

Caught in the Storm of Change

COMMON CHANGES AFFECTING WORK LIFE






- Increased customer expectations
- Rapidly evolving technology
- Continual redesign of work
- New regulations or changes to existing regulations (rules change frequently)
- Unpredictable resource allocation
- Personal life changes

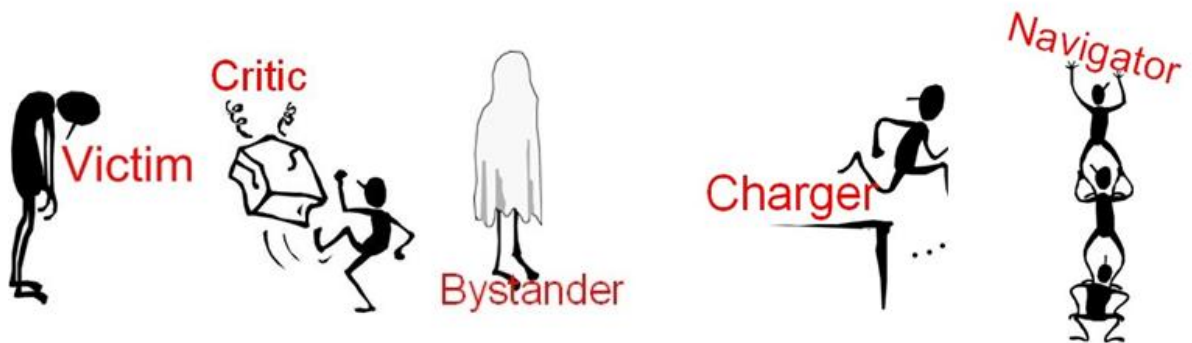
How People Respond to Change: A Model

(loosely based on Peter Block's "Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-interest.")

Change brings uncertainty and causes people to respond in a variety of ways. These responses range from the victim mode, where you are overwhelmed by the change, to the navigator mode, where you are able to take positive action individually and with others.

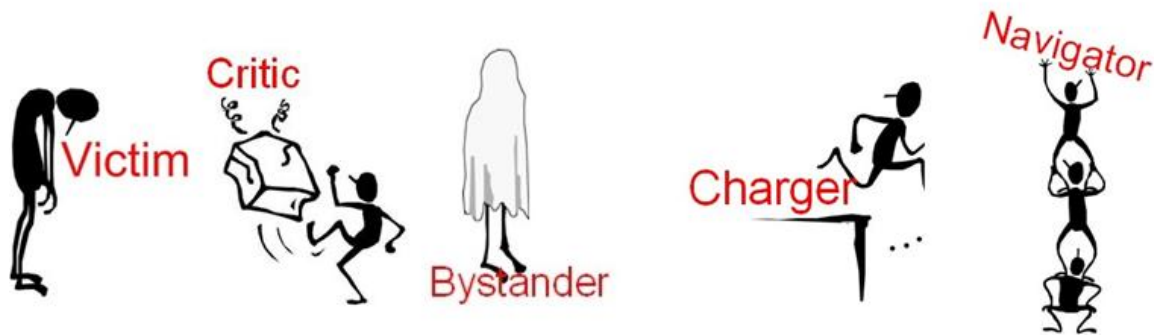
These modes are all normal and legitimate. They are not, however necessarily linear. You could be in the navigator mode when a change is first announced by revert to the victim mode as you get more information. What's important is not to "get stuck" in the victim, critic, charger, or bystander mode - all of which inhibit positive forward movement. Recognizing these modes will help you to move through them and to assist others in doing the same.

