



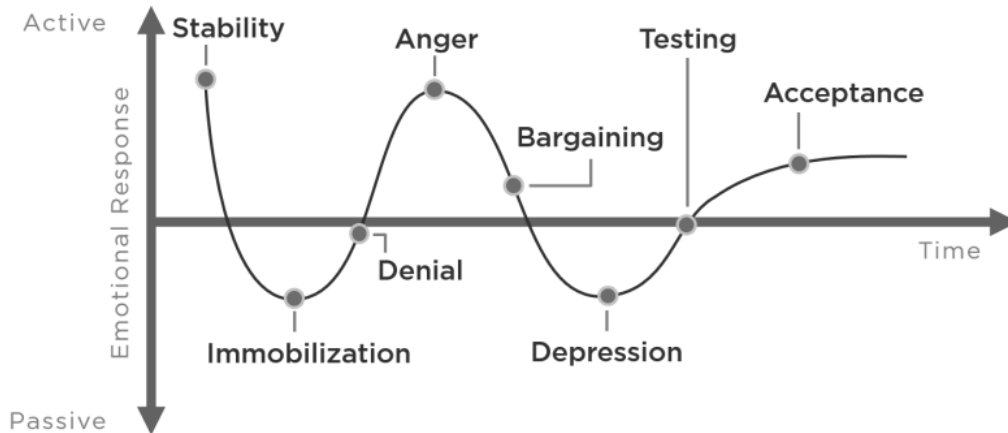
*Making the very complex...**awesomely simple***

Change and Resilience

Change and Resilience

The Human Side of Change

Change rarely moves in a straight line. The Kübler-Ross Change Curve helps explain how people react emotionally when faced with disruption. This version shows the ups and downs we all experience as we move from stability through uncertainty toward acceptance and new beginnings.



The Change Curve

Stability → Immobilization → Denial → Anger → Bargaining → Depression → Testing → Acceptance

Each point represents a common stage in the emotional journey of change. Some people move through these stages quickly, while others take more time. The process is not linear. People can move forward and then slip back, especially when new challenges appear. Someone may reach the testing stage, feel encouraged by progress, and then return to frustration or anger when the new way of working becomes difficult again. Your role as a leader is to recognize these shifts, remain steady, and guide people with empathy, patience, and clarity.

Stability

Life feels predictable and routines are intact. People are comfortable with how things work and may be unaware that change is coming.

How to Lead in This Stage

Communicate early and often. Begin creating awareness that change is coming and explain why it is necessary. The goal is not to create alarm but to prepare people mentally so they are not caught off guard when disruption begins.

Immobilization

The first reaction to major change is often shock or disbelief. People freeze while trying to process what is happening. Productivity may drop as uncertainty takes over.

How to Lead in This Stage

Provide calm reassurance and facts. Keep messages short, simple, and consistent. Avoid overloading people with information. Make yourself visible and available, even if you do not yet have all the answers. People need to see steady leadership more than polished plans.



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Denial

People may dismiss the change or insist that it will not affect them. They cling to familiar routines and avoid acknowledging what is coming.

How to Lead in This Stage

Focus on clarity and transparency. Continue explaining the reasons for change and the risks of standing still. Ask questions that invite reflection: “What would happen if we did nothing?” Support them in seeing that the old way is no longer sustainable.

Anger

Frustration grows as the reality of change sets in and control feels lost. Leaders may see pushback, cynicism, or emotional outbursts.

How to Lead in This Stage

Listen first, respond second. Allow people to express concerns without judgment. Acknowledge emotions rather than trying to shut them down. Reinforce that anger is a normal response and redirect energy toward problem-solving. Consistency and empathy build trust in this phase.

Bargaining

People begin searching for ways to avoid or minimize the change. They may propose compromises or temporary fixes that delay full implementation.

How to Lead in This Stage

Respect their input, but stay focused on the end goal. Acknowledge that the search for alternatives is a sign of engagement, not resistance. Clarify what is flexible and what is not. Keep reinforcing the purpose and long-term benefit of the change.

Depression

Energy drops and motivation fades as uncertainty feels overwhelming. Productivity often slows, and people may feel disconnected or discouraged.

How to Lead in This Stage

Rebuild confidence through small wins. Celebrate progress, however modest. Check in personally with individuals who seem disengaged. Offer encouragement and remind people of the meaning behind their work. Keep communication hopeful but grounded in reality.

Testing

Gradually, people start to experiment and look for new ways forward. Small successes begin to restore optimism and control.

