

# Workplace Enhancement Notes

A Journal for People Working to Build and Lead Great Organizations

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## Change, Resistance and Human Nature

Do people resist change? The answer seems obvious: *absolutely!* We see resistance all around us. Think of the last two or three change initiatives your organization has tried to implement. It's likely that you saw big time push-back as people fought the changes both overtly and covertly. It surfaces innocently as foot-dragging and nay-saying or less innocently as deception, undermining, and sabotage. But isn't there another way to interpret the resistance? Might an alternative story be that it's not change that people resist but the way that your organization has implemented it?



In our new book, *Change Basics* (ASTD Press, 2006), we argue that in fact people *don't* resist change – they resist *being* changed. It's our belief, anchored in our research into the nature of change over the past fifteen years, that change is an extraordinarily natural and normal process that each of us embraces – on our own terms.

In fact, when each of us is in the driver's seat of change we tend to see change as our ally, especially when seeking out learning, opportunity and growth. Imagine that one day you awake in a twilight zone where change never happens, everything stays constant and stable. In this place out of time you would live in the same house next to the same annoying neighbors for the rest of your life; you would never read another book, your children would never grow up – and, worse, they would *never* leave home; you would forever eat the same meal in the same restaurant with the same rude waiter; you would never visit a foreign country (even Canada!); you would do the same work every day for the same boss; you

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[www.RussellConsultingInc.com](http://www.RussellConsultingInc.com)

## What's Your Resilience Quotient?

Resilience is the capacity of a body to “bounce back” after being subjected to adversity or stress. For the past ten years, Russell Consulting, Inc. has been researching the characteristics and qualities that enable someone to be resilient. The result of our decade-long research has led to the identification of eight resilience dimensions. People who are high in these eight dimensions tend to have the capacity to regroup and rebuild after loss, injury, or trauma.

The eight dimensions of resilience that we have identified are:

**Self-Assurance** – Resilient people have a deep belief in their own capacities. They understand that the world is a complex and challenging place – and they believe that they have what it takes to deal with whatever comes their way.

**Clarity of personal vision** – Resilient people have a clear sense of what they want to accomplish in their life. For some people their purpose is their faith, for others family, for others to build community or it could be a thousand other forces that pull people forward.

**Flexible/Adaptable** – Those who are the most resilient have the ability to adjust

*(Continued on page 3)*



### Read this Issue to . . .

- Understand the nature of change.
- Explore the dimensions of change resilience.
- Learn about RCI's survey research services.

## Change and Human Nature, continued from page 1

would never marry – or ever divorce; you would never again experience wonder, joy or awe! We think that you’ll agree this isn’t the way that most of us want to live our lives.

From our experience working with individuals, teams, and organizations going through change, we’ve found that it’s not that people naturally resist change, it’s that organizations just aren’t very good at implementing it. In *Change Basics* we make the case that organizational leaders must view change in a profoundly different way. When leaders understand that self-directed change is something that humans naturally strive for and that resistance, when it surfaces, is evidence that people see the change as something being “done” to them, leaders approach the task of introducing change in a profoundly different way. Since people resist *being* changed, smart leaders find ways to tap into people’s natural inclination toward change. They work hard to put those affected by a change in *charge* of the change. Using the metaphor that likens introducing a change to going for a ride in an automobile, people tend to embrace changes where they have a hand on the steering wheel – or at least a map of the territory ahead. People will tend to resist change when they feel “locked in the trunk,” feeling powerless and victimized by the change.

**Create a Felt Need – A Sense of Urgency!** So, how do smart leaders get people out of the trunk and into or close to the driver’s seat? How can they introduce change such that people are more likely to embrace a change rather than resist it? In our book *Change Basics* we offer a simple four-phase process. The first phase is simply *creating a felt need* for change – a sense of urgency. Since merely pushing people into a change leads to resistance, effective change leaders work hard at building a deep and pervasive awareness of *why* the organization needs to change. This involves immersing people in data about the current environment and helping people see the need to change and the consequences of *not* changing.



