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*We Help You Focus Clearly,
Organize Effectively,
And Act With Courage*



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How Can You Manage Change?

Do:

- Acknowledge that something is changing.
- Expect ambivalence.
- Expect upheaval.
- Recognize the strengths of the past.
- Create a transition ritual to help you let go.
- Get organized to be effective.
- Recognize your feelings and understand you may have conflicting emotions.
- Be open with allies and confidantes.
- Embrace change.

Don't:

- Try to hang on to the past.
- Bury your feelings.
- Forget the big picture.
- Overlook the opportunities that change might bring.
- Forget what's important to you; your personal vision.
- Neglect to make your own plans.
- Carry hidden agendas.
- Be afraid to ask for help.
- Be inflexible.

MANAGING CHANGE IN A CHANGING CULTURE

In our daily work lives, we orient ourselves with something known as organizational culture. ***Organizational culture is an invisible web of values and expectations that bonds the group together.*** When there is rapid cultural change in our organization, we lose our point of reference and feel a sense of upheaval. Some may even feel a profound sense of loss. Although organizational cultures share many similarities, each is unique with its own rules and touchstones.

At IBM, for instance, where I spent 12 rewarding years, the prevailing touchstone was a sense of "family." Like other families, membership in the IBM family was unconditional. A lifetime guaranteed job was part of that unconditional acceptance.

Now the old IBM culture is undergoing a major change as the company responds to a new and different marketplace. It recently decentralized some business operations into semi-independent units, reflecting a move away from a top-down management style. A team concept is replacing "family," where acceptance is conditional, based on contribution. Lifetime job security is out. Instead, employees are encouraged to be entrepreneurial.

As a former employee, I am saddened to see the old IBM culture change, and can imagine how hard it must be for those at IBM. I also believe that change brings tremendous opportunity to create something new, if people can learn to adapt to it. Here are some ways I found that work:

- 1. Accept that change is a process that never ends.** Even cultures that seem to be stable, like the one I experienced at IBM, are always undergoing constant change. One way to embrace change is to get involved in shaping it.
- 2. Allow yourself to grieve the past.** Find the parts of the past you value, and create a transition ritual to help you let go. Share your concerns, grief and questions with those you trust.
- 3. Remember you have choices.** Cultural change is neither good nor bad. When you are in the midst of a culture change, you need to search your own soul and ask: "Do I accept the change? Do I want to be a part of it?"
- 4. Take care of yourself.** Eat right and get plenty of rest and exercise. Create a personal vision to help guide you through turbulent times. *CMP*