Change

Learn to love it, learn to lead it

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Executive Book Summary

Inside this issue:

Introduction	1
About the Book	1
Explore Change	2
Refresh Change	2
Believe Change	3
Question Change	4
Visualize Change	5
Share Change	6
Develop Change	7
Choose Change	8
Lead Change	9
Transmit Change	10
About the Author	11
Critical Review	11

Introduction/Book Summary

Sir Alex Ferguson said that, "to be successful, you have to be able to adapt to change", yet the word change itself evokes fear in so many people. What is it about the concept of change that makes people uneasy and, perhaps even more importantly, is there something we can do to overcome that fear? Change is increasing exponentially. Technology is a great example of the rapid change that is occurring. In order to be successful and productive we must shift our thinking about change and learn to embrace it. We must also learn to make sure that change is meaningful, authentic and properly executed with the right people in the right place at the right time.

Fear of change makes it difficult to thrive. Overcoming the fear is a necessity for fulfillment, happiness and wellbeing.

About the Book

Richard Gerver, in his book Change, outlines 10 change elements; explore, refresh believe, question, visualize, share, develop, choose, lead and transmit. In each chapter he focuses on why the element is important in creating a change culture as well as his personal experience with each. Each element offers a piece of the change puzzle and helps to make sense of the process. Change is not quick and easy. It requires reflection, time, confidence and clear communication. Leading change is not for the weak at heart but, when change is authentic it is worth the effort.

Explore

"The trick is to go right back to the beginning" (p 8). Babies have the ability to cope with a constant state of change. Every day they are introduced to hundreds of new sounds, tastes and experiences and they learn to adapt very quickly which raises the question, "why do we lose that ability?" The education system interferes with the natural learning process by putting parameters on the learning of children. The definition of change itself shifts from a natural occurrence to a force that is out of our control. Perhaps it is in that loss of control that we start to build a resistance and fear to change.

Richard's reflection on his own educational journey has helped him to recognize the importance of creating school environments that are creative and flexible so that all students can be successful. When he froze on stage during his singing solo he didn't run and hide, he actually became more excited about the possibility of performing and started to pursue this new interest, a true testament to his resilience. He learned that he loved adventure and going new places.

Dreamstime.com

Challenge for Change #1

Turn off the satellite navigation system.

When you reach a crossroads do you always go where your sat nav takes you? Take a chance and ask yourself, "where else could I go." (p 17)

Your Change App

Explore

-Learn to question your responses to change.

-Explore what unsettles you.

-Face your fears.

-Ask for support.

-Offer the same support for others.

-Remind yourself what it was like to be a child. (p 29)

Refresh

People are surrounded by change in every aspect of their lives, jobs, health, personalizes, in fact the world has become increasingly more uncertain and unstable. Change itself is exciting and it is human nature to want to explore, yet so many don't embrace it and rather see it as something to worry about or to fear. It is in those times of uncertainty that we tend want to just curl up and surround ourselves with things that bring us comfort. "It is a natural reaction, born out of the instinct to be nurtured and protected" (p 36). Being nostalgic is appealing because it is safe and comforting but it is important not to dwell in the past. It is imperative to recognize that change is not longer an option but a regular part of our lives.

Your Change App

Refresh

-What can you change to challenge yourself and others?

-When you feel comfortable, do something about it.

-Take "snapshots" of moments worth celebrating.

-Become your own action researcher.

-Delete stale applications from your personal mindset and download new ones. (p 54)

SMART

In the mid-1990s performance management systems introduced SMART targets.

S—Specific

M—Measurable

A—Achievable

R—Realistic

T—Timed

Although SMART can be a powerful tool, it has limitations for evolution if used in isolation. Targets should be used as a tool in a system that encompasses much more. (p 41)

Challenge for Change #2

Build change into the our organizations and culture. (p 43)

"Fear of Change is so often the result of imagined consequences rather than reality" (p 8).

Richard Gerver

Believe

Education can set limits on people's dreams and goals as well as artificially building up their self esteem. When there are too many constraints, and rules there is little room to question and investigate. These constraints limit creativity and inquiry which we know are innate attributes in human beings right from birth.

"Too often targets are set as a measure of expected performance, not as a tool to encourage extraordinary

development" (p 59).

Asking questions and inviting debates will help to break this cycle but too many of our meetings are simply data-driven which often end up with some new initiative. The confusion between vision and strategy adds to the implementation of systems that get layered on top of one another leading to increased pressure and decreased job satisfaction. In order to break the pattern a new way of thinking is imperative.

