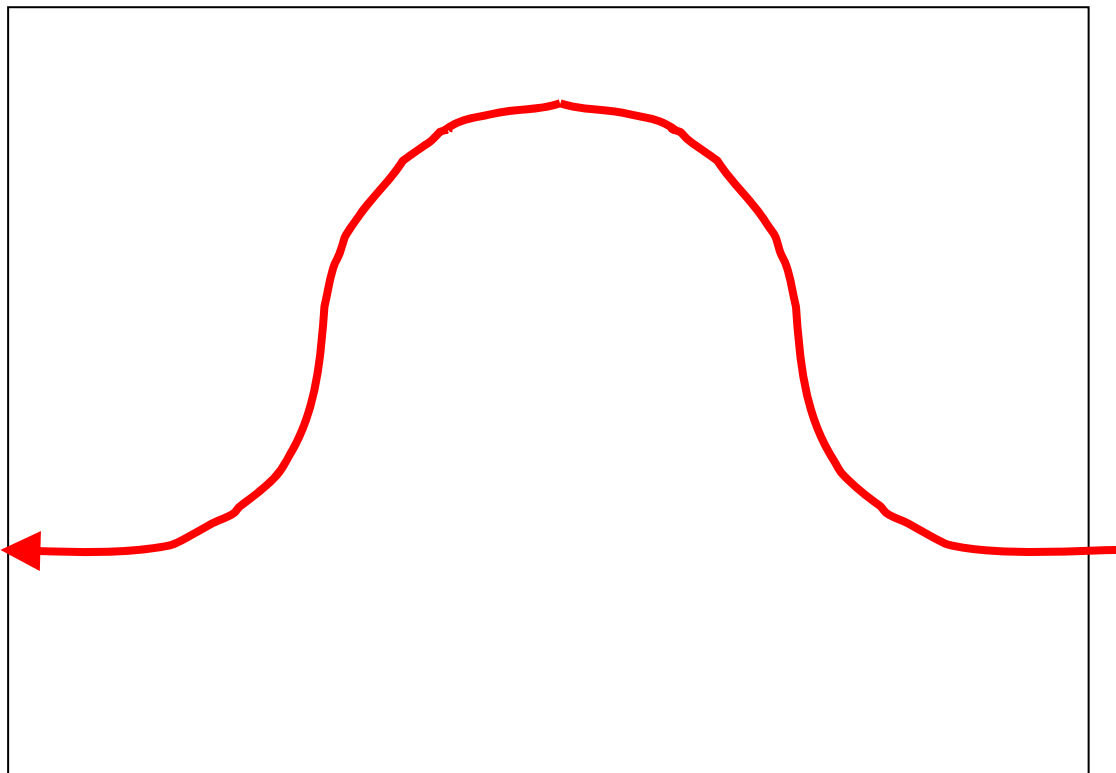




Concrete Heads

Psychological Change and Team Maturity



Finding the balance





Psychological Change Model

A 3 Slide presentation and notes available free on www.concreteheads.co.uk providing an overview of the Psychological change model and the inclusion of the model in relation to a team's maturity.



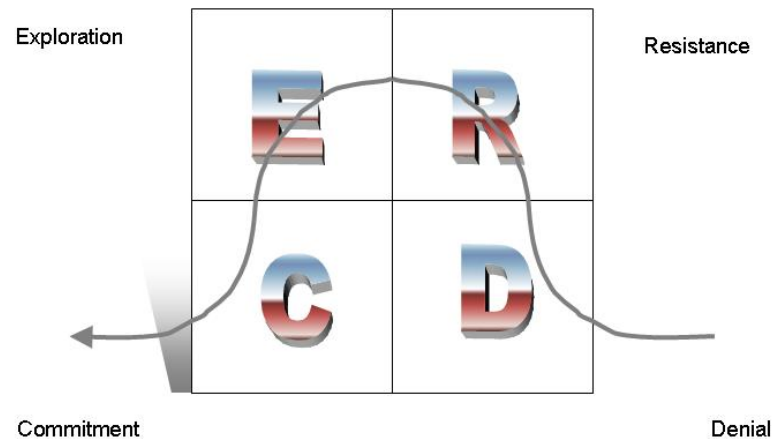
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SLIDE 1 – Psychological Change Model

Psychological change model



This is a well recognised psychological pattern of change in people. It is important to recognise this people process isn't restricted by time, this model can be applied over the space of an hour, or over a lifetime. There are different timelines that can be witnessed and there is no restriction to the amount of change cycles you can go through at any one time or the speed of each independently of one another.

