

# Introduction

Coping with change is one of the most important skills that any of us can hone. This book will help you to go even further. It will help you to embrace change. It will give you the power to change.

Change is tough. Most of us feel utterly powerless when confronted by it – especially big change that happens to us such as losing a job, becoming divorced or the death of a loved one. But we are not powerless. We can learn to turn situations to our own advantage. We all have the power to embrace the change and look for opportunities – we just need to be able to harness it.

Every one of us copes with small changes on a daily basis. We accept them, adapt and get on with our day. We have all dealt with myriad changes throughout our lives – some that have been thrust upon us and some we have chosen to instigate ourselves. When change is forced upon us, we can feel helpless, that we are not in control. But we are completely in control of one vital thing – how we choose to react to the change – and this choice can put us in the driver's seat. It can make all the difference.

Even change we bring about ourselves can be tough, as all change requires giving up something – even 'good' change. And there is always a little part of us that wants to cling on to those things we are letting go – to stick with the old mobile rather than jump into the world of the smartphone; to remain in the same team at work; to stay in the same neighborhood; to stay in a boring job or a loveless relationship because it's 'better the devil you know'.

This book is the result of almost 30 years of helping organizations and individuals lead change, cope with change and embrace change. It is the result of helping leaders question their strategy, clarify their strategy and align their organizations to deliver. It is the result of helping leadership teams to buy companies, merge companies and dispose of companies while looking after their people along the way. It is the result of reorganizing and restructuring organizations. It is the result of helping small- and medium-sized companies to grow. It is the result of transforming departments and helping leaders to transform their leadership teams.

It is the result of helping people to pause, reflect, embrace the new, seek out the opportunities – and thrive. It is the result of having experienced countless personal changes in my own life. Because change is inevitable.

Three of the key lessons I have learnt from all of this are:

- 1 All change is personal. Even the most significant corporate transformation is actually the culmination of myriad personal changes across the organization.
- 2 All change is emotional. We humans are emotional beings. When it comes to change, emotion trumps logic every single time.

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- 3 No-one embraces change simply because they are told to do so. We only change if and when we want to. (How many social workers does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but the light bulb has to want to change.)

My previous book on this fascinating topic, *The Change Catalyst: Secrets to successful and sustainable business change*, was awarded the title of 2018 Business Book of the Year. It is about leading change: a how-to manual for leaders to lead successful change. It explains in detail how successful organizational change is all about people:

Only your people can deliver your strategy. Only your people can deliver the change your business requires.

This book, *The Power to Change*, is for everyone. It is a guide to help you cope with personal change of all shapes and sizes – and ultimately to embrace change, harnessing it for your own benefit.

Part One explores our rapidly changing world. It discusses some of the key technological changes that are transforming the way we live and the

way we work. Neither will ever be the same again. We explore artificial intelligence (Terminator or Liberator?), the Internet of Things (IOT), 3-D printing, political change, social change, how human lifespans are increasing, climate change, Boyan Slat and the Millennials... the amount of change coming our way could either be seen as frightening or full of opportunity. It is entirely up to us.

Part Two explores the psychology of change, particularly the power of emotion and the pivotal role it plays in our decision-making and our ability to embrace change. I use the challenge of losing weight as an example of the battle between logic and emotion that rages within all of us between – and something that two-thirds of us in the West battle with to varying degrees.

Part Three is about the different types of change and our natural, instinctive reactions to them. You will be introduced to the Change Matrix and the Change Curves. I have included some rather frank and personal reflections of my journey through the ‘Burning Platform Change Curve’ (how we react to big change that is done to us) and detailed the fascinating and inspirational story of Dr Bronwyn King’s journey through the ‘Quantum Leap Change Curve’ (big change that we instigate ourselves) in her quest to convince the world’s largest pension funds and asset managers to stop investing in tobacco – a product that kills more people in a month than war, drugs, crime and guns combined in a year.

Part Four details the personal, and emotional obstacles to change that we place in our own path and, more importantly, discusses ways we can overcome them. I also explore the power of yoga to help with personal change – with assistance from my wife, Jane, who happens to be one of the most intuitive and empathetic yoga teachers you could ever have the fortune to meet.

Part Five expands upon this critical theme and explores additional strategies and tools you can put into practice to ‘Be your own change catalyst’. We explore the concept of resilience and ways to develop it, the importance of creating favourable conditions for change (featuring the childhood obesity charity HENRY), finding the help you need, helping others, developing your own personal SWOT and strategic plan, and treating yourself like a change project.

Then it is all summed up and tied into a neat bow in Part Six, ‘The secrets to embracing change’.

The book is designed to give us the power to change – to make the most of changes that are thrust upon us; and to seek out and embrace change that will help us grow and improve our lives for the better.

I hope it does precisely this for you and that you enjoy your immersion in *The Power to Change*.

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