Challenge for Change #3

Look to develop traits of greatness within ourselves, our people and our organizations. (p 62)

Sybervision's Ten common Traits of Truly Great People

- **Focus**
- **Preparedness**
- **Creativity**
- **Curiosity**
- **Resilience**
- **Risk-Taking**
- **Independence**
- **A Sense of Higher Purpose**

(p 61)

Change App

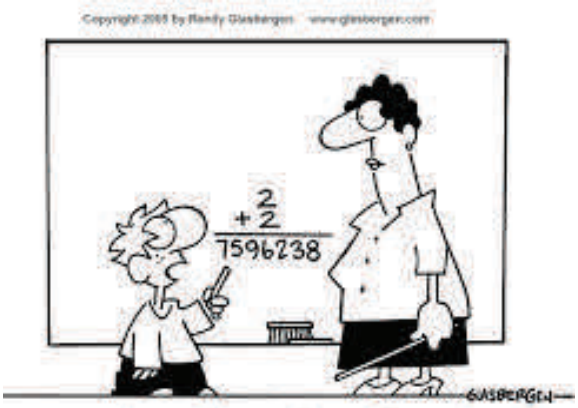
Believe

- If you were a brand what would you be and what would you change?
- Challenge your own actions and thinking.
- If you are leading create the route that matters to them. (p 76)

"When you create change, you can be wrong, but always believe that you are doing it for the right reasons" (p 56). Richard Gerver

Question Change

Richard Gerver's first opportunity to put into practice all of his great ideas was when he became head teacher of Grange School.. He had told the chair of the board of governors that he imagined his school would be "Like a Disneyland of learning." It was within those walls that he began to see his vision unfold and learned the value in questioning best practice and vision. He came up with four concepts to help link content with disciplines that made sense to kids; communication, enterprise, culture and well-being. He also defined who he was as a teacher with a central message: living, learning and laughing. And he made it clear to the teachers that he wanted to feel that message when he walked through the halls of the school.



"In an increasingly complex world, sometimes old questions require new answers."

Glasbergen.com

Challenge for Change #4

Use open-ended questions, they are powerful tools for encouraging discussion and debate. (p 95)

Transactional vrs Transformational Leader

Professor Bernard Bass of the university of New York identified two types of leaders, transactional and transformational. (p 91-92)

Transactional Leaders:

Exchanges rewards for effort.

Watches for broken rules and takes action to correct them.

Intervenes only if standards aren't met.

Avoids making decisions.

Transformational Leaders:

Provide vision and gain respect and trust.

Communicate high expectations

Promote intelligence and careful problem solving.

Treats employees individually, coaches and advises.

Chef Ferran Adria was founder of El Bulli restaurant. He shut it down at the height of its success because he wanted to explore his culinary art. He opened a center which brought together chefs, scientists and experts from different backgrounds. Together, they attempted to answer open-ended questions that allowed for creativity, innovation, trust and respect among the employees.

Change App

Question

-Ask yourself the questions a child might ask

-Question yourself regularly

-Transform your daily activity, don't just dream it.

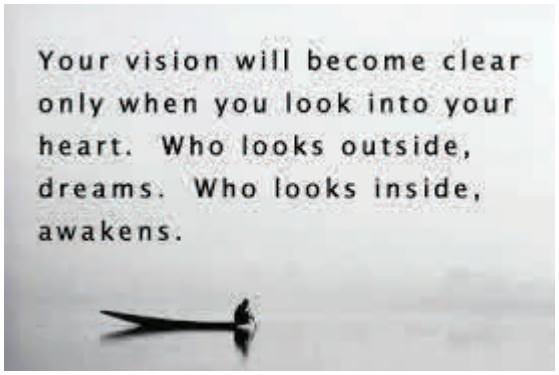
-Make a list of your interests and look at how you can add them into all areas of your life. (p 99)

Visualize Change

Gerver stated that vision is not something that can be easily designed at a boardroom table or found in a self help manual; it needs to come from within. An authentic vision is born from a belief. He further maintained that it is often a nagging that you feel you have to act upon.

"Vision is not something that can break through when you are busy doing what you have always done" (p107).

It is a active process where you question, explore, believe and refresh your way of thinking. New ways of thinking and true reflection help to clearly define one's vision. Communication of that vision and action are the next steps to successfully fulfilling the vision.



Konrad.soup.io

Nuture, Provoke

Communication of the vision to stake holders can be the hardest part. The vision is clear in the leader's mind and it is born out of passion and belief therefore we are motivated to move forward. However, vision needs to be nurtured and others need time to see the same thing that the leaders see. Here are some key points to consider when communicating your vision:

- Communicating a vision must not start with your response but with what started you on the journey.
- A vision cannot be reactive; it must be proactive.
- Start with presenting to a group but remember that real impact can only happen through personal contact and individual nurturing.