It can be redundancy, moving house, pregnancy, bereavement, Lean implementation, divorce (Adults and Kids), abuse, or all of the above. Any kind of imposed change will potentially see the transition through each stage of the model.

Sometimes each stage can be superficial, moving almost imperceptibly into commitment, when the change is perceived as 'Good' /beneficial. Sometimes one can get stuck in an early stage and spend years never moving on, especially when emotional pain is deeply embedded, as with learned automatic defence mechanisms set up through an abusive childhood or through divorce / separation / job loss, effectively any perceived 'Bad' or detrimental change.

Of course Good and Bad are individual perceptions and perceptions can be changed with education / knowledge. It is therefore the responsibility of



anyone introducing change to ensure it is perceived as 'Good' by those the change is expected of, through effective communications. Also, to be aware of the quantity of change individuals are going through and the psychological position they are at, relative to the speed at which they can accept and work through the change process in relation to the specific change expectations and those additional change influences in their lives.

If we were to overlay the individual maps of a team, it would inevitably show each person at a different stage of acceptance. If we add one persons change model line to a timeline in relation to the implementation of the next new fad, and the next and the next..... it would help us to understand why there is confusion in our workforces and morale is down wherever these issues are not considered within a 'Lean' or 'Lean Sigma' implementation program.

Explanation of each stage.

Denial – People deny there is any need to change, this is where our fight or flight mechanism kicks in and we try and ignore the 'rumour' to protect our individually safe environment, making things different removes the security we have become accustomed to, no matter how small, change is uncomfortable

This principle can easily be demonstrated practically, (you will also find this slide in our communications package) with the folding arms exercise. Fold your arms in front of you as you normally would, now swap your hand positions and arm positions, i.e. put the hand on top underneath and Vice Versa.

You might end up back where you started and have to try a couple of times before you get them swapped over, that's normal, but keep trying until you get your arms folded the other way around – Now be honest, is it comfortable or uncomfortable?

The point of the exercise? Any change no matter how small feels uncomfortable, it's not always easy to get right first time but if we persevere and did it differently for long enough, the other way would eventually become comfortable and acceptable to us. Some people already fold their arms the other way to us, and some are more comfortable with the change immediately, not really finding it uncomfortable from the beginning, they manage to do it the other way with their 1st attempt – this simple exercise embodies all of the differences in people that will become apparent with any requested / imposed change – imagine if someone you've never met before now comes along and tells you you're never going to be able to fold your arms in your preferred way again! How would you feel about that? Yet that's exactly what we do with peoples work processes and environments, without a thought for the feelings such action generates.



If we ignore it, it might go away and we can remain comfortable, safe and complacent. Familiarity breeds contempt, it's this sort of comfort that breeds complacency and why companies with no challenge to change, to improve, don't usually last too long, which is the opposite scenario those people who try to deny change want, by becoming stagnant in your reactions to change, you chance developing an environment of self destruction, as you won't be able to change when you have to, i.e. to compete against the competition that will inevitably turn up one day.

Consider you work for 'Arm Folding inc.', you will deny the need to change the way you fold your arms, even though the expert on arm folding can give you numerous accounts of how folding your arms differently will be better for the company, you keep trying to fold your arms the old way and eventually the company goes under, because the market and the shareholders demand the alternative arm folding methods are used, while all the time you are expounding the reasons why there is nothing wrong with continuing to fold your arms just the way you always have – this might seem too simple and silly, but in essence is exactly what happens with the introduction of new methods of working, call it lean or what-have-you.

