work there. An organisation lives and dies, fails and succeeds, as much from the attitudes and behaviours of its people as it does from the numbers printed in the credit and debit columns of its accounts.

But an organisation cannot *make* us choose better attitudes, better responses. It can't *give* us these things. All of the statements imply that someone or something else should do something different. That's why statements like these are so easy to say. They don't involve us changing. Not one of them talks about what *we* could do to change things.

Rather than wait to see if the organisation (or 'they') can do something to make us feel better, what could we do to make ourselves feel better? The only option is that each of us become more conscious of our responses and take time to consider more constructive alternatives. It is our responsibility to choose - and, like all things that involve responsibility, we take it on though we know it to be hard.

The following pages offer some suggestions of attitudes and behaviours that will make those constructive alternatives more possible and practical.

Nine Things To Remember...



...When Things Change

(Again)

1. Forget Comfort

The pyramid of organisational hierarchy is gone - now, surviving at work's like a jungle. You come in on day one and instead of saying 'here's the rule book' they say:

'Here's your machete, here's your pith helmet, off you go, good luck!'

You're more on your own now than you ever were. How do you react?

In *Watership Down*, the author Richard Adams coins the word 'Tharn' for the feeling that rabbits get when they're crossing the road and they get caught in the headlights of a car. 'Tharn' describes that terrible feeling of being frozen stiff in panic! Rabbits have 'Tharn', but we can't afford to have it, even though the world throws up many opportunities every day for being scared rigid. Most of all it's scary because things are changing so rapidly. What seems certain one day seems ridiculous the next. What seem the best course of action one week seems hopelessly misguided the next. And some things can appear right and wrong, good and bad, certain and confused at the same time. Ambiguity prevails.

Ambiguity-tolerance means a willingness to live within a structure where things aren't always the same. It means an ability to thrive in a work environment where you might find yourself reporting to one person one day and another person the next, or even more than one person at the same time. It means working within a structure that encourages you to move into quickly put-together cross-functional teams - and maybe just as quickly leave them. It means tolerating a role that might be only vaguely defined.

These are the sorts of demands that are being placed on us in this changing world.

How do you know if you have ambiguity-tolerance? Perhaps the ultimate test is deciding which of the following two phrases describes you best:

1. "If tomorrow isn't different from today I'll be frustrated"
2. "If tomorrow is different from today I'll be terrified."

But ambiguity tolerance doesn't just mean being comfortable in the dark. It means being brave enough to assign your own priorities, based on your knowledge of the team, department or company's overall strategy. It means seeking information if you haven't got it - asking for help if you feel your team leader or manager or a colleague could offer more guidance. And it means having the guts to get on with the job in hand, whilst remaining flexible enough to alter course quickly if need be.

2. Create Value

Try not to think of what you do in terms of your job and the qualifications you need to keep it. Think of what value you add to customers, wherever they may be, inside or outside the organisation. And concentrate on increasing that value.

When the world of work was more stable, you kept your job if you did your job, that is, if you were responsible and hard working. Only if you did something really naughty did you put that job in jeopardy. But now things are a lot less secure - the marketplace is a lot more competitive. Doing a good job will not make you safe. Putting in lots of hours - or years - will not make you safe. The employment offices are full of talented, hardworking, unemployed people.

The only measure of survival and success at work is in the value you add to customers. What service do you give to these customers and how do you treat them? In what ways do you contribute more than you cost?

If everybody in the organisation is treating their internal customers with the minimum standard of service or care - only really putting in extra effort when a 'real' customer is involved - it's going to be very difficult to provide high quality for the external customers.

You'll have heard of the old team working adage 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.' It works in a negative way too. One individual's mediocre service added to another's added to another's eventually builds a huge amount of apathy and poor quality - beyond what each individual ever intended.

So thinking of your work in terms of adding more value to customers will add to the organisation's overall quality and increase its chance of remaining competitive. And if you are seen to have helped that, it will have made you more *valuable* to the organisation.

And to add value, make yourself more valuable. Discuss value with your manager or team leader. Take the appraisals seriously (or insist that they are taken that way in future, if your manager doesn't seem to care). What skills or knowledge can you develop that are needed in the organisation? Or perhaps you can add value by being the one who builds and maintains a strong relationship with another department in the process chain, or repairs an old rift.

Add value to your customers and you'll add security to your career.

3. Be part of the solution

...and not part of the problem.

The world is full of people who want to offer their advice. And advice - feedback or criticism, call it what you will - is crucial for human survival and growth. If we didn't get feedback, we'd never improve.