Gallerhip.com

Three Stage Method for Measuring Success in Vision Communication

1. Have I communicated effectively?
2. Do others feel ready to take responsibility for the action that needs to follow?
3. Am I seeing the impact in the realization of my vision?

Challenge for Change #5

Figure out how you can sell your vision to others.
(p 108)

Change App

Visualize

-Take an issue you are passionate about to convince someone of your postion or direction

-Work on the four levers by Dr. Lickerman

-Apply the three stage process of holding your own leadership (p 121)

Dr. Alex Lickerman's reminders when faced with something new:

1. Trying something new requires courage.
2. Trying something new opens up the possibility of enjoying something new.
3. Trying something new keeps you from boredom.
4. Trying something new forces you to grow. (p 121)

Share Change

"Unity is strength...When there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved." Mattie Stepanek

We overcome isolation by seeking out others with similar problems or struggles. This contact is a vital part of our wellbeing. If a person feels too much stress they will often retreat into isolation. That stress lowers motivation and creativity, key elements in success. Collaboration and communication are skills that we must nourish in order to overcome the feelings of isolation.

As humans we tend to surround ourselves with like minded people, teachers socialize with teachers, doctors with doctors etc. That is in part by design of where we work and who we see, but expanding your social network to include a variety of people allows for greater growth. Those people may have an entirely new perspective as an outsider.

Signs of resistance to new experiences:

1. General apprehension/anxiety when something new is suggested.
2. Bodily sensations of tension/rigidity when in a novel situation.
3. Attempts to self-medicate high levels of arousal/anxiety with drugs/ alcohol.
4. Tendency to complain along the way during new activities/experiences.
5. Choosing to focus on the negatives of the new experience, rather than the positives. (p 138)

Your Change App

Share

-Trust your gut instinct when building networks.

-Get out there and meet people.

-View other peoples experiences through your own lens.

-Make an effort to get to know people you are threatened by or are opposite of you. (p 146)

Challenge for Change #6

What professional development would you put in place to harness the power of the people around you? (p 140)

Develop Change

Interestingly many of the traits of truly great people describe the behaviour of a child. The idea that we can learn from looking back and remembering what we were like as children is a reoccurring theme in the book. Gerver's belief that we are more apt to change and less frightened by the unknown when we are young is often the jumping off point for many other areas of thought. In this chapter he talked further about four traits of great people; focus, preparedness, conviction and creativity. Ultimately, as leaders, we need to find ways to foster the creativity in the people around us. In listening and giving them opportunities to do what they are passionate about we are opening up a world of innovation and engagement for both the teachers and the students.

Your Change App

Develop

-Aim to find a sense of purpose.

-Develop the ability to assess yourself.

-Think about how you can move forward.

-Ask yourself how you can enable your own journey from focus to resilience.

-Provide opportunities for people to step outside their daily routine.

-Find your own personal hero whose journey inspires you. (p 172)

Challenge for Change #7

How do we actively develop people's ability to be creative and curious? (p 164)

Maryvillepawprint.com

Choose Change

Change can happen when you least expect it. For Richard Gerver, change presented itself out of a chance encounter with Sir Ken Robinson. Happenstance had them at the same conference. Richard was giving a session to a group and Ken came in to listen. They quickly learned they were kindred speakers because Richard was putting into practice everything that Sir Ken had been researching and speaking about for years. It was out of this friendship that Richard expanded his social network to include people outside of the teaching profession that he received an ear as well as advice from his new friend. Perhaps the most profound advice was about a change in careers that was presenting itself to Richard. It was a scary change as he would be giving up a stable career he loved for a career he knew little about. Going from a head teacher to a motivational speaker and writer was a big leap. Ultimately it was Richard who had to choose to make the change, to take the step but his support network helped him think through the process and make the most informed decision he could.

"Be prepared to take the plunge—and find somebody to help give you a timely push" (p 174).

Challenge for Change #8

Find the confidence to respond to your own needs and instincts. (p 183)

Your Change App

Choose

-Monitor yourself closely.

-Allow yourself to be selfish

-Find a mentor

-When you are ready to jump, do it with conviction.

-Accept that sometimes things go wrong. (p 194)

Stampingwithjudy.com

Lead Change

Gerver outlined a few areas that needed to be addressed when leading change.

As we get older we consider play to be something we do during our leisure time. But play is important in our schools at all levels. It allows children to be "in charge" and helps them to explore and learn. It builds self-esteem, social skills and a space to work out their feelings. We must change the way that we think about play and focus on the benefits such as increased curiosity, creativity and innovation.