	<i>Behaviors</i>	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>How to get unstuck</i>
 Victim	Resists change Feels angry or depressed Reverts to old ways of doing things	Why is this happening to me? Why can't things stay the same? I just have to wait and see what "they" will do to me this time.	The victim response may be considered a South behavior. To get unstuck from this response, try to move toward more North behaviors, particularly taking charge of responsibility for what's happening in your life.
 Critic	Looks for reasons why change will not be a success Fails to see any positive outcome from the change	This has never worked before and it won't work now. They don't know what is going on or what they're doing. This will just make things worse.	The critic response may be considered a West behavior. To get unstuck from this response, try to move toward more East behaviors. Think about the possibilities and opportunities that are or could be open to you, how and what you could do to influence change.
 Bystander	Acts reluctant to get involved Waits for others to take the lead	If I ignore this change, it will go away. I won't jump in until I know it's safe. I'll wait until others have made the decisions.	The bystander response may be considered a East behavior. To get unstuck from this response, try to move West and find out how change impacts you. Seek information, find out what roles you can play in change efforts.
 Charger	Leaps before looking Pushes others too hard Does not listen to others	I know best and I'll just force it to happen. I don't need more information. Do it my way and do it now.	The charger response may be considered a North behavior. To get unstuck from this response, try to move South. Examine how change impacts others, seek information, engage additional input before making decisions.
 Navigator	Looks for ways to reduce negative reactions Explores reasons for change Finds ways to be useful in change Looks for opportunities to improve Forms positive and supportive relationships with those affected by the change	This change presents opportunities to do things differently. It's a chance to do things better. I'm bound to make mistakes, but I'll learn from them. I am in control of how I feel about the change.	The navigator response is the center of the Leadership wheel. It is the balanced and centered place where people can respond effectively. Being in this role helps the person help themselves and organization move successfully through change.



4 KEY ACTIONS

1. Acknowledge your own reactions.
2. Assess the impact of the change on you and others.
3. Seek and acknowledge others' reactions.
4. Take positive action individually and with others to address the change.



KEY ACTION #1

Acknowledge Your Own Reactions

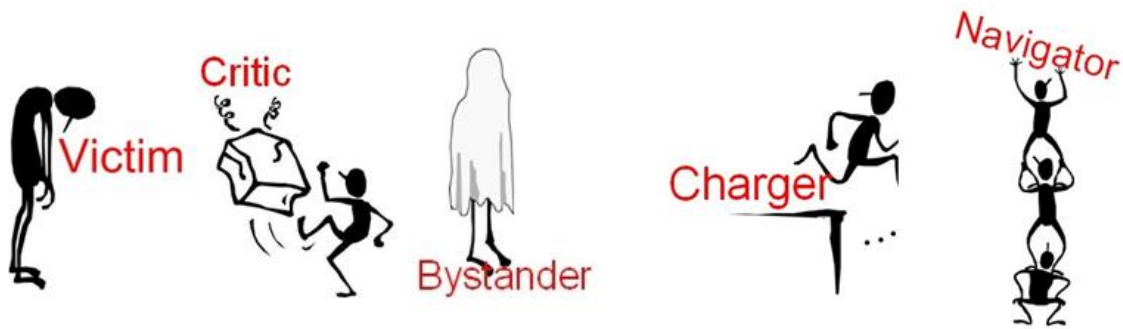
Why

It is difficult to move forward with change unless you understand your thoughts and feelings about it – both positive and negative. What’s more, if you ignore your initial reactions, they may surface later, paralyzing you and preventing you from taking any action at all. You can lead people only as far as you have come yourself.

How

This is a process of self-examination. You can do it on your own or with a trusted associate – someone with whom you feel comfortable and who can help you think through your reactions.

Whether you are working on your own or with a partner, a good way to get your feelings clear is to put them on paper. Write the change at the top of a piece of paper and divide the paper into two columns labeled “pro” and “con” (or “what I like about this change” and “what I don’t like but have to get used to”). In the positive column, list every potential positive outcome you can think of. In the other column, list all your fears and concerns.



KEY ACTION #2

Assess the Impact of the Change

Why

If you take the time to assess the impact of the change objectively and thoroughly, you will be in a better position to identify your ability to adapt successfully and will minimize the emotional distress and discomfort change can bring.

How

This requires some information gathering.