The problem is that some people complain and think that complaining constitutes good, constructive, critical advice. They don't really want to go the extra mile and force their advice through so that it improves things. They just want to make themselves feel better by letting everyone know how aggrieved they feel. You may have seen people like this in action. You may notice that they are very good at giving their 'advice' often and loudly; you may also notice that they never actually give their advice to anyone with enough power or influence to do anything with it.

In reality, we all have power and influence in the organisation, although not all of us can have the same status. We all have the power and influence to do these things:

(i) we can think and reflect on the bigger picture. What is creating the problem that makes us want to complain? Who's fault is it? Is it really 'their' fault? Or is the fault outside the organisation - in the form of rapid business change, increased competition or the changing needs of customers?

(ii) we can formulate our arguments and develop our proposals if we think we have an insight or an idea that will help. And then we can seek out someone who might be able to implement our ideas. No organisation is going to turn down well-intentioned, well thought-through ideas. On the contrary, most organisations are crying out for any help that will keep them competitive.

And we all have the power and influence to challenge those who complain unconstructively. Those people may do it in a humorous way that entertains and edifies us at first. But in the end it is not a nourishing diet and it will begin to pall very soon. Constant griping and moaning damages the organisation - it produces a cold and resentful environment (and that in turn will effect you). And it damages the individual - because if they dislike the situation so much, they can hardly be motivating themselves to do high quality work every day. Besides, if we challenge them, we might be able to help. Their gripes may mask fear or confusion - both of which they may thank a colleague for dispersing.

It's a tough world and problems will crop up regularly. But how you react to it will determine your chances of satisfaction and success.

And if you *are* part of a problem, take responsibility and do whatever you can to solve it. Gain a reputation for owning challenges and resolving them.

4. Master your own destiny

You could lie back and 'think of England' or you could get on top of it all. One way you might just get shafted. The other way, you might join in and have some fun...

Mastering your own destiny is the difference between changing and being changed, between active and passive, being at cause and living at effect.

It is possible to live a life where you are the victim of everything that happens to you. In such a life, your happiness would depend on whether someone else was happy - your spouse, maybe, or a family member. Or it would depend on what sort of mood you woke up in that morning.

Your job satisfaction would depend on how well your boss treated you. Or how hard your colleagues seemed to be trying. Or how many widgets the company sold today.

It would be a life where you were buffeted around by external circumstances. There would never be constancy. You wouldn't be at the centre of your life.

It is also possible to live a life where you take responsibility for what happens to you. So your happiness would depend on what you focused on or how you interpreted something. Your job satisfaction would be determined by how hard you pushed yourself, problems you took on and solved and results you achieved. Your mood, not an accident of physiology, framing and endorphins, but a result of how you choose to use those tools. It wouldn't stop bad things happening to you, because bad things always happen - but how you respond to such things is entirely within your control.

Living and working with that self-responsibility is hard - that's why it's so rare in our lives. It is so much easier to blame others for the things that happen or don't happen or for how we feel.

Taking self-responsibility means holding yourself accountable for your work. It means thinking about the job's bigger picture - and pushing yourself to do whatever is necessary to achieve results, even if it means working outside your job description, or with other departments - or even working with people you usually try to avoid.

Taking self-responsibility means stopping focusing on competition with others, because, ultimately, you can only ever compete with yourself. Focusing on how well others are doing in relation to you may give you a temporary measure for your efforts, but if you come to rely on it, you will give your power away. Your success can only come if they fail. What happens if they win? Self-competition means constantly improving what you do, because that means continuous victory.

Taking self-responsibility means stopping expecting others to provide things for you - loyalty, integrity, security - and it means striving to be a source of those things yourself, in yourself.

We can all spot the faults of others. Taking self-responsibility means knowing your own faults and trying to eradicate them. Taking self-responsibility is difficult, often painful - but it puts us back in control of our lives. And as such it can be a true source of satisfaction and happiness. And in this age of empowerment, we need people who can empower themselves.

5. Balance

Respect what you know and love and then respect everything. If that sounds difficult, explore, experiment. Find out what else to respect.

We all had a worldview, characterised by the certainties of the hierarchy and a job for life. That worldview is no longer tenable. Change it. Balance it with a different one.

Learn to love walking in another person's moccasins, immersing yourself in someone else's point of view. Start it as an exercise - think:

'what would it feel like if I thought that?'

'why would I feel that way?'

'what might happen to me?'

Balance is also about easily switching from the eyes of the eagle to the eyes of the mouse, being as happy with the detail as with the Big Picture. Think egocentricly and orgocentricly - see things both ways.

It's also about being able to work at something with passion and fire, whilst at the same time maintaining distance and objectivity. In a changing world, even our point of view is shifting.

6. Belong

Buy-in to whatever you're doing whilst you're doing it. Why bother coasting?