How to Lead in This Stage

Encourage experimentation and recognize effort, not just results. Create a safe environment for learning and making mistakes. Reinforce that progress is more important than perfection. Keep sharing stories of what is working.

Acceptance

Confidence returns as people integrate the change and find a new sense of stability. The new way of working becomes normal again.

How to Lead in This Stage

Solidify new habits and routines. Recognize those who have modeled adaptability and helped others through the process. Reflect on lessons learned and communicate what has been gained through the change. Begin linking this new stability to future growth.

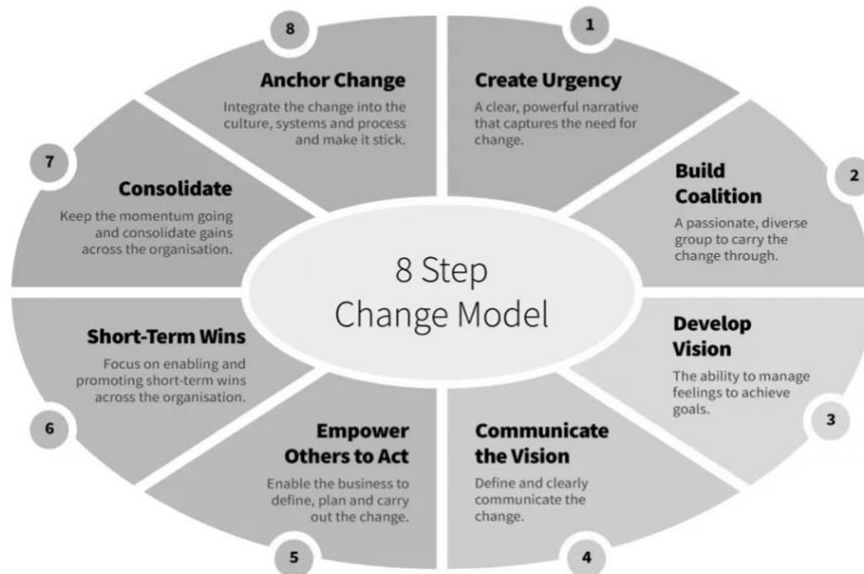


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Leading Change Effectively

Managing change requires more than communication and goodwill. It requires structure. John Kotter's 8-Step Change Model provides a clear roadmap for leading change strategically and ensuring that improvements last. Each step builds on the one before it. Skipping steps often leads to failure or loss of momentum later in the process.

Kotter's 8 Step Change Model



1. Create Urgency

Help people see why the change matters now. Without a shared sense of urgency, people drift toward comfort and old habits. Use data, stories, or external pressures to show why change is essential and time-sensitive. The goal is not panic but focus and commitment.

2. Build a Guiding Coalition

Form a small, credible group of people with influence and trust across departments. Include diverse perspectives so the coalition reflects the larger organization. This group models commitment, keeps energy high, and helps manage resistance during the transition.

3. Develop Vision and Strategy

Clarify the future you are trying to create and the key actions that will get you there. A clear vision gives people a picture of success they can believe in. Without it, change feels like chaos. Keep the message simple, specific, and connected to organizational purpose.

4. Communicate the Vision

Share the vision early, often, and through many channels. Explain it in plain language. Repeat it until everyone understands both what is changing and why. Communicate with optimism and honesty, and listen carefully to feedback. Consistency builds credibility.



5. Empower Others to Act

Remove the barriers that make change harder than it needs to be. This might mean updating systems, reallocating resources, or confronting behaviors that slow progress. Empowerment happens when people have both permission and support to take action.

6. Generate Short-Term Wins

Create visible, meaningful early successes. These wins show that progress is possible and worth the effort. Celebrate them publicly. Recognizing small victories builds confidence, reinforces the vision, and gives the team energy for the next stage.

7. Consolidate and Sustain Acceleration

After the first wins, it is tempting to declare victory. Do not. Keep pushing forward. Use momentum from early success to tackle bigger challenges. Reinforce what is working and continue communicating progress to prevent regression into old habits.

8. Anchor Change in the Culture

Integrate the new approach into the daily fabric of the organization. Embed it in hiring, training, performance reviews, and leadership behaviors. When people describe how things are done, the new approach should be part of that story. Sustained change only lasts when it becomes part of culture.

Change often fails not in design but in reinforcement. Many leaders do an excellent job of planning and launching new initiatives, but fail to sustain them. The hard work begins after the announcement, when attention shifts elsewhere. Real success comes when the new way of working becomes the natural way of working.

Group Workshop: Best Practices for Leading Change

Every organization approaches change differently. Some have developed practices that make transitions smoother, faster, and more sustainable.

