



Leading Through Change and Transition

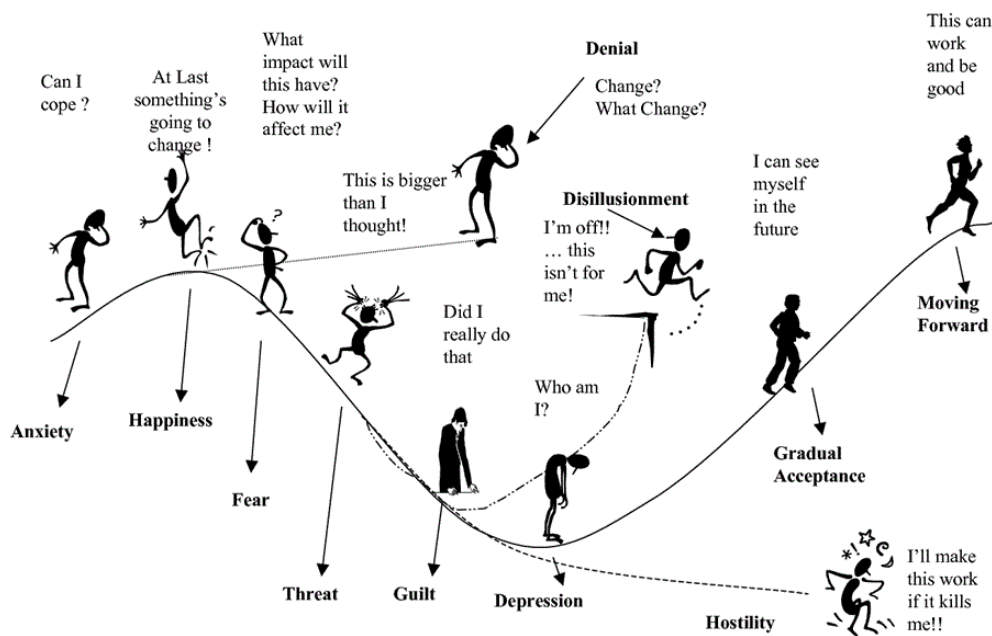
Change is: an event; situational; fast – think of change as something you can see happening, i.e. one day you are using X software program, the next you are using Y.

Transition is: a process; psychological & emotional; slow – think of transition as the result of a change, and something you experience rather than see, i.e. the experience people have as a result of the change to your software.

The important thing is to focus on both change and transition.¹

When we focus on change , we consider:	When we focus on transition , we consider:
Cost & Time Risk Policies Systems Procedures Processes	Beliefs Values Personal experience World View Culture Loss

The Process and Emotions of Transition



Graphic from J.M. Fisher ©2000. A free resource from www.businessballs.com.

This illustration helps us to remember all that can be happening below the surface for people and that there is a lot to process during a transition. When we are navigating a transition, such as **a return to work after being at home for more than a year!**, people are generally reacting *unconsciously* to things that aren't necessarily observable.

¹ Inspired by *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, by William and Susan Bridges

In fact, as William and Susan Bridges say, people don't fear change (we are actually wired for change), they fear **loss**. Trying to understand what people fear losing is a way that we can help support them through the changes that we are implementing (big or small). This happens through exploratory conversations geared to helping people surface what is happening unconsciously, through questions and acknowledgment first and solutions later.

The S.C.A.R.F. Model

The S.C.A.R.F. model was developed by Dr. David Rock, Director of the NeuroLeadership Institute. The model is based on neuroscience research that implies that these five social domains activate the same threat and reward responses in our brain that we rely on for physical survival. **And change definitely activates our threat responses!**

We have also added an element, the final "S" to represent the need to be seen, heard, appreciated, valued because we hear this need spoken to directly by the leaders and teams we coach. It is also a need supported by Donna Hick's work around dignity and Marshall B. Rosenberg's work around non-violent communication.

Status – Rank or importance relative to others – *I am valued!*

Certainty – Ability to predict the future – *I can plan!*

Autonomy – Exerting control over events – *I have a choice!*

Relatedness – Sense of connection or belonging – *I belong!*

Fairness – Sense of fair or just treatment – *I am treated with respect and integrity!*

Seen - Sense of being seen, heard, appreciated, valued - *I matter!*

Considering which of the five elements of S.C.A.R.F.S. might be at play for a person can help us understand people's reactions and underlying needs related to the change and transition.

PUTTING S.C.A.R.F.S. INTO PRACTICE

To put this into practice, listen for the need that might feel threatened by the change:

- *"I fear or dread the stress that comes with having to commute now - the time it adds to my day, taking away time from my family or the exercise routine I finally got established!" (loss of relatedness, autonomy)*
- *"While it will be great to see people and I've missed the informal interactions in the company kitchen, I also worry how I'll get my work done with all of the distractions."*
- *"Wait, what? That person just got back from vacation where? Did they wear a mask? Are they vaccinated? I just sat in a conference room with them for 2 hours." (loss of certainty, autonomy).*

It's important to note that change isn't likely to be a neat and linear process. You might have to have the same conversation multiple times or different conversations multiple times with the same person as they move through the transition associated with the change. It's also important to point to the separation of *acknowledging* and *solving* – we often go to solutions too fast, which can leave people feeling dismissed. As shown in the illustration above, people go up, down, and around a variety of emotions and reactions during the transition process.