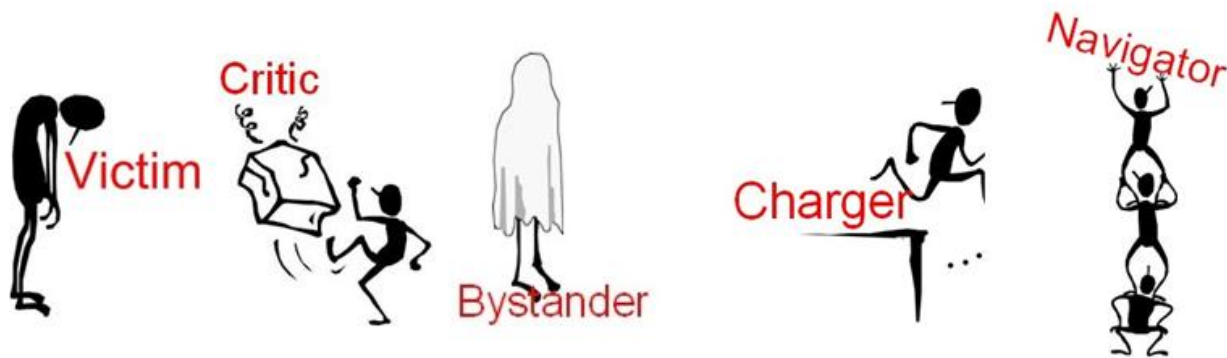
Talk to as many people as possible about what they think the effects of change will be.

Get a variety of perspectives. If the change is happening now, identify how it is affecting you and the others involved. If appropriate and possible, identify how the change is affecting customers, suppliers, and vendors. Talk to those outside your group as well.

Assemble the information you have gathered in a way that will help you understand and assimilate it.

You may need to create a simple outline or drawing that shows each function and lists how it is being or will be affected. You could also use a flowchart to help you visualize the effects for the change. Summarizing the information you've gathered will help you.

- Evaluate the change
- Question your own reactions and assumptions
- Identify ways to overcome obstacles
- Make appropriate choices about how to deal with the change



KEY ACTION #3

Seek and Acknowledge Others' Reactions

Why

Change creates a stress on everyone involved. Anger, fear, anxiety, and frustration can undermine self-confidence and self-esteem and ultimately can interfere with the success of the change. By encouraging others to express their fears, concerns, or needs, you can help them work through those feelings and return their focus to the task at hand. You can also plan how best to address their feelings and needs. Your empathy can lay the foundation for trust and open communication.

How

Ask people who are, or will be, affected by the change to share their concerns or opinions.

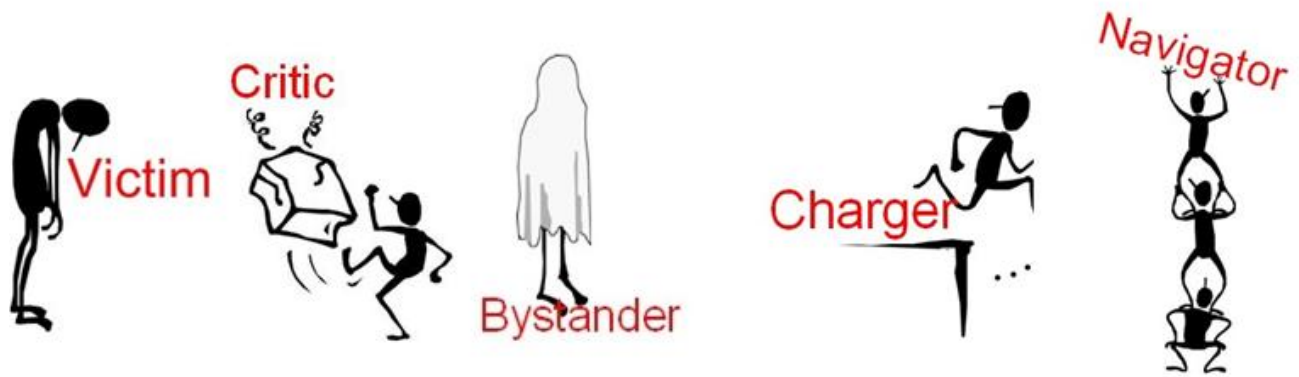
Find out what people fear and what they hope will happen. Encourage them to express their frustrations, and let them know that their feelings are legitimate. Share your own concerns too. Everyone needs to express legitimate concerns about change. Some people will be vocal, but others may be reluctant to speak up. Encourage everyone to share their thoughts and be prepared to listen.

