

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



982 Reasons Why People Resist Change – Part 1

Change is all around us. You've heard that old saying, "The only constant is change." You'd think we'd be used to change by now, but we're not. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll talk about why people resist change, next, on The Extra Point.

Resistance to change is one of the biggest hurdles managers and leaders have to deal with in guiding an organization. Many people just cling to what they know and what makes them feel comfortable.

Rosabeth Moss-Kanter is a professor at Harvard Business School, and she outlines 10 reasons why people resist change.

1. Loss of control. If I lose control, that may lead to me eventually going out of control. Losing control is loss, and loss makes me a loser. Change makes me a loser. We're off to a bad start.

Strategy: Help people to feel like they have not lost control during change.

2. Excess uncertainty. I hate the unknown. I don't mind putting up with the misery I know, because I've come to terms with that. It's the misery that could be waiting for me that scares me. What if it's worse?

Strategy: Leaders should always display the processes involved with change. Illuminate the moving parts, so the uncertainty goes away.

3. Surprises. So many times, decisions are thrust on people without notice, and there's little or no time to prepare. People hate those kinds of surprises.

Strategy: If at all possible, plant the seeds of change over time, rather than tossing them at your team all at once.

4. Everything seems different. You and I are

creatures of habit. If too many differences pop up at once, it's going to be distracting, and maybe confusing.

Strategy: When you can, minimize the number of differences you introduce at one time.

5. Loss of face. Most leaders don't see this one coming. Change is the process of leaving the past behind, and replacing it with something you believe is better.

If you think about that for a moment, that past and all that went with it represented the ideas of people who believed in it. Now, could the perception be that somebody now feels they must have been wrong?

Frankly, this is a sticking point for some people. I'll admit it's not the common view, but you have to realize that some people were likely emotionally invested in what was, so they're not going to be excited about what will be.

Let's make it even more personal. "If THEY feel that what we were doing wasn't any good any more...well, maybe they feel that way about me, too." If you think that's a stretch, trust me, it's not. People can get there mentally, in a heartbeat.

Strategy: It may be wise to find ways to celebrate the past, then show how that past helped bring us to these changes, and a brighter future.

We'll have the other half of the 10 reasons why people resist change, tomorrow.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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