

## Lifting the Emotional Fog During Change

*When a change occurs, people react. Positively or negatively - we all react to the change. How we react and how quickly we can discipline ourselves will determine what we can make out of the change.*

To effectively manage change, one must understand the change process. Changes occur in any of three ways.

- Outside of a person -- a new job or work process.
- Inside of a person -- a pregnancy or career change decision.
- Change in expectations or understanding of reality -- realizing what we thought was true really wasn't true.

Regardless of how the change occurred, there is an emotional reaction to the change. During the reaction, people often feel like their head is in a fog. Decisions take longer, it is harder to get motivated, motives are questioned, and confusion sets in. This "fog" decreases productivity by affecting teamwork, decision-making, and problem solving. Frequently, any expression of emotion is blamed for the productivity loss, resulting in the emotional fog being ignored and being driven underground.

If ignored or underground, the emotional fog is a nemesis to productivity. People will get results working in the fog. But, they won't achieve their potential and the organization won't be as successful as it could be. If the emotions are acknowledged and completed, the emotional fog lifts. With the fog lifted, possibilities can be seen. Value can be added to the new reality because the best of the old ways can be retained and reapplied. Additionally, left over emotional fog can be unconsciously carried from the past and applied to the current situation. This results in an overreaction, with all of the uncompleted emotions, when anything similar to the old situation occurs.

For example, when someone divorces and doesn't lift the fog, they run the risk of marrying a new spouse just like the old spouse. They may also come into the second marriage carrying the unresolved emotions from the past relationship, overreacting to similar situations in the new marriage.

Many individuals and organizations resist clearing the fog for many reasons:

- Clearing the emotional fog, talking about the emotion, is uncomfortable -- if we begin working through the issues, what will come out?
- Believing that it takes too much time to work through this stuff and gets in the way of real work.
- We don't know how to clear the fog and don't believe that it is possible.

Getting expert support is essential in overcoming the barriers and getting the fog lifted so that productivity can be reclaimed and good results can be gained. If teamwork, good decision-making, and excellent problem solving skills are needed to improve productivity in the wake of a change, then the emotional fog that hampers these skills must be cleared away. The earlier in the change process that the fog is blown away, the faster productivity increases.

A process and forum must be provided for people to clear away the emotional fog. People must be given real skills so that they can reclaim their abilities to effectively problem solve, work well on teams, and make good decisions. By clearing the fog, you, and your organization, will gain the good results intended from the change.



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