Blind loyalty to a corporation may be in decline, but loyalty to colleagues, teammates, customers, to the project and to your own principles still matters.

Loyalty does not have to be built up over years - it's a decision you can make in an instant. Am I going to commit myself or not?

Support, like trust, is a two-way street. You can't get it unless you do it. That's why even mavericks work hard at building networks of supporters, influencers and co-workers, because they know that they can never work in a vacuum. All their maverick-like insights and ideas have to be implemented by someone.

7. Learn and Grow

Change is an opportunity for growing both yourself and others. And learning *from* yourself and others them too.

Since we are programmed to learn from the moment of conception, it would be a shame to lose that instinct now that we have developed in adulthood not just our instinct but other powerful forces such as reason, love, imagination and tact.

New people are constantly coming into your world; learn from them, rather than close yourself off from them.

Stretch yourself, since the more you know the more you can participate. Learning is a process of moving outside the Comfort Zone, so, by definition, a Learner must feel uneasy more often than secure.

Become comfortable with that discomfort. Seek feedback. Your faults are indicators of your potential to be better than you are, not marks of your weakness.

When the world is moving so fast, it doesn't take long for that skill you've just mastered, or that course you've just completed, to begin to look a little outdated. The key is to keep learning. The danger is to think: 'I know that; I'm safe.'

Update the old and continuously refresh yourself with new skills. Read around your subject - attend courses or seminars. Know what is going on in other companies and other countries in your area of responsibility (and in related ones). Keep interested and you will appear interesting - and that will be good for your career.

Think of your job as a place to learn rather than a place you turn up at every day. Be aware of what you are learning and how it might be applied in other companies. Shorter term contracts are becoming the norm. So is a career based on completing projects for many different employers. So imagine updating your CV this evening and filling in your current tasks and responsibilities. Forget about trying to redesign or rewrite your resume so that it makes you *sound* better. Think about what you can actually start *doing* better *now* that will make that role appear more attractive to a future employer. What valuable competencies have you increased whilst you've been doing this job? Think marketability. Think employability. Think value.

But don't think of this as purely a benefit related to your work - or think of learning as the boring accumulation of facts that happened in school. The need to learn is hard-wired into us from our time in the womb. It is what helps us to survive and then thrive. The impulse to experience something and then understand it is a core human trait and a precious gift. Continuing your learning throughout your life will be a source of continued satisfaction - and continued growth. Life becomes an open-ended journey of discovery rather than a closed journey towards retirement.

Being open to learning, then, doesn't just mean having a thirst for new skills and knowledge. It means being open to what life teaches you. If you believe that everything teaches you something, you'll be more likely to take self-responsibility and change your life proactively - and less likely to picture yourself as a victim of chance or the deeds of others.

8. Share

Your brain is wonderful, but the more brains the better.

Hoarding information is pointless - it's a bit like hoarding oxygen. The best thing to do with oxygen is to get together with someone who makes breathing apparatus, then you'll really be able to explore the universe.

And sharing information is a communication issue.

Communication is at the heart of all you do. And, in a way, it's *all* you ever do - everything you do is carried by communication. The world is buzzing with billions of pieces of information being communicated - sent and received - every second. It's a communication marketplace of which two things can be said with confidence:

1. The communication marketplace is massively overpopulated, and
2. Every one of us is in it, whether we like it or not.

That's why today's business environment demands that we strive constantly to improve our communication. Because if our audience - our boss, our team mate, our customer - doesn't buy *our* message, they'll surely buy somebody else's.

Communication is the skill that adds value to everything else you are trying to do.

The ability to generate ideas and solutions is a precious gift, but is nothing if it is not matched by an ability to persuade others that you are right, or at least, temporarily worth their investment of time and energy. Unless you can sell your ideas to those who have to carry them out, you'll guarantee yourself a working life of frustration.

The ability to paint a verbal picture of the results you expect will give much needed clarity and direction to those whom you manage. And the ability to give feedback to people as they work - to let them know in a careful, detailed and empathetic way how they are doing and how they could improve, will be a major source of motivation for them.

Communication is about what you say but, more often than not, it's about *how* you say it. That means using flexibility, creativity and patience to find many different ways of saying the same thing - until your audience understands.

So often, for example, people in organisations complain that 'they' don't listen. 'We give them ideas, but they won't listen to us, you know!' Maybe this can be reframed, so that the 'we' can still maintain some sense of possibility and influence: 'we give them ideas, but we haven't yet found a way of communicating our ideas that makes them understand, or dispels all their doubts.' Only when we have tried every way of communicating can we be sure that 'they' *really* won't listen.

