

5

CHANGE – The Cycle of Self-Reinvention

Joan F Marques

The most effective way to deal with change is to be just one step ahead, and reinvent yourself on a regular basis. How? By keeping track of developments in your interest areas; by adopting a pro-learning mindset; and by refusing to let setbacks get the best of you. Read how you can make change part of your routine.

In today's fast-paced world, we have no choice but to accept the changes that are continuously brought upon us. The most effective way to deal with change is to be just one step ahead, and reinvent yourself on a regular basis. How? By keeping track of developments in your interest areas; by adopting a pro-learning mindset; and by refusing to let setbacks get the best of you. Setbacks always occur, in everyone's life, but it's the losers who dwell on them, while the winners look for the lessons to be learned from these setbacks and the opportunities hidden within or behind them.

So, how do you keep yourself at the forefront in an ever-faster changing world? By making the following cycle part of a regular routine. Monthly is good, weekly is better.

Source: This article appeared earlier in the book 'Interbeing: Thoughts on Achieving Personal and Professional Excellence Toward Greater Mutuality', published by the Icfai University Press, 2007. © The Icfai University Press. All rights reserved.

Check it out

The Internet, magazines, mentors, television, colleagues, and children: Those are just a few of the numerous sources available to you to generate fresh ideas on how to keep yourself up-to-date. It all starts with a mindset that is geared toward learning: A hungry mind. Checking things out with a hungry mind that is diligently seeking for opportunities and ideas, will lead you to see more than you did before. You will start thinking about things at a different level: You will absorb information provided by friends, colleagues and mentors in a more constructive way. You will find that children's perspectives are not bad at all. Television, magazines and newspapers will become more than just passive ways of spending time. On the contrary, you will start a continuous scanning process that will help you to break barriers, obtain ideas, formulate your vision, and find ways to realize it.

Hash it over

Once you decided what your next move will be, discuss it with others whose opinions you value. Avoid naysayers, because they will come up with ten thousand reasons why you will not be able to realize your vision. Instead, seek out the constructive souls – People of whom you know that they dare in a responsible way, and that they also belong to the club of self-reinventors, because their life is proof of it.

Analyze

Here's where you start working on a strategy to go from where you are now ("point A") to where you want to be ("point B"). Point of caution – Keep it realistic, and be flexible. You may have to adjust your strategy toward reaching your goal more than once. Yet, once you've determined where you want to go, you need to know where you currently stand. Analyze your current circumstances. What does your point A look like? And what do you need to do to get to point B? What skills do you need to upgrade?

Here's a suggestion: Make a SWOT analysis of your status quo, whether it's a career-related or private goal you are after. As you may already know, SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The two first ones

are the internal issues to work on; the two last ones, the external factors you may have to tackle.

Navigate

As a result of your self-evaluation, you can now start looking for ways to upgrade your skills to the point where they need to be in order to reinvent yourself. Oftentimes, it will be that you need additional education. Find out what is available out there: Schools, self-education tools (specialized books or magazines), or maybe even some traveling in order to acquire insight into other cultures and practices.

Get going

Start the upgrading process as soon as you have figured out what you need to do in order to achieve your goal. Put your heart and soul in it, and don't give up when it becomes a bit difficult. Hardly anything gets achieved overnight. Besides, it feels so much better when you can look back and see how far you've come from the moment you acquired your idea for a new direction to the moment that you finish your self-renewal process.

Execute!

The final step is the most exciting and daring one. Here's where you finally make the leap toward the next phase in your life. Whether it's the move to a new job, the start-up of your own business, or the initiation of a new love life: it is time for implementation.