**Introduce Solutions.** Once people are awake to the need for change, the next phase is *introducing solutions* – proposing ideas that *solve* the challenges that have led to the sense of urgency. Effective change leaders, however, recognize that introducing the change involves far more than simply sharing and selling their vision. Introducing solutions involves engaging those who need to change in actually challenging the proposed change and encouraging them to offer their own solutions. Despite what change leaders do there will always be some level of resistance – rooted in perceived losses, mistrust, anxiety about the future, concerns about competence, and so forth – but by inviting people to make the change their own, by asking them to move closer to the driver’s seat, resistance will inevitably be lower.

**Revise the Change Vision and Plan.** Once people step up to the invitation to help create the change, the next phase for introducing change, *integrating ideas and revising the change*, naturally falls into place. In this phase people have made an emotional commitment to help make the change work and change leaders shift their focus from selling the need for change and introducing the new ideas to encouraging people to discover and invent creative solutions. Change leaders are most helpful in this phase by being flexible and open to the new ideas that people offer and then integrating these new ideas into the evolving change vision.

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People don’t resist change . . . They resist **BEING** changed!

People **embrace** and thrive upon change when the change is on their own terms.

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*Call Russell Consulting today to explore how we can help you guide your organization through change. We wrote the book on it!*

(608) 274-4482

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The greatest glory of living lies not in never falling . . . but in *rising* every time you fall.

– Nelson Mandela, first President of the post-apartheid Republic of South Africa

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## Change and Human Nature, continued from page 2

**Stabilize and Reinforce the Change.** The final phase of introducing change is one that, unfortunately, too many change leaders neglect. They do so at their peril. All of the energy invested in tearing down the old reality and inventing/creating a new one will be for naught unless people at every level of the organization *stabilize and reinforce* the new ideas, behaviors, and outcomes. As the field of operant conditioning clearly tells us, any new behavior that isn't reinforced tends to disappear, with individuals and the entire system reverting to the old behaviors. In this, the final phase of our model, the primary task of the leader is to ensure that the organization's infrastructure – its goal setting, performance management, measurements and accountabilities, reward systems, and so forth – explicitly reinforces the new ways of thinking and behaving.

**Got Change? Who Ya Gonna Call? RCI – We Wrote the Book on It!** Are you interested in knowing more about how to tap into the change-oriented potential of your organization? Are you tired of fighting resistance at every turn? We can help – we wrote the book on it! Contact Russell Consulting, Inc. to find out more about our model for leading change, our latest book *Change Basics*, and to enlist our help in navigating the challenges of change.

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Too often,  
change leaders  
fail to do simple  
things to  
reinforce and  
stabilize the  
change.

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You can order our book, *Change Basics*, by visiting RCI's **Online Store**. Check out our website, an outline of our book, and our Online Store here: [www.RussellConsultingInc.com](http://www.RussellConsultingInc.com).

## What's Your Resilience Quotient?, continued from page 1

their actions and behaviors to changing circumstances. They pursue their personal vision in ways that accommodate and respond to the realities of their world.

**Organized** – Resilient people create the level of structure and stability that they need to create order and focus. They set realistic goals and find personal strategies that enable them to cope with the challenges that they face.

**Problem Solver** – Thinking critically and reflectively, understanding root cause, anticipating setbacks, collaborating with others, and viewing failures as opportunities for learning, growth and inspiration are all qualities that resilient people bring to help confront their challenges.

**Interpersonal Competence** – This dimension involves demonstrating empathy for others, laughing at oneself, seeking out other's perspectives, and displaying emotional intelligence.

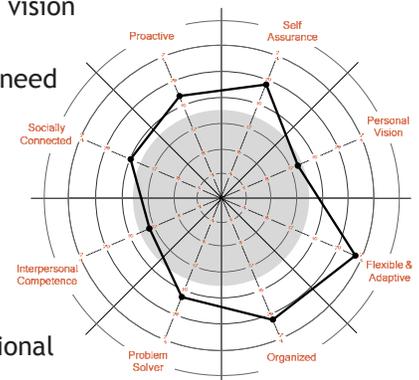
**Socially Connected** – Those who are the most resilient tend to have strong social connections with others. They do this by reaching out to others, building bridges and alliances, discovering common ground, and contributing to the common welfare.

