

Phases of Change

We are constantly being told that the world has seen more change in the past fifty years than ever before. The pace of change is accelerating; few of us can remain unaffected in these times.

The work world is changing, peoples personal lives are changing, their work lives are changing, some are developing new skills, being promoted, seizing opportunities, elsewhere others struggle to deal with redundancy.

Business are facing changes, some are responding positively, some are not.

We may welcome change or dread it; it can be overwhelming or a challenge. Whatever way change arrives at your door you cannot remain neutral or unaffected.

We are always in transition.

Change has some identifiable phases and the following is a brief description of each phase.

Sometimes we can seem frozen or *immobilized* by change, needing time to absorb what has happened, we can fear appearing stupid or getting it wrong.

The next phase is *denial*, still stuck in the old pattern refusing to come to terms and adjust to the change. We act as if the old way can still work in the new environment. Generally, it will not work in the long term.

The third stage is a period of *frustration*, we know that we need to behave differently, but we do not know how, for now. We have to work it out, and discover what new approaches we need to make, and what skills we need to learn or apply. We can become frustrated with ourselves, the job, or other people.

Stage four leads us to *acceptance*, we let go the fears and worries of the previous stages, and engage the learning of stage three. We begin to

test out new ways of doing things, experiencing less frustration as we become more competent.

In phase five we are in the *development* phase of change. We become more comfortable in our not so new and familiar environment. We make effective decisions and have confidence in executing them.

In stages six and seven our skills are performed without fear, we are through the change cycle and are no longer aware of the change

We are ready to begin the adventure of another change.