

# Mentor Insights



## INSIGHTS

### EMBRACE CHANGE

Wayne Townsend, CEO for Peer Mentor.net describes change as “a constant that needs to be embraced.” It is going to happen, you cannot control it; however, you can direct some of it. Those things over which you have no control, there is no sense in losing any sleep over them.

### FEAR OF NO CHANGE

Dr. John Oesch, in a presentation to the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, stated that “sometimes you have to let people know what they will lose if they don’t change.” Fear is often all the motivation you need.

### APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

David Cooperrider, from Case Western University, designed the “Appreciative Inquiry” model which examines the best of what: was, what is, what should be, and what will be. Using numerous questions of inquiry he would search out all four levels. This is an incredibly positive approach to change leadership whether small or large organizational change.



*Dr. John Oesch, Professor, Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, states that, “if mentoring and coaching are a part of your organization, then change is significantly enhanced..”*

He alluded that we need “change leadership” and not “change management.” If we manage change, we are in a reactionary position like the Red Queen shouting: “Off with their heads;” however, if we lead change, it is much more proactive when the leadership is prepared with a plan and framework for change. Dr. Oesch referred particularly to John Kotter’s Change Model and focussed on four key steps for the presentation. These steps simply labelled are: 1. Set the Stage; 2. Decide What To Do; 3. Make It Happen; and 4. Make It Stick.

What is unique about John’s framework is that he spent some time articulating how to set the stage. He stated that often leaders focus on why we need to make this change. “Here are the benefits.” John felt the difficulty with this approach is that, according to the Prospect Theory, most people are very concerned about what they will lose. Therefore the law of inertia (the tendency to resist change) becomes the greatest obstacle. John also felt that sometimes we need to focus on what the individuals will lose if we don’t make this change. People are more moved by loss than benefit. “If people are in a loss frame, they are more apt to take a risk.”

People too are more afraid of the unknown. Leaders tend to punish people who try things and fail. Therefore, people tend to “stay the course.” When we take action, we take responsibility and may suffer criticism and regret. So, inaction is safer. “Let’s not rock the boat.”

John felt that we need to be more open and honest about what’s in it for me. Communicate our true beliefs about the beneficial outcomes for ourselves. In this way, reduce employee conjecture, and increase the likelihood that the employees will feel like partners in the change. Help build commitment to the change. Share the pull factors for change. John stated, “Always be explicit about alternatives, so that status quo is one of many choices. Would you change to the status quo if you had several better alternatives?” Pull can be as powerful as a push. My framework is one of focusing more on the effects of change on your people and less on the structural/organizational aspects. Therefore, the pull from customers and the data dilemma are important. Both have effects on those involved in the change. As leaders, we ask our employees to take a leap of faith; yet, we ask them for data when they suggest something. Leaders need to give followers “**a reason to believe.**”

We Need A Framework For Change—  
“A Reason To Believe”

## Change Leadership

Dr. Oesch delivered a presentation to the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce in December 2009. His topic was about change. He entitled this talk as, “**Five Unusual Ideas About Change.**”

John began his talk with the concept that, “we need a framework for change.” Sometimes, you will choose to change or you will have change thrust upon you. In either case you have to deal with it. Having a framework to handle change will significantly help your organization.

He used a metaphor from the book, Alice In Wonderland.” He chose The Red Queen as someone who was running faster and faster with very little results. Thus, the need for a framework to lead through change that improves the corporate stance in a highly competitive market.