**Proactive** – Resilient people focus on what *they* can do to effectively engage the world. Rather than focusing on what others have done to them, they focus on specific actions that they can take to confront whatever challenge lies before them.

### Assessing Your Resilience

We have developed the Resilience Quotient to help individuals and organizations assess their resilience capacities in these eight dimensions. Each person who completes an RQ is able to plot their RQ scores on a radar chart to graphically display all eight RQ dimensions.

For more information on our **Resilience Quotient** and to receive a free copy for your personal use, e-mail us at [RCI@RussellConsultingInc.com](mailto:RCI@RussellConsultingInc.com), visit RCI Online at [www.RussellConsultingInc.com](http://www.RussellConsultingInc.com) (click on *Leading Change* in the menu bar at the left side of our home page) or call us at 608.274.4482. We look forward to hearing from you.



An Example Resilience Quotient

*For information on becoming a licensed user or distributor of our Resilience Quotient,*

**Call Russell Consulting**

**(608) 274-4482**



## Surveys • *for* • Results!

**L**ife as a leader or manager involves making decisions and solving problems. Decisions about how to best meet customer needs, how to attract and retain the best employees, how to identify the causes of quality problems, and how to increase employee productivity and performance all require good data. In a time of tumultuous change sorting out your options and strategies can be a challenge. Having good data can help.

Russell Consulting enables you to get the data you need to make decisions that strengthen employee job engagement, enhance your customer service operation, develop your leadership team, and grow your business. To meet your needs for data when you require it, RCI created **Surveys•for•Results!** – a survey development and analysis business. We custom-design both paper and online surveys to ensure that valid information drives your decision making. Here's what we can do for you:

- **360 Leadership Assessment:** Leaders derive their power from those who look up to them for guidance and direction. Great leaders understand the needs of these “partners” and use this knowledge to strengthen their capacities. Our online process helps leaders understand their strengths and uncover “aha’s” where gaps emerge between the leader’s self-perceptions and the perceptions of others.
- **Employee Job Engagement Assessments:** Building a great and enduring organization depends upon employees who are engaged in their work and feeling part of a community working toward a common purpose. The leaders of these organizations know that you never take employee job commitment and engagement for granted. **Surveys•for•Results!** has developed a powerful online job engagement assessment tool that enables leaders and teams of employees to better understand their job engagement strengths and address their vulnerabilities. The data we provide gives you the insights you need to create and sustain the organization you want.
- **Customer Satisfaction Assessments:** Understanding your customer’s level of satisfaction with the services you currently provide them – and exploring their perceptions of the services that they’d *like* to receive from your business – are at the heart of your company’s long-term success. Our online or paper-based assessment tools will help you translate your customers’ perceptions into a stronger, more responsive company.

**Contact Surveys•for•Results!** Our customized survey design process is anchored to a clear understanding of your needs and how you will use the resulting data in your business. We'll do the hard work by crafting great questions, recommending the best delivery method (online, e-mail, paper, etc.), pulling a random sample or conducting a census, compiling the data, analyzing and presenting the findings, and offering our recommendations for action. Call **Surveys•for•Results!** today to learn how we can help you move your business to the next level – based upon a clear understanding of your customers and employees.

*Let us help you understand what your employees need to be fully engaged with their work!*

*Call us today!  
Surveys•for•Results!  
– a business of  
Russell Consulting –  
can bring you the  
information you need  
to make the right  
decisions today!*

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*“Quality is impossible if people are afraid to tell the truth.”*

– W. Edwards Deming



ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE THROUGH  
QUALITY WORKPLACE CONSULTING  
AND TRAINING SERVICES



Jeff and Linda Russell, Co-Directors

*Workplace Enhancement Notes* is a journal published periodically by Russell Consulting, Inc. (RCI) for its clients. *Notes* shares insights and issues that emerge from RCI's consulting practice around leadership, strategy, change, performance management, motivation, process redesign and improvement, teamwork, and customer service. Visit us online for information on the full range of our consulting and training services.

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