

Leadership & Change!

Britta Eremit



What's Constantly Changing - *We are constantly invited to adjust the way we cope with change.* Managers, leaders and their employees face the daily challenge of dealing with complexity of the job-requirements, expectations, cultural differences, communication styles and values.

What will Never Change - *People's will to change and people's fear of change!* Both are essential and have a tremendous impact on our well-being and the preservation of our relationships. Change is an anxious-arousing business, both for the one implementing the change and for those impacted by the change, as Harriet Learner pointed out in her gem of book "The Dance of Fear".(1)

It's not only individuals who get anxious – systems (if more than one person is involved we talk about a system e.g. organizations, families, partnership, friendship) become anxious too. Organizational Consultant Jeffrey Miller wrote in his book *The Anxious Organization*: "... Anxiety is what organizations are made of and what makes them tick ... and ... Anxiety makes smart organizations do stupid things."

We are constantly invited to stay open, to grow and to make progress. Change is an essential part in our life, it is indispensable. This can only happen if we are willing to look at things from a different perspective. As George Bernard Shaw pointed out:

"Progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their minds, cannot change anything!" George Bernard Shaw

However, changing our minds and the way we deal with change can provoke unpleasant and harmful consequences. Based on our individual experiences we know that there is no guarantee that change will be automatically linked with pleasant feelings, luck or positive and successful outcomes. Quite the contrary! It is also linked with losing something or someone

e.g. financial stability, the job, friends, beloved ones, physical and mental health, cherished beliefs etc. So, how can we find a way to deal constructively with our fear of change?

The Daily Challenges - Most of us are familiar with situations, where organizations decide to cut resources and leaders are asked to restructure the entire organization. Leaders have to find out “What are our best talents supporting us in building the “NEW” – the future?” Leaders have to adjust their own competencies, skills and character as well. Leaders have to align departments, staff and core competencies according to the constantly changing expectations of the organization and what if we, as leaders, are forced to adjust individual cherished beliefs and values as well?



It's the complexity of these situations where uncertainty, fear and anxiety are highest and where we don't speak openly about it. But it impacts the individual objectivity, inner balance and well-being of the whole system – organization, managers, leaders and employees!

Uncertainty, anxiety and fear travels – passing from individual to individual, from one department to another, like ripples – affecting and infecting systems and the people involved. The Dictionary (2) describes the difference between anxiety and fear as follows: Anxiety is the “expectation of future threat”. Fear is a direct response – emotionally triggered - to a real or perceived immediate threat. It is related to the specific behaviors of fight-or-flight responses, and defensive behaviors, etc.

“There are consequences to everything we decide or don't decide, everything we do or don't do, everything we say or don't say, and even to what we think and feel.” Lise Bourbeau (3)

Psychological science has discovered that how we cope with change is linked to our individual experiences in childhood (*educational background, experiences with parents and siblings, siblings position, level of developed emotional resilience etc.*). These experiences are the underlying indicators for our ability and the preferred way we deal with day-to-day challenges.

The Good News - There is a chance to De-Code the individual motives and types of behavior that come along with uncertainty, anxiety and fear helping us to find a way how to cope constructively!

How to Cope Constructively - Harriet Learner identified in her book *The Dance of Fear* (4) different Anxiety Styles and linked behaviors, people unconsciously choose to manage stress.



The “5-ANXIETY STYLES”

based on Harriet Learner “The Dance of Fear” (4)
... automatic things we do under stress!

- * **UNDER-Functioning**
 - * **OVER-Functioning**
 - * **Distancing**
 - * **Blaming**
 - * **Gossip! Gossip! Gossip!**

The first two “UNDER-Functioning” and “OVER-Functioning” can be categorized as the core styles. The styles three, four and five can show up while stepping into one of the core styles.

De-Coding the ANXIETY STYLES!

1. UNDER-FUNCTIONING - *DOING TOO LITTLE!* - *Quiet Competence*

! TOXIC Behavior under stress (5):

- (a) Distancing from people (physically/emotionally);
- (b) Building emotional walls/barriers;
- (c) Tendency to isolate and disconnect;
- (d) Open communication and sharing new ideas is decreasing;
- (e) Passivity; Defensive behavior; Afraid to act; we fail to say what we really think about important issues; we avoid conflicts or drawing negative attention to ourselves or we just “clam up”;

! CONSTRUCTIVE WAY OUT (5):

- (a) **Take Responsibility** - Leave out Blaming;
- (b) **Think Through** - Be strategic rather than spontaneous; just talk about the facts; avoid emotional and physical distancing;
- (c) **Hang Out Rather Than Hide Out** - Move toward people; show up at events, look people in the eye, smile, use humor, small talk, show interest in their work/ideas; avoid emotional and physical distancing;

(d) Stay Present and Be Direct - ask clear questions, clarify where you stand; do not step into the gossip- mode: gossip is when we talk about someone, rather than directly to him or her!

(e) Be Straight-Forward – if you are having a problem with someone, talk directly to that person!

2. OVER-FUNCTIONING - *DOING TOO MUCH!* - Control freaks under stress

! TOXIC Behavior under stress (5):

- (a) Detach from emotions;
- (b) Being controlling;
- (c) Outcome over people;
- (d) Showing up tough or emotionless;
- (e) Micromanagement of others;
- (f) Think they know what's best not only for themselves but for everyone else on the planet!

