

JULY, 2009

This quarterly newsletter features topics related to managing change and improving our work environments. If there are topics you would like to see covered or feedback you have about this newsletter, please submit your ideas and feedback to the following link: <http://www.anneoffner.com/contact.htm>



Change is a power-packed word. Sometimes when we hear it we immediately get excited, anticipating the benefits of what may come. Other times when we hear the word we think more deeply about it, analyze it, and consider whether what may come is actually going to be beneficial. Still other times we hear this word and immediately panic, visualizing the worst-case scenario.

Perhaps one way to manage this range of response is to make “change” a regular part of our day. The idea being, if we invite change we’re more likely to welcome it despite potential misgivings.

I haven’t come to this great insight because I studied so well in graduate school. Even though I could spend the entirety of this newsletter spouting off about all the different change management theories and all the studies that have demonstrated why we embrace or run from change, I won’t do

that today. If by chance you are interested in the theories, see the newsletter section on my website:

<http://www.anneoffner.com/newsletter.htm>

I’ve come to understand the benefit of incorporating change into my life daily because I’ve learned that being emotionally prepared is often the best bridge to successfully implementing changes that I invite, or which are invited upon me. We can emotionally prepare ourselves by looking closely at our habits when we’re under stress.

I’ve found that sometimes it’s tough to really make a change when my schedule is over-the-top busy. And, the busier I get, the more likely I am to resist a change or ignore the need for it. So, as I’ve started to propose in my blog, I think it makes sense to start with simple behavior changes:

<http://anneoffner.com/blog/>

For example, at certain points in my life, when things have been very hectic, I’ve spent unnecessary amounts of time searching my house for my car key. Now, my car key is actually a fairly large, bulky key fob and so it really should not be that difficult to find. However, after a frantic 10-minute search, it has always turned up, often in some very unlikely places. Such searches delayed my getting out the door,

and added to my anxiety as to where I was headed for the day.

Because I am a keen psychologist I noticed that this seemed like an unnecessary waste of time. This insight led me to an experiment in which I tried for 30 days to put my key in a drawer in the desk in the foyer to my house. After 30 days of reminding myself to do this, it became habit. Making that simple behavior change is a source of pride for me. If you come to my house, I'll show you the special place where I keep my car key. And, it has propelled me into further changes that have allowed me to decrease the amount of unnecessary time I spend due to unproductive habits.

You might ask why a keen psychologist would share such a simple insight. Well, if I can change that habit, I build my confidence that I can certainly change others. Since I had a positive experience with it, when I make other changes in my behavior, I actually welcome them. And, when someone approaches me with news about a change that will affect me, I find I'm more apt to listen with an open mind vs. engage my fight or flight instinct.

To assist you, my kind readers, below is a checklist for simple behavior change:

- For the next week, make it a point to observe all the habits in your daily routine. Perhaps you rush out the door without eating in the morning or spend the first 15 minutes at work trying to find the file you need for your first meeting of the day or get to the grocery store and realize you've forgotten your list or rush your child to baseball practice without listening to the story that he wants to tell you.
- At the end of the week, brainstorm your list of habits.
- Choose one that you think will take less than a minute out of your day to change.

Picture in your mind what you will do differently.

- Make a commitment for the next 30 days to make this change. Write it down on the calendar, tell someone else, or mark it on your daily "to do" list.
- The first time you forget to make the change, smile a little and immediately correct the habit. *The smile is important.* Your day is hectic enough. If you smile, you'll remember that this just a simple change, no big deal.
- After 30 days, reflect on the change you've just made. How do you feel about it? Has it reduced the amount of time or energy you spend each day? Are you interested in trying out another change?
- Go back to your brainstormed list and select the next change you want to make.
- Repeat for 30 days.
- Smile.
- Repeat.



I've opened myself up to technology. In May, I added a blog to my website. It's a great tool to get little bits of information out and invite input.

Also I am now providing online coaching to clients. From my website, you can click on the "live help" icon and be immediately connected to me for coaching, client questions, etc. Let me know when you want to be online and I'll connect with you! In general, if I'm at my desk and not on the phone I'll be available for online chat.

For individual clients the fee will be "per minute" or part of a total coaching package fee. For corporate clients the fee is part of the coaching package. In any case, the first

time you log in for a chat session the fee is waived until we can mutually understand the coaching need and put a plan in place for the coaching.

In the future I will be looking at other technologies that might serve my clients. We live in such a technology friendly world it's time to embrace that. For clients who work in cubes or lack the privacy needed for in-person or telephone conversations, the on-line chat will fill a void in my services.

You'll also find me on Linked In and Facebook.



A Few More Things to

Note... I'm partnering with a virtual assistant, Alexia Longacre. She lives in CA but can assist my clients and me as if she were sitting right next to me. If you cannot reach me, Alexia will be available at no fee to you:

http://www.anneoffner.com/docs/Alexia_Longacre_Short_Bio.pdf

And, finally, I'm providing a suite of change management programs and tools which I will blog about in the coming weeks. These

Anne Offner, Ph.D. is the owner/principle of Offner and Associates, LLC, a change management and leadership development consulting firm. She works with organizations & individuals to maximize performance, effectiveness and satisfaction in the workplace.

This newsletter is edited by Larry Offner of West Palm Beach, Florida.

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will include a change management planning dashboard, workshops for change agents, on-line assessments, and an on-boarding program for new managers. Please call for more information and stay tuned to my blog for further updates.



Enjoy the summer and
Happy Fourth of July!