

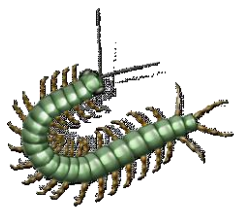
CHANGE

(You, the Centipede and the Bungy Jump)



By Ester Kruger
Bioss Southern Africa 2009

Change... What can I say that has not been said before? We all know the clichés – change is the only constant, change happens etc. Theoretically, we all understand and accept these things as part of our lives, whether personal or professional. Isn't it strange then, that when we stand in the midst of it, it is often very difficult to have the right answers, or even understand the problem? Maybe the following quote captures what we sometimes feel:



*"A centipede was happy quite, until a toad in fun
Said, 'Pray, which leg comes after which?'
This raised her mind to such a pitch,
She fell distracted in the ditch,
Considering how to run."*

~ Anonymous ~

The point is that knowing and understanding is often not enough, in fact, our thinking ability can often be the exact reason we fall over our own feet. In terms of the subject of this article, no one is exempt from being affected by change, no matter how "strong" your brain. The reason for this is because of our basic "programming". Whether you believe in Darwin or not, it cannot be denied that **survival** is a fundamental "software programme" that drives most behaviour - even a virus, which is not even a living thing, is built with one aim - **SURVIVAL**. The most basic cell in living things wants to survive, and if that is what every cell in our body wants to do, how can this not be one of the most basic fundamentals in human behaviour.

The basic emotion that drives survival is the fact that we have to fear some things that are a threat. In response to a threat, whether real or perceived, the fight or flight instinct is triggered. We are no longer living in caves, or in the bush, but this basic "software programme" is still ingrained in every fibre of our being. Fight or flight in the organisational domain, is explained as resistance, whether open resistance or disengagement. Both of these can be very detrimental to an organisation that depends on the productivity of its employees to survive and thrive.



In our respective organizations we all realize that we are not unique in the changes we are experiencing, whether originating from the Global Context, the South African environment, our clients or the people within. Managing change successfully or even generating the change ourselves is largely dependent on the change **resilience** of the people within the organization. Resilience implies, how we stretch ourselves without breaking, and how do we come back after being stretched ready for more stretch... It is like bracing yourself for a bungee jump the first time, and loving it the second time, then, getting addicted to it from the third time.

Because we don't really suggest that you go bungy jumping to develop change resilience, the following are a few hints, tips and smart advice in order to improve your own resilience or stretch ability:

- ❖ **Be a Detective.** As difficult situations arise, immediately pinpoint at least one facet of the situation you can influence, if not control.
- ❖ **Be a Lawyer.** Silently or vocally question people who say, "Well, there's nothing we can do about it." Find specific ways to prove them wrong. Prove your case with real evidence.
- ❖ **Be a Judge.** If you feel you lack control over a given situation, try to be impartial in your assessment. Base your judgment only on facts.
- ❖ **Be a Pioneer.** Be the first to take ownership of difficult situations, whether or not you were the cause. Pick your moment and step into the wilderness of responsibility by declaring your accountability and intended action.
- ❖ **Be an Opportunist.** Ask yourself what will definitely happen as a result of a given situation within the next 24 to 48 hours. Pick those outcomes for which you feel most compelled to take ownership and action.
- ❖ **Be a Fire Fighter.** When adversity strikes, immediately contain the blaze by acting with urgency to prevent it from affecting other areas of your life. Hose down emotional brushfires as they pop up.
- ❖ **Be a Surgeon.** As difficulties arise, prevent them from bleeding into other areas of your business, relationships, and life by surgically clamping the damaged artery and operating on or even removing damaged tissue.
- ❖ **Be a Visionary.** No matter how severe a setback may be, imagine life after it has passed. Force yourself to rise above and see beyond the adversity. Paint a mental picture of how life is different now that adversity is history.
- ❖ **Be an Accountant.** Create a balance sheet, indicating on one side the likely result of adversity over which you have no control, feel no ownership, and which is far-reaching and long-lasting. On the other side, put the implications of adversity over which you feel a certain amount of control, strong ownership, and which you see as limited and short-lived. Apply your analysis to the situation at hand or as difficulties arise.
- ❖ **Be a Catalyst.** Take even the smallest constructive action to regain control, to take ownership, or to limit the reach or endurance of the adversity, and you will immediately begin to see it shrink.

*"What is the most rigorous law of our being?
Growth. No smallest atom of our moral, mental
or physical structure can stand still a year.
It must grow; nothing can prevent it."
~ Mark Twain ~*

Bioss SA offers a comprehensive Change Management Skills Training program, designed and researched by Ester Kruger. The course encompasses the following:

- Stable Program Design – consistent throughout the Organization
- Buy-in and support from the "critical mass"
- Building Change resilience into organizations and individuals for any and all circumstances, as a standard business tool, to counter potential pitfalls of unplanned change
- Empowered and skilled Line and Professional support staff to comfortably manage planned and unplanned change processes

- Enables staff to drive departmental change initiatives from within the business
- Enables Leaders to drive planned and unplanned change across divisions, ensuring efficiency
- Guide everyone faced with generating or responding to change

Training outcomes include:

- Change generated from Board level with an implementation program for consistency
- Leaders at all levels in the organization must be sensitive to daily changes and adjust their work flow planning accordingly, without disrupting performance of teams and individuals.

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