! CONSTRUCTIVE WAY OUT (5):

- (a) Know When to Stop!** – Stay open; practice patience; show others that you are interested in their ideas and knowledge; create room and space to listen with compassion; encourage others for mutual brainstorming; balance “trust vs. control”; offer and give appreciation; reduce the tendency of taking on extra work and responsibilities and learn to say “NO”; balance your expectations (*own/others*) – NOBODY IS PERFECT!

The underlying driver of the Anxiety Styles is here:

“We do need to protect ourselves when the feelings evoked by connecting are unmanageable or simply too painful!” Harriet Learner

Where do we go from here and What Comes Next? – *The Leaders are the “Real Brand” of the organization!* Excellent & Intelligent Leadership is about balancing and coping with the two core competencies of leadership (1) TRANSACTIONAL Competence - the Task and Result-Oriented Approach and (2) TRANSFORMATIONAL Competence - the approach focused on people (emotional & empathic approach).

Since Marcus Buckingham and Curt Hoffman found out that “People leave managers not companies” it’s not a secret anymore why excellent people (managers and employees!) leave.

So it could be worthwhile to focus on here:

What’s the USP of your Leaders? What makes their employees confident to stay? How do your leaders make their employees feel? Why? What makes your leaders unique and stand out from the crowd? How self-aware are your leaders? What anxieties do your leaders bring to work and

how do they cope with them constructively? How do you enable and encourage them to cope constructively? What behaviors and beliefs do you link with excellent & intelligent leadership?



A Key could be here: “BE YOUR BEST VERSION”!

– Each of your leaders, managers and employees is an individual; embrace that fact. Have them be what they are best at being, themselves. However, beyond that, how can you qualify new leaders and encourage existing leaders to increase self-awareness to be optimally engaged? What do you need to execute at Team and Management Level to produce top performance? Do you know HOW? Unlock Leadership CHANGE Intelligence.

It's worthwhile to find out!
Kindest, Britta Eremit

Sources & Literature

- 1 Harriet Learner, Ph.D. *“The Dance of Fear”*, Page 79 – Paperback, Copyright 2004 by Harriet Learner
- 2 Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anxiety> - Accessed on: 7th May 2016
- 3 Lise Bourbeau *“Heal your wounds and find your true self”* Page 14 – Paperback, Copyright 2001 by Lise Bourbeau
- 4 Harriet Learner, Ph.D. *“The Dance of Fear”*, Page 96-116 – Paperback, Copyright 2004 by Harriet Learner
- 5 Excerpts included from Harriet Learner, Ph.D. *“The Dance of Fear”*, Page 96-116 – Paperback, Copyright 2004

About the Author



Britta Eremit

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Britta Eremit is principle of BE Change & Company and an Executive Trainer & Coach specialized on Change & Strengths – *Change Management & Leadership Training & Workshops*. BE Change & Company was formed out of the desire to provide CHANGE SOLUTIONS for Organizations, Leaders and Teams, to create sustainability in “Success & Efficiency” and “Engagement & Personal Fulfilment”. The concept focusses on the THREE C’s: CHANGE Competence - CHANGE Excellence – CHANGE Intelligently.

Britta is among the few in Europe who are authorized to provide Strengths Strategy-based training as Germany’s FIRST Strategic Strengths Certified Coach (Certified by Strengths Strategy Inc., USA). She is also Co-Founder of the Institute for Innovative Leadership, “The Change Team”, and founder of BEC2 Coaching & Consulting. More than 20 years hands on experience in different positions in international Financial- and Real Estate Organizations made her aware of that “CHANGE will always come!” and it was the central theme she was involved with permanently – CONTINUOUS CHANGE.

According to Britta: In my positions as leader, team-member and colleague I found out that we have to deal with extraordinary challenges – on business and personal level - in times of change. And additionally, that the key for building up - and still going ahead – with trustworthy relationships in organizations and in the interaction with clients during these times is within here – that dealing with constant CHANGE by creating sustainability and success becomes today’s Organizational Core-Competence. Beside that it is essential and inevitable to establish appreciative communication and a culture of trust. So as a result the core area of my training for the management, teams and leaders is focused on CHANGE - to support you to Co-Design CHANGE effectively and NAVIGATE your organization and people consciously through these times of CHANGE. I’m deeply convinced that here within is the key for both - organizations & people - to be successful and perform at the best effectively. So I’m here to support you to develop with you your ROAD-MAP of CHANGE (on Leadership Level & Organizational Level) and to accompany you while taking this journey!

Britta has 20+ Years in International Finance and Real Estate Sector Core area Controlling & Tax Department, Project Management, Client Management, Key Account Management, Head of RFP & Sales Support, Senior Manager Investor Relations & Marketing, Roll out and

development of functional relationships between global and local RFP-Teams, strategic and operational issues.



She is additionally author of the specialist book “Individual Development – Growing by Transformation” which has been published from the publishing company Springer Verlag in 2016 in German language

<http://www.springer.com/de/book/9783658094522>.

The English version will be published soon.

My USP – excellent ability to capture very quickly the essential aspects of different circumstances based on an analytical and strategic expertise; exceptional competence of active listening and building trust, connectivity and appreciative cooperation.

My Passion – to work with people with diverse cultural background, bringing teams together, support integration and living mutual appreciation.

TODAY'S CHALLENGES Companies, top executives and employees face the daily challenge of dealing with global change and demographic trends. We constantly have to adjust our skills and behaviors. This requires courage, the willingness to change and the development of new routines.

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