Be supportive and responsive to people's concern.

Many people who are frustrated by change simply lack the information they need in order to adjust and adapt. When a person's job changes significantly, s/he may not know what to do - or how to do it well. Ask people who are affected by the change to suggest ideas for overcoming obstacles or hurdles. Work with people to develop solutions.

Be patient.

People need time to adjust to change. Give them time to work through their emotions.



KEY ACTION #4

Take Positive Action Individually and With Others

Why

When you are dealing with a major change, it's normal to feel a loss of control. Don't expect to be able to take on everything at once. Instead, take charge of what you can do and encourage others to do the same.

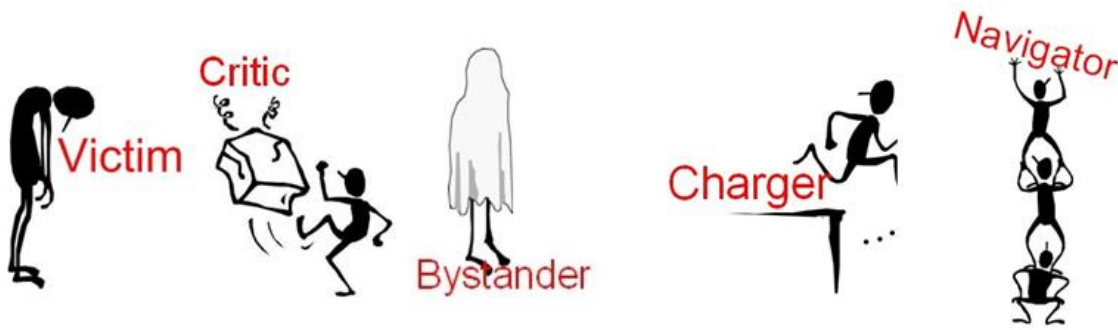
How

Assess your individual responsibility with respect to the change.

Change involves many different roles and levels of involvement. Before you can take positive action, you need to understand your role in carrying out the change.

The degree of your involvement will depend on whether you are initiating the change, how much the change affects your work and life, and what the scope of your responsibility is. Your role may involve one or more of the following.

- Informing others about the change
- Collaborating with others to implement the change
- Staying abreast of what's happening
- Adjusting your work to respond to the change



Once you have defined your role, you can choose the appropriate action(s) to take. The six useful actions that follow can help you focus your efforts for the maximum benefit.

1. Communicate the change and the reason behind it.

Identify the most common questions and objections and how they will be addressed. Seek input from people who will be affected by the change. Find out what they need to know to be comfortable with the change.

If you are initiating the change, get the information out to everyone involved as soon as possible – BEFORE rumors start. If you are on the receiving end of the change and don't feel you have all the information you need, don't make assumptions or listen to rumors. Instead, seek out people who may have the information you need. Gather facts to determine the real reasons for the change and the ways it will impact you and your co-workers.

2. Help develop a shared vision of how the change can be successful.

In order to make change successful, the people involved need to take responsibility for its success. Developing a shared vision of the goal enables everyone to work together to make the most of change.

3. Look for areas that need improvement.

Being a navigator of change does not always mean looking at the positive side. You also need to be aware of where a change may not be succeeding. Be alert to skills that need developing and to procedures that were designed under the old system and may no longer be effective.

4. Stay focused on the outcome of the change.

Frustration with change comes from not being able to see past the obstacles it presents. Instead, stay focused on the business (or fundamental) issue that's driving the change. Help others to do the same. This will make it easier to remain objective about the change and to maintain positive relationships.

5. Learn from your mistakes and encourage others to do so.

During change (as always), people make mistakes. Set an example for others by taking your mistakes in stride. It is only by making mistakes and sharing what you've learned, that you - and others - will find a way to successfully do your work.

6. Change along with the change.

To contribute in new ways, you will need new skills. Make continuous learning a daily priority - it allows you to develop new perspectives, insights, solutions, and actions. Encourage other by your example. Stay flexible and be alert to new ways you can add value to the organization.