

Members Quarterly

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President's Message

Dealing with Change: Star Trek's Borg were Right

Resistance is futile



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President

I am not a great believer in cosmic energy or the flow of the universe but I do recognize and respect the laws of nature. It's pretty hard to ignore gravity, especially as you get older and everything starts shifting downward. I do believe in Murphy's Law that whatever can go

wrong will go wrong. Eventually - it's just a matter of time. But I have also come to believe another axiom, especially at work, that change is inevitable. The only choice I have is whether to accept the change or offer up resistance.

Whenever I think about that resistance, I think about Confucius who said: "Only the wisest and stupidest of men never change." I also think about a wise sage from a space-themed movie who said "resistance is futile."

So there you have it. It is both foolish and futile to resist the inevitable change that has happened or is just about to occur. Why then do we persist in - resisting change, especially at work? Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a respected business author and professor at the Harvard Business School, cites 10 reasons why we resist change in her blog. See how many you can relate to:

Loss of control: We might lose autonomy control over territory.

Excess uncertainty: We'd rather be miserable than jump off a cliff.

Surprise, surprise: We don't have time to get ready.

Everything seems different: We are creatures of habit.

Loss of face: If we were responsible for the old ways, we feel like we've lost.

Concerns about competence: Will I look foolish?

More work: Who really wants more work?

Ripple effects: It might disrupt other relationships.

Past resentments: We're not over the last change yet.

Sometimes the threat is real: Like going to the dentist-this may hurt. No, it will definitely hurt.

I can certainly see myself in many of these concerns, real or imagined, when it comes to resisting change. But if the change is coming, which it almost always is, I must then find a way to overcome these fears in order to make a safe transition to the other side. It is never easy but it is always worth the effort. The alternative is just more pain.

How do you folks deal with resistance to change? Do any of these reasons resonate for you? How do you help your subordinates and co-workers navigate these difficult change waters? We'd love to hear from you.