Resistance – 99 reasons why it won't work, Also known as the 'Yeah But' syndrome. (This is where people automatically start each sentence with "Yeah But," sending a signal at the start of any interaction that they haven't actually considered what you have just said, they are going to make sure their point of view shows you why yours is inconceivable) this is where you experience the fear of change. The greater the fear, the greater the need for self preservation, therefore the greater the possibility of 'yeah But'.

You are familiar with one scenario, regardless of how hectic or stressful, maybe even abusive, your everyday life is, if you're used to it, you will be comfortable with it, where change is being 'Threatened' (Communication of change will usually be translated internally as a threat to your environment and subsequent perceived safety) you will rationalise why it isn't and shouldn't be possible. Reverting to the negative is a defence mechanism, it allows us to justify staying the same.

Again, using 'Arm Folding inc.' as the example, folding your arms one way may in the long term cause a medical problem in a shoulder, but you are not aware of the long term impact, the change is therefore for your benefit, but not being able to understand this means the message that you have to change your arm folding methods, is met, after denial with your reasoning as to why folding your arms this way has been ok for the last X amount of years and will serve you going forwards – Thank you very much! And anyway, the new way of arm folding isn't going to work, because you wear your watch on the hand that goes underneath and can't see the time, and because you move your arms differently with the new way, your cuff links get caught on your shirt, and it's uncomfortable and you feel self conscious of what you look like etc. etc.



The detail is used automatically to justify why it can't work (Negative) rather than finding solutions to the other issues the change for the long term benefit will provide (Positive), we feel safe being negative (It's natural and part of our defence mechanism at a psychological level), especially as we can't associate the benefit in the future with our level of comfort now (Wisdom = the perception of time), yet the poor shoulder in the future may incapacitate us and we may not be able to perform the job any more, (if you'll pardon the pun – Arm Folding inc. will fold ☺) if only we would move our watch onto the other arm and start using buttons instead of links! We would save our shoulder and the company.

As stated above, It is therefore the responsibility of the 'Change Agent' to ensure the communication received is sufficient to ensure the fear of the new proposed methods is minimised, removed or at least understood, so it can be dealt with openly and rationally, and not only with a select few, but with everyone – as with all 'Lean' initiatives, the one common proposal is that a change effort doesn't exclude anyone, yet managers and consultants tailor their efforts in relation to status, position, roles and responsibilities. This isn't sufficient effort or resource for sustainable change.

Exploration – following some pockets of success, people may become interested and start to ask questions, this is where the benefits to others are visible and you start to 'WANT' to get involved. Your internal conversation might go something like, "If the new scenario is providing 'them' with personal benefits, (whether it be environment, recognition, pay, whatever), perhaps this new way of doing things might be worth trying?"

You get an interest, because it appears to be of benefit, your perception of 'it' is that it might be a 'Good' thing. i.e. If you witness a group of respected individuals folding their arms in a new way, you will wonder why they see it as the best thing to do. Alternatively this is where many leaders don't walk the walk but only talk the talk, and where leading by example is pre-requisite, if you only hear someone telling you to fold your arms differently while seeing them continue to fold their arms the old way, anyone would be hard pushed to be convinced of their sincerity (Where sincerity is another constituent part of culture and a reflection of belief – consider the Director that expounds the implementation of 5S, but continues to work in a pig sty?????).

This 'Big Impact' approach is the principle a lot of consultancies operate with and why an implementation program will include a 'Quick hit' (Kaikaku) forcefully imposed change drive, to quickly convert one section of a business as the flagship for the remainder. The demonstration area can have the soft issues addressed from a resource point of view (see the Hawthorne effect in our History overview package under George Elton Mayo – 1927 – slide 16) and generate commitment in a team prior to the event which ensures the change is guaranteed support from the core / focus / work / group (Team – various names are en Vogue).