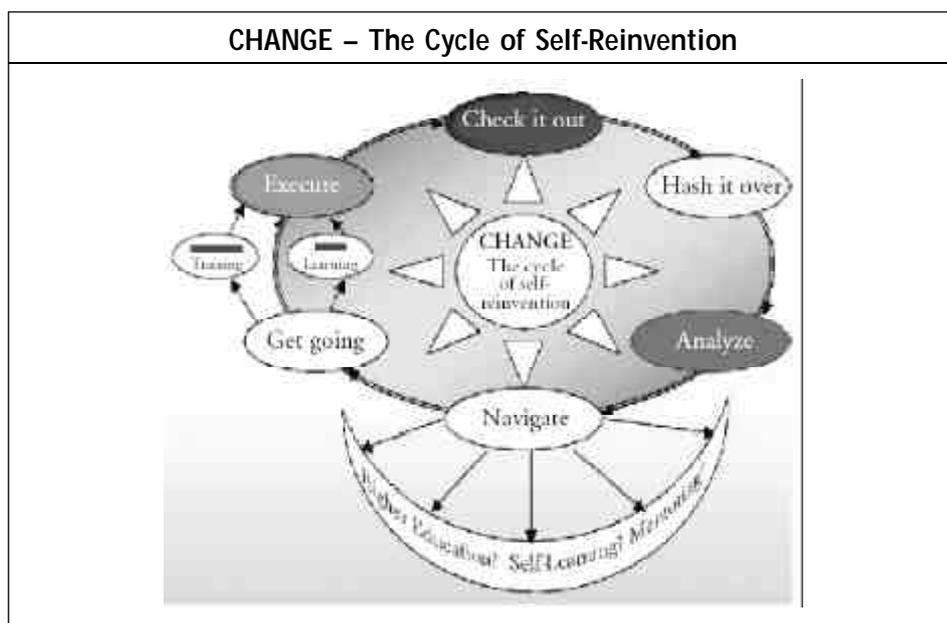
In the figure you can see how it all works schematically.

Two final points to ponder:

1. All through the implementation of CHANGE, keep scanning for opportunities, and for possible needs to adjust your direction.
2. Learning is never wasted. So, even if at the eleventh hour, you have to change your goal, you will always be able to apply the lessons you learned along the way in some way or another. Don't get discouraged.

CHANGE may be a lifesaver if you get used to applying it on a regular basis. It will save you from getting suffocated in the status quo; it will make life more exciting and rewarding, and it will enable you to adapt faster than others when “surprises” hit the market, because guess what? You are prepared!

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The Incredible Wealth of the Self

To be really happy during moments of solitude, and to enjoy them instead of enduring them; to experience an elevation of spiritual intensity rather than a subjugation of mental well-being; and to exuberate with positive energy and gratitude instead of suffering depression and disgust are genuine assets of only a handful.

The person, who is primarily content with his or her own company, is a happy and fortunate one. This is not to say that company of – and interconnectedness with – other people should be discouraged. On the contrary, there is much to be learned from other individuals that can enrich one's insights about human nature and the essentials, absurdities, heights and depths of existence.

But having the capacity to be really happy during moments of solitude, and to enjoy them instead of enduring them; to experience an elevation of spiritual intensity rather than a subjugation of mental well-being; to exuberate with positive energy and gratitude instead of suffering in depression and disgust; is a genuine asset of only a handful.

And this quality of enjoying one's own company should not be underestimated, as it can determine the difference between aloneness and loneliness. These two terms, although often used interchangeably, do not necessarily mean the same: aloneness can entail being alone without feeling abandoned: a deliberate state of being; whereas loneliness usually entails an unwanted state of existing.

Why should self-contentment be encouraged? Because a person who can value his or her own company in the first place has demonstrated, whether deliberately or not, that he or she has an elevated spiritual intensity: Wealthy enough to entertain him- or herself sufficiently; wealthy enough to use the time alone constructively; and wealthy enough to be more productive in those days of solitude than at any other time.

Yet, it may be appropriate to stress once again that valuing solitude does not mean resenting company. As stated earlier, the moments of companionship should fuel the productivity that emerges during solitude: They should serve as eye-openers regarding issues of interest and as discourses on the art of interconnectedness.

For only when there is enough interconnectedness with other symbols of life, i.e., human beings, flora and fauna, etc., can we continue to learn. However, interconnectedness is fundamentally fed by inner-connectedness. There has to be a connection with the own spirit first: An acknowledgement that the foundation of all the important ingredients of wealth resides within. It is only when this realization is established within an individual that the endless ascent toward growing emotional intelligence can commence.

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