



Reacting to Change

Learning objective: This team-building activity can help develop awareness of how we react to change.

Time required: About 30 minutes, depending on group size.

Instructions:

Prior to the meeting, you may wish to personally review a change process/cycle model, to be familiar with basic steps and issues at each stage. An example is the [SlideShare of William Bridges': Managing Transition](#).

Do not share in advance what this activity is about. At the meeting, once everyone has taken their seats, ask team members to get up and change chairs. Don't look them in the eye or give any explanation. If they ask, just say they must move to any seat but the one they were in, and they should take their things with them.

Once everyone is re-seated, ask for volunteers to share what they felt or experienced during or after the request to change seats.

Suggested Wording:

I want you to think about what you thought or felt when you were just forced to change chairs. Having change thrust upon us with little or no explanation can be stressful. We may feel resentment, annoyance or something else.

Okay, let's go around the room and each person share what they experienced when forced to change without knowing why.

Instructions:

You could link what the group shares to the various steps in William Bridges' change process/cycle model.

The purpose of this activity is to convey ideas to help team members manage change in the workplace. These may include the notions that:

- *Change is rarely straightforward. It is often complex and messy.*
- *Change can take time, and patience is important.*
- *Change can cause anxiety. It's important to share and demonstrate an understanding of our fears and concerns, to help reduce this anxiety.*
- *Sometimes it can be helpful to explore possibilities and take reasonable risks.*
- *We do not all react the same way to change.*

Suggested wording:

There are two things to consider here – we need to do our best to prepare people for change and explain the purpose of the change. The other is that we can be aware of our own stress related to change and take steps to seek clarity in order to gain a better sense of control.

Activity developed with help from: William Pallett, WJ Pallett & Associates.