Everyone thrives under different parameters. We need to respect the individuals performance indicators.

Visualization is personal and private but allows for reflection and clarification. It is about self and wellness, important aspect to a strong staff.

Correct behavior is expected of staff and needs to be enforced. Building trust, respect and open communication helps to make this process easier.

Challenge for Change #9

Ask yourself three questions:

1. How well do you know yourself?
2. How well do you know those people you are leading?
3. How sympathetic and skilled are you in helping them to develop their personal awareness. (p 209)

"Our ability to change, to lead change and to love change is entirely dependent on the way we behave and the conditions our behaviour creates around us" (p 197).

Three important aspects of leading:

Self-efficacy—the ability to complete tasks and reach goals, independently. Leaders need to build this in staff. It is an easy thing to undermine and hard to build back up.

Multi-tasking—the skill comes in connecting the vision and the next chapter while controlling the desire to move on.

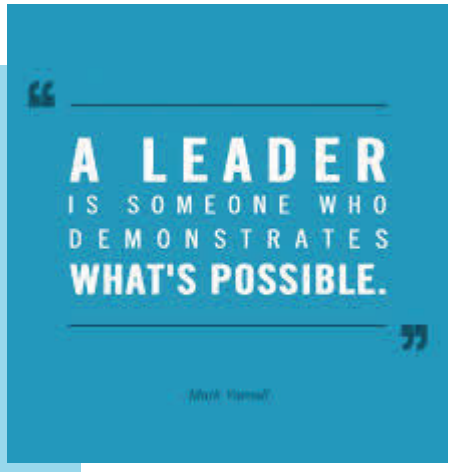
Networking—the process of creating relationships that offer a variety of support through many different threads. This can include face to face meetings through volunteering or social media.

Your Change App

Lead

-Six principles that define key strategies that ensure healthy, sustainable culture of change:

1. Lead by example, take risks and demonstrate that it's all right to fail
2. Encourage the people around you to try new things and take risks.
3. Encourage creativity and allow others to challenge the status quo.
4. Do not discount new ideas.
5. Recognize and reward best efforts, even if they fail.
6. Debrief and evaluate results. (p 212)



Crunchmodo.com

Transmit Change

"Capacity for change can only accurately be measured through the legacy, the quality of the continued journey. A change culture that is mature, confident and resilient is one that requires little formal intervention or stimulation" (p 217). However, these legacy systems, left unchecked, can crash the entire network. Sustainable change culture is a continuous way of thinking and it will not happen overnight.

"If you have embraced the nature of change and mastered the process of change, then it should happen imperceptibly, like the daily growth of a child" (214).

Challenge for Change #10

The legacy you leave is not going to be easy to see, because if you have led the right way and taken change to the heart of people's thinking and behaviour, then it will be the people you have touched and left behind who will, in their own way, be a testament to your legacy. (p 226)

Your Final Change App

Never stop exploring, challenging, hypothesizing, experimenting and learning. Remember: it is those people who are open-ended and curious who love and lead change best. (p 235)

About the Author

Richard Gerver successfully transformed Grange School as Head Teacher. He is a man of vision and passion and he used his skills to implement authentic change. His philosophy is based on three core principals, communication, empowerment and impact. He is a celebrated speaker who left his 20 year career in education to "explore the links between great leadership, human potential, change and innovation" (http://www.richardgerver.com/#!about/c1enr).

Change:
Learn to love it, learn to lead it

"Organizations need to remember that systems and structures change nothing, people do and that to ensure that we get the best from those we work with, lead and serve, we must be committed to developing the communication, understanding and actions that lead to a culture of empowerment resulting in a long term demonstrable impact" (http://www.richardgerver.com/#!about/c1enr).

RICHARDGERVER.COM

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snOjWbllgVE

Richard Gerver captured my interest right from the very first words of his book. His anecdotal accounts of his journey were riveting and kept my attention. All change can be difficult but Gerver's message of a new way of thinking about change echoed throughout the book. If we fear it, it will become something that is out of our control and a negative aspect of our lives. If we learn to see change as exciting, necessary and positive we will be able to accept change and, perhaps, even seek it out.

Gerver is a living testament to what can happen if you choose change. His experiences and insight help to bring clarity to issues in leading change and helps understand the importance of accepting change and challenging ourselves to find new experiences.

This book is easy to read, insightful and practical. This book filled me with moments of great clarity but perhaps the most profound, for me, was that; systems and policies that you changed may not remain but it will be the people you left behind that will be the true testament to your legacy.

Gerver, R., (2013). Change: learn to love it, learn to lead it. London, England: Penguin Books.