The Neuroscience of Change: Wired to Resist

Wired to Resist: The Neuroscience of Change

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Our Pathway

Today's Change
Assessing Impact of Change
Brain Science of Resistance
Tools + Tips for Thriving Through Change

Today's Change

50-70% of change initiatives fail

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- New job/role/team
- New manager/leader/colleagues
- New technology/process
- New product/service
- New market/customer

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Assessing Impact of Change

Time to acclimation
Amount of disruption
Total number of changes
Pace between changes

The Change Matrix

New country/culture
New organization/future
New home/school/community
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Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of disruption</th>
<th>Time to Acclimation</th>
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The Change Journey Model

Current State: Amount for past and potential losses

New Normal: Amount for future and potential gains

Long and Intense Climb

Quick Hike Up a Steep Hill

The Change
- Structural
- Factual
- Plan
- Execution

The Transition
- Emotional
- Reactive
- Process
- Adjustment

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Assess: your change journeys

In pairs or trios, talk about changes you’ll go through in the next 12 months. Map them on a timeline. When will you be holding the most changes? How might that impact you?
Assess: your travelers’ motivation

In pairs or trios, discuss the travelers on your upcoming journeys. What do you think their motivation is likely to be and why?

Motivation for Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Endure/accept the situation.</th>
<th>Trudge along</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resist the imposition. Dig in heels.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Embrace the opportunity. Walk with purpose.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Celebrate the win. Run toward it.</td>
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Mapping Traveler Motivation

4 Levels of Traveler Motivation

Assess: your travelers’ motivation

In pairs or trios, discuss the travelers on your upcoming journeys. What do you think their motivation is likely to be and why?
Neuroscience of Change

The ways that the central and peripheral nervous systems influence how we respond to and move through change.

We are predisposed to...

RESIST

Key Brain Structures

- Basal Ganglia
- Amygdala
- Entorhinal Cortex
- Habenula

Survive  Belong  Become

1. Fear

Amygdala

Connected to major sensory nerves

Fight/flight/freeze

Change is DANGER
2. GPS > physical space
Entorhinal Cortex
Internal GPS
Sphere of “place” cells

Ref: May-Britt & Edvard Moser

2. GPS > physical space
Creates 3D mental maps of physical space
Size, space, boundaries
Change often
ERASES MAPS

Ref: May-Britt & Edvard Moser

2. GPS > social space
Creates mental maps of social relationships
Power + affinity
Change often
ERASES MAPS

Ref: Rita Tavares et al. (2015, Neuron)

3. Habits
Basal Ganglia
Repeated tasks > habits
Creates low package

3. Habits

Habits are well-grooved neural pathways

Change often requires NEW HABITS

Cue ➔ Routine

Reward

4. Failure

Habenula

Uses chemical guardrails

Influences decision/actions

Change creates lots of opportunities to FAIL

Ref: Okihide Hikosaka (2010, Nature Reviews Neuroscience)

Fear (amygdala): “I’m freaking out!”

GPS (entorhinal cortex): “I’m lost!”

Habits (basal ganglia): “I don’t know what to do!”

Failure (habenula): “I can’t screw up!”

Status

Certainty

Autonomy

Relatedness

Fairness

Ref: David Rock (2008, NeuroLeadership Journal)
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47% of senior execs feel that change fatigue is prevalent in their orgs.

Assess: brain science of change
Discuss which aspects of the brain are related to your upcoming change journeys. How might these impact your travelers?

Disengagement
Exhaustion
Absence
Confusion
Conflict
Cynicism

Tools + Tips for Travelers

The Traveler’s Journey
1. Learn About the Journey

- Learn about the journey.
- Build a roadmap.
- Train for the trek.
- Ask questions.
- Rest at the resting points.
- Ask for help.
- Find your own purpose.
-Partner up.
- Gamify the experience.
- Get off the mountain.

Who’s “getting the message” about the change?
- 68% of leaders
- 53% of managers
- 40% of employees

Ask Questions

Partner Up

Gamify the Experience
Gamify the Experience

- Helped someone
- Found a solution
- Tackled technology
- Asked questions
- Shared information
- Offered praise
- Did some self-care
- Took a break

Rest at the Resting Points

- Self-Care
- Mindfulness
- Play

Thriving Through Change
Resilience grows Amgydala shrinks

Ref: Sara Lazar, Psychiatry Research (2011)

Mindfulness

Resilience grows Amgydala shrinks

Before meditation... After meditation...

Frontal lobe Parietal lobe Occipital lobe

Ref: Sara Lazar, Psychiatry Research (2011)
Reflect: thriving through change

In pairs or trios, reflect on how you can thrive through change by using self care, mindfulness and play. You can choose to explore each briefly or hone in on one that is meaningful to you.

Self Care  Mindfulness  Play  7:00

To Learn More...

Thank you!

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