



The Challenges of Change

By: Donna Messer

**Success in the challenges of change
is when preparedness meets opportunity**

Personal Workbook

The Challenges of Change

For years I have been experiencing the challenges of change and I have always welcomed these challenges. It never dawned on me that not everyone feels as I do when those challenges are thrust upon them.

Challenge as defined in the dictionary - is to query, to question, to confront.

What does challenge mean to you?

When we look at the word Challenging - the definition is inspiring, stimulating, thought provoking, worthwhile.

What do you think when you see the word Challenging?

It appears that perception could be the winner of this battle with words and how to cope with those Challenges of Change could be based on our perception.

I speak to audiences across the country and many in my audience are in transition. Some are experiencing the challenges of Mergers and Acquisitions. Some are being downsized, given an early retirement package, or choosing to move to another field of endeavour. Some are students, considering career choices; some are new graduates seeking gainful employment. All are in the challenges of change.

What is your 'Challenge of Change?'

What are the positive aspects of this new position you find yourself in?

What are the negative aspects?

W3

When I challenge my audience I ask them for three things - it's what I call our **W3**.

- W1 Who are you?**
- W2 What do you need?**
- W3 What are you willing to share?**

Answer these three questions.

Who Are You?

What do you need?

What are you willing to share?

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By giving some thought to your W 3 - your perception will change and all of a sudden you not only have a need, you have a gift that can be incredibly valuable to someone in your network. The challenge you have is to become excited about the changes, and not to become fixated on your own needs. The challenges of change can be the most exciting and exhilarating time in your life - it gives you the chance to sit back, examine and reflect on what is important to you, and to draft a plan that will lead you to your ultimate destination.

The Journey

The journey is one you need not take alone. There are many coaches, trainers and facilitators who can help you determine your needs and act as a guide as you move forward. But first you must determine that you are ready to take that first step - the one that says - I am inspired, stimulated and I look forward to the challenging journey before me.

Our clients must not only be inspired, they must be willing to work as we guide them along their path to a successful change in their situation. Somehow, we have become what we call a Corporate Guidance Counselors. Our clients, many of whom have been in my audiences around the world, are now seeking guidance for many of their challenges - and because of our methods of handling those challenges, the changes are positive, profitable and profound.

How are you Inspired?

Are you willing to work, and how?

We have developed a process that not only provides us with the information we need, it provides the client with the insight they need about themselves to move forward, to focus on their challenges and to find the best path to take them on their journey of discovery.

While it might sound rather hard to believe, we all know what we want in life, it just takes a little time to put it into words that can generate a plan of action. As a guide, a mentor if you like - our role is to help you design that action plan and to help you avoid the pitfalls that might otherwise stop you from reaching your destination.

The Tools

The tools we use include mind mapping and determining your communication style. We uncover the skills and talents that many of you take for granted. Our first session is taped so that you can refer to it when you begin your follow through on your action plan. We ask you to fill out a Mind Map which is available on our web site in advance - this helps us, help you.

The questions on the AHA Mind Map include:

What do I like to do?

What am I good at?

What are my strengths?

What are my weaknesses?

What are my hobbies/interests?

What associations do I belong to?

Who do I know - my friends associates, neighbours - who do they know?

What special skills do I have?

Am I a volunteer, do I have a charity of choice?

What is my wildest dream, if money, time and talent had no bearing on my dream?

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If you are experiencing the challenges of change and you want to focus on the journey of self discovery, that will take to get to your next destination - do your W 3 and fill out a Mind Map - you will be amazed at what you learn about yourself.

Think Laterally!

On your journey, learn to think laterally - there is more than one way to get to your destination. For those who find it difficult to determine just what lateral thinking is all about - imagine that you have locked yourself out of your house - what do you do? Ask your friends and neighbours what they would do in a similar situation - you will be amazed at the number of answers that differ from what you would do... That, my friends, is a simple definition of lateral thinking - there is always more than one way to get in the door!

Steps to Take

To accept the challenges and make the necessary changes, the following are the step to take:

Develop a plan

Whatever your needs, they are best satisfied by developing a strategy. Your plan should include what you want to accomplish and what organizations or associations would best satisfy the plan's execution. Remember your W3 - what are you willing to share!

Research the people you hope to contact

Who do you know? Who do they know? What do you have in common? People like people, who are like themselves. Remember your W3!

Learn to listen

Don't dominate the conversation. Find out the needs of others. Don't try to sell - find out what people want to buy. It's easier to fill a need, than to create one. Share your resources.

Learn to network effectively

Determine your communication style. Use that knowledge wisely, team up with others who have the strengths you lack, it makes networking more effective. Remember your W 3!

Follow up

Find out the best way to communicate with those you meet and follow up promptly. Try and find your common denominator with everyone, use caution when following up, make sure you have a gift of someone or something that will be valuable to the receiver. Make sure your meeting is memorable and that your follow up solidifies that meeting.

Be accountable

Make sure you get a return on your investment. Follow the plan; keep in touch with your guide, report on your progress and record your successes.

Be Prepared!

Success in the challenges of change is when preparedness meets opportunity. Being prepared is the single most important part of your challenge. Where you go and who you work with is up to you. Don't try and do everything yourself. Join a support group, take a refresher course, ask for help - trade talents. It's okay to sell your strengths and buy your weaknesses.

Our Corporate Guidance Counselor* program works with you, we help you develop the plan, research your needs, make introductions, determine your communication style and guide you on your journey of discovery. We will even take you on a "Walk Through The Forest" - which helps us determine where you've been, where you are, and where you are going. It's a trip you won't want to miss!

* (If you want to check out the entire above visit our website at www.connectuscanada.com and begin your journey)

Donna Messer



Using her own experience, she tries to share the benefits and power of networking with others. Donna's experience speaks for itself. She is:

- President of ConnectUs Communications Canada
- Winner - International Leader Award
- Chair, Nexpro (Business Development Bank of Canada)
- Past Director of Agriculture for the State of Illinois in Canada.

(Illinois is Ontario's largest trading partner!)

- Honourary member, Rotary Club
- Chair of Women in Food Industry Management (membership increased by 30% since she took office!)
- Chair, Women in Politics (membership of over 200 politically active members)
- Past President of the Canadian Specialty Food Association (during her time in office, membership increased by 25%)
- On the board of directors for Women in International Trade - Organization (WITO)
- An international trade specialist www.infoexport.gc.ca
- Has more than 10,000 people in her database, including associations from across Canada www.csae.com
- Works with colleges and universities, including SHAD Valley, developing innovative leaders
- Helps the unemployed - HAPPEN is a great resource for those in transition
- A keynote speaker, workshop coordinator and seminar leader. She works with many associations to help add value to their groups through networking. In every case, membership increases after members have helped to network effectively
- Working with colleges and universities to help them expand their networks and helping students find placement, not only in co-op programs, but also for full-time employment when graduating. Networking offers students and teachers a new perspective, often contributing to more positive results.
- Offering workshops to many government programs, whose goal is to help the unemployed help themselves. I have spoken to more than 25 such groups and in almost every case, self-employment has been the result.

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Donna Messer is a mentor with the Canadian Youth Business Foundation and nominated for Mentor of the Year. She is an international speaker, trainer, facilitator and author. President of ConnectUs Communications Canada , the company designs, develops and delivers training programs. Link and Think, Walk in the Forest, AHA - Your Mind Map of Self Discovery, and W 3 are just a few of the programs that will help you handle the “Challenges of Change”. Donna can be reached at dmesser@connectuscanada.com



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