At your tables, share examples of what your organization has done well when leading a major change. Discuss the actions, habits, or leadership behaviors that made those efforts successful.

Use these questions to guide your discussion:

- What specific steps or strategies helped your organization move through change effectively?
- How did leaders create momentum, alignment, or trust during the process?
- What can others learn from these experiences?

As a group, identify one or two best practices you believe others could benefit from hearing.

Each table should select one person to present those best practices during the group report-out. The goal is to gather practical ideas that can help every organization in the room lead change more effectively.

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RESILIENCE

Building Personal Resilience

Resilience is not a personality trait. It is a skill, a set of behaviors, habits, and perspectives that can be developed over time. It is the ability to recover quickly from challenges, adapt under pressure, and keep moving forward with clarity and purpose. Strong leaders understand that resilience is not about being tough or emotionless. It is about staying steady and grounded, even when circumstances are uncertain or difficult.

Resilient people understand that setbacks are part of the process. They maintain perspective, focus on what they can control, and view change as an opportunity to learn and improve. The same qualities that make individuals resilient also make organizations strong. Resilient organizations are built by resilient people.

1. Recognizing and Rewriting Negative Self-Talk

Everyone has an inner voice that interprets events and influences emotion. During times of stress, that inner voice can become critical or pessimistic. This negative self-talk often exaggerates failure and minimizes progress, creating unnecessary anxiety.

Leaders who build resilience learn to recognize when their inner dialogue turns unhelpful and to replace distorted thoughts with balanced ones.

Instead of “This is never going to work,” reframe it as “This is challenging, but we are making progress.”

Instead of “I can’t handle this,” reframe it as “I have handled difficult things before, and I can do it again.”

2. The Power of Explanatory Style

Psychologist Martin Seligman’s research found that the difference between pessimism and optimism often comes down to how we explain events to ourselves.

A pessimist sees setbacks as permanent, pervasive, and personal.

A realist or optimist sees them as temporary, specific, and external.

When something goes wrong, pause and ask:

Is this problem really permanent, or is it short-term?

Does it affect everything, or just one area?

Is it entirely my fault, or are other factors involved?

How we explain events shapes how we feel and act. Leaders who reframe difficulties as temporary and solvable bounce back faster and help their teams stay positive and focused.

3. Cultivating a Belief in Your Ability to Cope

Resilient leaders believe they can handle what comes their way. That belief does not mean overconfidence. It means remembering that you have overcome challenges before.

When facing stress or change, remind yourself of past moments when you adapted, learned, or succeeded under pressure. Reflecting on those experiences strengthens self-trust and reduces anxiety.



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Reflection

What is one significant challenge you have faced in your career or life? What helped you get through it?
What did you learn about yourself that you can carry forward into future challenges?



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4. Reframing Setbacks as Opportunities for Growth

Resilient leaders do not avoid failure. They learn from it. A setback can be a powerful teacher when we ask the right questions: What did I learn? What would I do differently next time? How will this experience make me stronger?

This mindset aligns with what psychologist Carol Dweck calls a growth mindset, the belief that skills and abilities can be developed through effort, learning, and persistence. Leaders with a growth mindset embrace feedback, value learning, and view mistakes as part of progress.

Reflection

All of us have faced moments that felt like failure at the time but later became important turning points in our lives. Think about one of those experiences in your own life. How did it change you for the better? What strengths, insights, or opportunities came from that situation that helped shape the leader you have become?



5. Focusing on What You Can Control, Influence, or Release

When everything feels uncertain, focusing on what you can control brings calm and clarity. Draw three circles labeled “Control,” “Influence,” and “Release.”

In the first circle, list things you can directly control, such as your attitude, preparation, and behavior. In the second, list things you can influence, such as your team’s morale or a decision that is still being shaped.

In the third, list what you cannot control and need to release, such as market forces, regulatory changes, or other people’s opinions.

Leaders who invest energy in the first two circles and learn to release what they cannot control conserve energy and stay focused on what matters most.

6. Strengthening Relationships

The longest-running study on adult development at Harvard found that strong, supportive relationships are the greatest predictor of happiness, health, and resilience. Relationships act as emotional shock absorbers. They help us process stress, gain perspective, and recover more quickly from adversity.

Leaders who intentionally build and maintain positive connections create support networks that sustain both themselves and their teams. Relationships with colleagues, mentors, friends, and family provide the encouragement and perspective we need to stay grounded.

Reflection

Make a list of the people that you would truly trust your life to.



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