Being a microsystem change agent takes personal resilience

Helen Bevan
@HelenBevan

Do You Bend or Break?
RESILIENCE

CHANGE DOES NOT ROLL IN ON THE WHEELS OF INEVITABILITY, BUT COMES THROUGH CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE.
- MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

#qmicro @HelenBevan
“New truths begin as heresies”
(Huxley, defending Darwin’s theory of natural selection)

Talk to your neighbour about your own experience of being resilient
What happens to the “heretics” in organisations who challenge the status quo?
We need to be boatrockers!

• Walk the fine line between difference and fit, inside and outside, rock the boat but manage to stay in it
• Able to challenge the status quo when we see that there could be a better way
• Conform AND rebel
• Capable of working with others to create success NOT a destructive troublemaker

Source: Debra Meyerson
What are the risks for a boat rocker?

1. Our experiences of “being different” can be fundamentally disempowering. This can lead us to conform because we see no other choice

- we surrender a part of ourselves, and silence our commitment, in order to survive

Source: adapted from Debra E Meyerson
Research shows the psychological distress that comes with inauthentic behaviour

"Staying true to yourself matters, even if it is difficult, because we notice that there is a cost involved in straying too far from your personal values.”

“It seems to be true that to act in accordance with one’s own self, emotions, and values is a fundamental aspect of well-being,”

Psychological Science July 2015
What are the risks for a boat rocker?

1. Our experiences of “being different” can be fundamentally disempowering. This can lead us to conform because we see no other choice
   - we surrender a part of ourselves, and silence our commitment, in order to survive
2. Leave the organisation

Research shows the psychological distress that comes with inauthentic behaviour

“it is important to note that a threat to someone’s moral self-concept is different from other negative states of mind such as feeling confused, disrespected, or overwhelmed. Clear instructions, positive feedback, and flexible hours are all undoubtedly appreciated, but for leaders who want to keep their employees engaged for as long as possible, understanding their need for a positive moral self-concept might be key”

What are the risks for a boat rocker?

1. Our experiences of “being different” can be fundamentally disempowering. This can lead us to conform because we see no other choice
   - we surrender a part of ourselves, and silence our commitment, in order to survive
2. leave the organisation
   - we cannot find a way to be true to our values and commitments and still survive

Source: adapted from Debra E Meyerson
What are the risks for a boat rocker?

1. Our experiences of “being different” can be fundamentally disempowering. This can lead us to conform because we see no other choice
   - we surrender a part of ourselves, and silence our commitment, in order to survive
2. leave the organisation
   - we cannot find a way to be true to our values and commitments and still survive
3. stridently challenge the status quo in a manner which is increasingly radical and self-defeating
   - this just confirms what we already know – that we don’t belong

Source: adapted from Debra E Meyerson

A description of resilience fit for a microsystem change agent

A ‘resilient’ material can bend under strain then spring back. Human resilience, however, is a much more complex, dynamic process, one fundamentally based on interconnectedness – with strong connections to others, a sense of meaning and purpose, and the capacity to deal with each unfolding moment by flexibly responding to life’s pressures and constraints

Jennifer Napier

Source of image: pinterest.com
Early thinking on resilience

“Hardy”

“Invulnerable”

“Invincible”

Source of image: forums.marvelheroes.com


Resilience: what does the evidence base tell us?

• Researchers increasingly view resilience not as fixed attributes but as an alterable set of processes that can be fostered and cultivated

• Resilience can grow or decline over time depending on the interactions taking place between a person and their environment and between risk and protective factors in that person’s life

• We can build protective factors that enable us to reduce the negative impact of stressors and support positive change

Source: Ryan Santos

Ways to build resilience as a leader of change

1. Get social support
2. Try not to see crisis as insurmountable problems
3. Accept that change is part of living and alter the things you can alter
4. Find ways to move towards your goals
5. Keep a hopeful outlook
6. Build your own self efficacy
7. Look after yourself

Source: adapted from The road to resilience, American Psychological Society

Four things we know about successful boat rockers

1. strong sense of “self-efficacy”
   - belief that I am personally able to create the change
2. able to join forces with others to create action
3. able to achieve small wins which create a sense of hope, possibility and confidence
4. More likely to view obstacles as challenges to overcome

Source: adapted from Debra E Meyerson
Self-efficacy

“If you think you can or think you can’t, you are right.”
Henry Ford

“There is a positive, significant relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs of a change agent and her/his ability to facilitate change and get good outcomes.

Source: www.h3daily.com

Ways to build resilience as a leader of change

1. Get social support
2. Try not to see crisis as insurmountable problems
3. Accept that change is part of living and alter the things you can alter
4. Find ways to move towards your goals
5. Keep a hopeful outlook
6. Build your own self efficacy
7. Look after yourself

Source: adapted from The road to resilience, American Psychological Society

Source of image: www.h3daily.com
We can make ourselves more or less vulnerable by how we think about things

George Bonanno
Loss, Trauma, and Emotion Lab, Columbia University

50 Reasons Not To Change

Key #1...

Instead of avoiding Rejection... Increase it.
Key #2...
Don’t Take it Personally.
It’s not about you.

Source: http://www.slideshare.net/AndreaWaltz/gfn-handling-rejectionpositively

#qmicro @HelenBevan

Key #3...
Respond Positively.
Don’t react badly.

Source: http://www.slideshare.net/AndreaWaltz/gfn-handling-rejectionpositively

#qmicro @HelenBevan
Key #4...
See ‘NO’ as an opportunity. Value it.

Key #5...
Make it a personal PERFORMANCE target.
Key #6...

Understand that NO does not mean NEVER.

You don’t know you’re going to get a “No” until you ask, and if you don’t ask, you’ve given yourself the “No”

Jack Canfield
Research from the sales industry:
How many NOs should we be seeking to get?

• 2% of sales are made on the first contact
• 3% of sales are made on the second contact
• 5% of sales are made on the third contact
• 10% of sales are made on the fourth contact
• 80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact

Source: http://www.slideshare.net/bryandaly/go-for-no

“Papers that are more likely to contend against the status quo are more likely to find an opponent in the review system—and thus be rejected—but those papers are also more likely to have an impact on people across the system, earning them more citations when finally published”

V. Calcagno et al., “Flows of research manuscripts among scientific journals reveal hidden submission patterns,”
What are some tactics you might adopt to build your own resilience?

“**If your horse dies, get off it**

Cherokee proverb

Source of image: fenwickgallery.co.uk
‘We cannot direct the wind but we can adjust the sails’

Jennifer Napier

Source of image: www. encore-editions.com