

Hello as we roar into the final weeks of 2010.

In the 80's, 2010 seemed an inconceivable date sure to be filled with Spock type characters (to me anyway) yet here we are, confused by some of the wifinamicrotechnology but still driving in fossil fueled four wheeled cars, walking on grass and eating real food not vitamin pills. Lots of change, some of it unexpected, some not as radical as imagined, some for the better, some quite inconsequential.

This month I concluded my training sessions with the DUCT teams. It has been most satisfying to be a part of such a worthy organisation and project. The feedback was gratifying as some peoples' lives have obviously been quite changed by the realisation that each of is unique, and that communication is not just a simple speak/listen exchange. I will hopefully continue doing some work with the DUCT staff next year. Another exciting event this month was working with Trish and Gael from Learning Identity. We asked Hamblins/ Muirheads to do our "trial run" with Learning Identity Working Style. We had a lot of fun, I enjoyed being part of a little team and by all accounts the workshop was a great success. We are looking forward to doing a lot more of this work in the New Year. Please check out [www.learningidentity.co.za](http://www.learningidentity.co.za) for more information regarding that workshop. We are aiming to help companies improve productivity, communication and decrease stress by helping each person to understand how they function best.

I also ran a one day workshop for 2 NGO's on Change Management. In my research for it I came across The Inter Change Cycle. This is a phenomenal little book and I learned a great deal. Change being what life is about and a New Year around the corner I thought that I would share a few bits with you.

All change affects us on an emotional, mental and behavioural level therefore we need to understand how it works and also replace our faulty ways of thinking about change i.e. stop seeing it as something scary and negative, because to copy Henry Ford "If you think it is, it is, if you think it isn't it isn't"

Brock and Salerno have mapped out a 6 Stage cycle of change which I found to be extremely relevant. As they say, if we hide in fear from change we push our self esteem lower and are making a choice to be less than our best as we get filled with fear and doubt and anger and prejudice. But if we make a successful change we will have desire and skill which leads to purpose.

**Very briefly the 6 stages are:**

*Loss:* Change (good or bad) results in loss which leads to fear which causes us to flee or freeze. Short term fear is healthy as it causes us to take stock or look before we leap, but stay in that place too long and you become a victim. It is in this stage that we tend to make up new fears thus making the change even more intimidating. **False Expectations Appear Real.**

*Doubt:* In this stage we tend toward resistance and blame and inaccurate information. We are skeptical of other people's motives, our own judgments and the validity of the reasons for change. The challenge here is to take full responsibility for ones feelings, and actions and to gather the necessary information.

*Discomfort:* Anxiety, confusion and unproductive behaviour are hallmarks of this stage. There is a real danger of swinging back to stage 1 or falling into depression. Our minds and bodies are out of sync which makes the simplest task difficult and our sense of esteem diminishes. We need to keep taking small steps forward.

*Discovery:* Once here we are out of the danger zone although still not finished the journey. This is when the change is internalized and we begin the energized process of gathering ideas and possibilities, we are looking for a solution. The only problem is that we sometimes get delayed and distracted by all the possibilities. Keep your eye on the end.

*Understanding:* Here is when we begin to realise the importance of the change; our confidence increases and thus our productivity. We also become far more pragmatic and are able to apply all our new learning's but the journey is not yet complete!

*Integration:* The final stage where balance is restored, we are focused, able to give back to others and able to set goals for the future. Flexibility is also restored.

Those of you who have done the change cycle with me, and those of you who processed the Grief cycle will recognize the pattern. I certainly identified with all the stages, in my personal life but also having watched others processing change, even change that they have instituted themselves.

I often think of the old world maps that had "here be dragons" inscribed in unexplored places. It takes courage to explore the unknown, and for many of us, underlying our desired change is "here be dragon's territory". For those courageous enough, just like Columbus and the gang, there are untold wealth and riches to be discovered.

Have a Christmas that is focused on loving family and friends, enjoying each others company and not stressing about the blasted turkey. Do set SMERTIE goals at New Year, cos you know those midnight resolutions seldom last past the third sunrise. Don't forget to look at the stars, smell the roses and walk barefoot on dew wet grass!

Keep well, keep searching, and keep growing

Fiona

ps ... If by any chance you don't want to receive this letter or my Monday morning sms (those of you who are receiving that) please let me know and I will happily desist.