These essential soft issues, which allow commitment to quickly evolve prior to the physical change taking place in the work environment, will be subsequently missed, as the financial controllers won't be able to justify the consultants resource for all and sundry. This is one fundamental part of successful change implementation that is missing. (i.e. the benefits are conveyed with a lot more personal effort and attention in the Kaikaku event. The team is convinced of the benefits and individually experience a 'feel good' moment as they are also being shown interest away from the work environment, providing them with a boost to their self esteem, as they are the 'Chosen ones' it the 'Someone upstairs cares' effect)

Commitment – Where people experience a benefit from doing things in a new way, their belief in relation to the personal benefits alter and they internalise the new way of doing things as their own accepted way. The trick with a continuous improvement environment is to develop peoples acceptance of an environment that never remains constant, never becomes stagnant, provokes and stimulates conscious thought for methods of making things better, slicker, quicker and easier, more value adding.

With the typical approach to change implementation as it has been represented over the last twenty years in the first slide graph in our alignment package, this isn't achieved. The change is imposed by consultants, the fundamental attitudes of the 'people' aren't changed and the changes aren't sustainable, as they aren't intuitively understood through familiarity.

It doesn't become 'the way we do things round here' it only ever achieves 'the way they do things round here' status.

It's only ever a method of working acceptable to the managers and consultants, and unfortunately the managers often don't believe in the new approach either, they are just better at saying the right things in the right places regardless of their beliefs – my Mum and Dad brought me up to consider this as 'Lying' and therefore wrong and detrimental to progress.

Based on the results of the last twenty years of implementation failure, I guess my ol' Mum and Dad's Victorian attitude might have been right.

All the falsehood that people communicate and justify for diplomatic reasoning and cultural acceptance, saying what is expected rather than what is believed or honest, to keep the peace, breeds confusion and adds to the levels of stress. As we have come to understand, levels of stress are directly relative to levels of performance.

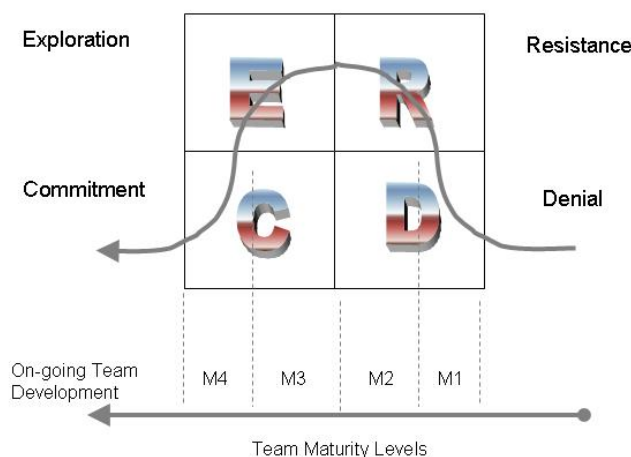
This then yet again links to our HRT model – Honesty, Respect and Trust being the mainstay of implementing sustainable change over and above political correctness, deceit, status, selfishness etc. that pervade our modern way of life.



Stress is generated by this attitude - See the last slide on our Alignment presentation free to download from www.concreteheads.co.uk

SLIDE 2 – Team Maturity in relation to the Change model

Team Maturity - a



Consider we automatically operate on the WIIFM principle (What's in it for me).

Becoming committed to something really means we **change our belief**. Originally in the Denial stage we believe the current 'way' is right and the new 'way' is wrong – not for us – unnecessary – so we oppose it (Resistance). By the time we become 'committed to the cause' our perception of 'The Way' has changed, we have had enough **time**, to **experience** the benefit to us directly and individually.

So when WIIFM is asked we have changed the internal answer in ourselves from 'Nothing' to 'Something'. It is when all members of a team **understand** there is something in it for them individually that the team is mature, as their **need**, their **want**, will all be the same – they will be aligned as a team.

Successful change implementation 'should' have this as it's driving force - most in charge of change do not even know the principle. Let alone use it as a measure of change progression.