Your ability to communicate is also your ability to build relationships - and in this age of team working, we need people who can manage the complexities of working in groups. Build strong ties with others and you'll find you are generating value beyond your individual efforts.

9. Trust

What if...the world's not out to shaft you?

Which of these do you most subscribe to:

Paranoia the abnormal tendency to suspect and mistrust others

or

Pronoia the unaccountable feeling that everything is conspiring to help you.

The thing to remember about the word 'trust' is that it is both a noun and a verb. This reminds us that trust is something you get because of something you do. No-one gives love to someone who doesn't show it, and trust is no different. If you want to be trusted, trust others; if you want to know trust, be trustworthy.

Here are some other ways to build trust:

know who you are

Watts Wacker describes a Brand as a Promise and applies that understanding to individuals. *You* are a brand - you are a promise of value added, or accomplishment achieved, or security embodied, of love given. The point is that you can't keep a promise if who you are - the promise-maker - keeps shifting. Consistency is the bedrock of trust.

explain who you are and what you do

in which case people around you will know by what standards, measures or principles to judge you (and judge you they will, whether you communicate with them or not)

demonstrate clearly what it is you share with others around you

a vision, a view of life, a set of objectives, a sense of humour. People trust people who are like them.

balance virtual with skin meetings,

You can maintain trust at a distance, by keeping people informed, by asking for information - but people ultimately trust people that they can see. Don't be a stranger.

balance work and play, seriousness and laughter, fortitude and tears etc

since people to respond to authenticity and are suspicious of appearances and surfaces

keep your promises

both to yourself and others. Breaking a promise causes a rift in the psychic bond between your intentions (represented in thoughts and words) and your actions. This bond is never permanent and fixed but is very easily weakened. Fulfilling even a small part of a big commitment you have made is better than not fulfilling any of it.

be honest

immediately, always and about everything, big and small - since this is another expression of consistency. In a recent survey of 40,000 Americans, 93% admitted to lying 'regularly and habitually in the workplace'. For the 93%, your honesty will be an inspiration and example. For the 7%, well, people like people who are like them...

give

freely

achieve

as often as you can, to the best standards you are able

Epilogue

Change is natural - that is, it is part of being alive.

This handbook suggests that we can find a way of living and working that accepts change as necessary and inevitable, a way that welcomes the new for the rich possibilities it opens us to, whilst honouring the past for all that is valuable there.

Not all of us can be the leaders - at the top of the organisation taking in the whole picture. But we can all be *like* leaders, looking with the eyes of the eagle to take in the whole field, to seek out more information, to answer more questions, or to look at the problem from a different point of view. And then we can return to the immediate challenge - using the eyes of the mouse to help us through the field - with a new sense of purpose and understanding.

Being able to use both the eyes of the eagle and the eyes of the mouse demands that we be flexible. And flexibility is the constant challenge - because stress and fear and confusion tend to make us rigid.

Flexibility, too, is entirely natural, but we often forget it. Have a look out of the window - any window - and you will see that all the straight lines are man made. Being *naturally* human, being happy and healthy in change, means that we have to let go of our impulse to make a straight line out of our life - a life where everything would happen smoothly and fairly and when we wanted it to.

Remain flexible and you can take back responsibility for what you think, feel and do.

Remain flexible and you will avoid the rigid responses that make change fearful and painful.

Remain flexible, and you will open up for yourself a multiplicity of attitudes, beliefs, possibilities and actions.





DAVID FIRTH

*People draw together by their very nature,
but habit and custom keep them apart*

Translated from Confucius

David is a consultant, facilitator, change management expert, conference speaker and executive coach in progressive Organizational Development.

David helps global clients – and those nearer to his home in Loveland, Colorado - institute profound practices for engagement, enrolment and workforce participation. He brings people back to being the source of change - rather than its victims or objects - by unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit of creativity and ownership. This, he suggests, is not a top-down or even bottom-up shift, but an inside-out one.

At the heart of all David's work are his proprietary COQUORA PROCESS and CONVERSATIONS FOR CHANGE methodologies, which are guaranteed to generate creativity, energy and accountability where there was only resistance, stasis and blame in the past.

He has just created a company called *The Coquora Project*, whose mission is to create substantive change in communities, local government, healthcare and education, for all stakeholders, by running One Thousand CoQuora Processes around the world over the next five years.

Current and recent clients include the International Olympic Committee, Amnesty International, Unilever and a globally-famous family confectionary business.

As an author, his books stand as a provocative complement to traditional thinking about leadership, and include *How to Make Work Fun*; *The Corporate Fool*; *From 'Making a Living' to Creating a Life* and the subject of his recent [TEDx talk](#), *Change Your World One Word at a Time*.

Further information on David's consulting and coaching work can be found at:

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