
Navigating Transition

with a winning attitude



Generosity and Flexibility

BY MALCOLM

Before I move on to the more technical aspects of navigating change, just bear with me as I look at two more attitudes essential for successful transitions. These are generosity, and flexibility.

Generosity. The English poet from the 17th century John Donne, writing of the interdependence of people and nations penned the famous lines below.

*“No man is an island,
entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main.”*

(from “Meditation 17”, written in 1623).

The process of managing change involves:

1. Analysing the issues.
2. Taking a broad look at the response options available.
3. Choosing the most appropriate one.
4. Focussing on and implementing that choice.

In this scheme each step involves particular skills. Analysis involves honesty and critical thinking. Identifying possible options takes imagination, research, lateral thinking, and a host of other skills. Choosing requires clarity and courage. Focus and implementation calls on our strategic planning and determination.

Re-enter John Donne. *"No man is an island"*. To have any hope of maximising a transition opportunity we must not do it alone. To do so is to isolate ourselves from necessary information, moral support, feedback, different perspectives and other awesome benefits which come with community.

Here is where **generosity** comes into the equation. The Bible says very truly, *"The generous eye will be blessed"*, Proverbs 22:9. This and other teachings including contemporary psychology, reinforce the truth that those who are outward looking, altruistic, and inclusive in attitude thrive, and create more life around them than those who are insular, isolated or miserly in posture.

So how does this impact transition success? I said above that we must not do this alone. A generous person seeks situations which allow them to contribute to others, and not just further their own agenda. In networking, all sorts of unexpected information is shared and new relationships are formed and deepened.



A generous attitude will realise that it is important not only to give but also to receive. Opening up and becoming vulnerable to others, is in itself is a gift to them which is too infrequently given. Then in receiving from others we allow them to express their gifts and skills, and as we humbly and gratefully receive we add value and honour to them. Even something as small as properly accepting a compliment instead of glossing it over or deflecting is difficult but positive for some of us.

Flexibility

This attribute goes hand in glove with the Curiosity and Life-Long Learning article. Flexibility or Agility allows us to adapt and alter our perspective to suit changing situations. This does not mean that we change our values or core beliefs, (unless we find them to be flawed), only that we are open to processing and responding to new information, and perhaps updating our perspectives.

There are generally agreed to be 10 identifiable thinking errors which undermine our progress. Three of those rigid thinking, black and white thinking, and jumping to conclusions. These, and all the rest lead us to make premature or inappropriate judgements, and limit the breadth of information and options we will consider. The other consideration to bear in mind is our mental biases. We all have them, and it is helpful if we can identify them and counteract their impact. The more we can get beyond these limitations, the easier it will be for us to think outside the usual square, to move on to lateral thinking, and usefully assess and respond to change.

Happily, we humans are the only creatures as far as we know, who can think about our thoughts. We can consider whether our thoughts are beneficial or harmful to ourselves and others. We are also capable of extended strategic planning such as in a chess game. Speed chess and Rubik's Cube masters simply dazzle me. Sadly chess is not something I'm very good at no matter how much I wish. However I can plan in my mind complex carpentry projects and then build them without plans, and think through the complex possibilities involved in change processes with ease. We all have some variant of these abilities somewhere in us to analyse our thinking and decision making. This doesn't mean that we make use of it, just that we have it.



Flexibility and making the most of our change moments requires that we do just that; analyse our thoughts to see if they are helpful or not, to move past our biases and processing errors, in order to see clearly the options which lie before us.

Given that we are all born with the basic capacity to negotiate change, or at very least could access someone who could help, why don't more of us do this successfully and enthusiastically? I will discuss this in more detail in coming articles, but we could start with these.

- We are attached to the status quo, or things as they were, and cannot imagine a different and better future.
- Inertia or good old laziness.
- Fear, mental fog, and a disorganised life.
- Disempowerment for a variety of reasons.

Not to end on a down note let me reiterate the Helen Keller quote from the previous article, "*Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.*"

Have you signed up for the adventure? Have fun with that!

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moving forward together

For more on **Navigating Transition** read our other articles "Curiosity and Lifelong Learning" and "Realistic Optimism"
