

## Embracing change

It's all very well helping other people learn, but more challenging when we personally are the subject of the learning.

This happened when I added a new tool to the consulting/coaching toolkit. It's an Emotional Intelligence profile, and while the results of my own test were generally consistent with my self-image, they challenged me regarding my adaptability. I'd seen myself as highly flexible, but this profile said otherwise – while in the mid-range, I was less comfortable with change (and more ok with stability) than I'd believed.

Debriefing threw some light on this puzzle. The psychologist providing the product training suggested that many of us are comfortable with changes we initiate ourselves, but less so with changes initiated by others. I used this feedback to learn that I could 'loosen up' regarding imposed change.

Speaking of change, we've quickly moved on to an even more powerful Emotional Intelligence profile tool – the EQ-i 2.0. This is the one we will stick with. It provides a superb report, and as it's a work-based profile, it's valuable for a consultant and coach to organisations and individuals for development and recruitment purposes, as well as those going through change at work.

Change can bring up some pretty strong responses, challenge our views of ourselves, and take us out of our comfort zone. Of the two broad categories - change that's imposed on us, and change we initiate ourselves – it is imposed change that often calls on our deeper reserves. It demands an effective personal response. Within organisations, such changes can include downsizing, restructuring to meet market changes, and role changes or even terminations. It's important that such a change program is well designed and implemented to account for personal responses and to help people move through the change process.

Overall the changes we initiate ourselves are easier to handle, but even there we can run into the law of unintended consequences and find ourselves having to deal with surprises. We change employers – and it's out of the frying pan into the fire. We chase more seniority – and find that tough challenges go hand in hand with managing staff.

At work today the organisation that is not changing is losing ground. In the Silicon Valley, performance reviews are trending towards four times a year simply to keep up with the pace of role change. New products and services are disappearing before they even hit the shelves. Employers are looking at not just what you can do now, but at how well you can adapt to what their business might need to do next – and they don't even know what that is!

Both individuals and organisations can do 'change' better. How we manage and respond to change are the keys. Some insight into our own change-orientation is a good starting point.

When change is in the air, are you an early adapter, one of the majority...or a resister or laggard? Do you shut down, or get proactive? Low levels of adaptability are not inherently wrong – but they could indicate a need for more flexibility if we are to be comfortable and fully effective in a fast-changing environment.

A great little book by Spencer Johnson is useful. “Who moved my cheese?” is simple, yet full of insights on change and our personal responses.

You’re also welcome to contact us for access to the EQ-i 2.0 Emotional Intelligence profile, which tests not only adaptability but the whole range of our emotions and behaviours at work.

You’ll be amazed at the insights, whether you’re using it for recruiting, development or helping you or your staff operate more effectively in a changing world.

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