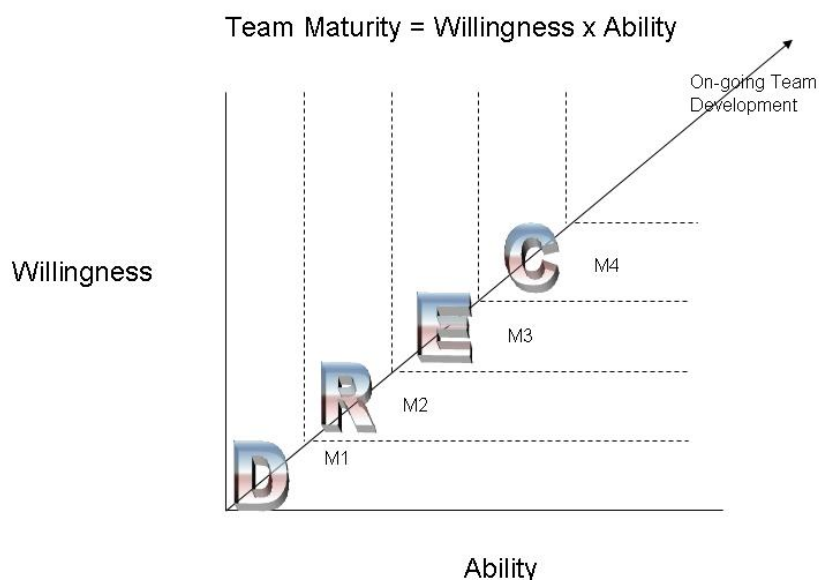
Now, in relation to this change process, communication complexity and the exponential growth of interactions dependant on the quantities of people in a team etc. have to be considered. (This theory will feature in our communications package – currently under development but available on the concrete heads site soon). For now, trust me, Teams will ideally consist of no more than 9. Best is 7, where you combine cross-functional teams in this way.

Outside of that, we generate levels of maturity in said team in relation to the combined stages of psychological development within the team, to produce our levels M1,2,3,4. (Maturity 1, 2,3,4, etc.).

See next slide.....

SLIDE 3 – Team Maturity = Willingness x Ability

Team Maturity - b



Another Graphical representation, still making reference to the psychological change model, but showing also, how willingness and ability feature in Maturity, and how team maturity can be effected not *only* by psychological change, but through the introduction of different levels of experience, different attitudes toward work etc.



Willingness – how much you do something without any ‘feelings’ of discontent, objection etc. – i.e. no negative, but only positive ‘feelings’ about the activity required of you. (This again – if being asked to do something by someone else comes back to HRT – Honesty, Respect, Trust).

Ability – the level of skill you have developed through experience to do the job, with Wisdom. (Wisdom being the foresight to see the end at the beginning, such that you perform every step of the activity in such a way as it will be of positive benefit toward the final objective).

Final is of course relative to the job-in-hand, as continuous improvement has no ‘end’ by its nature, of course, but in relation to ‘work’ activity, CI is more often than not a by-product of producing something – i.e. a plastic injection mould tool for a toolmaker (maybe a 8-10 week cycle) or screwing the next two nuts down on a bolt to finally lock the next assembly together for an assembly worker on a production line (maybe a 1 minute cycle). Improving the efficiency of these activities by removing the ‘waste’ elements and reducing time, effort etc. is CI, doing it again and again is ability.

The maturity stages – combinations of A&W

Consider a new Starter (Straight out of school) – They are typically (but not always) very enthusiastic, they **want** to do well, make a good impression, but as yet, have no ability, so they are not in denial, but are low on the maturity scale. (Don’t get me started on the lack of wisdom surrounding investment into apprenticeships and the critical skill situation the country is facing!).

Now consider a person who has been in the company for years. Very experienced, has all the ‘ability’ but is comfortable with the way things are and you are asking them to change – they are in the ‘Denial’ stage and therefore have very low willingness. Again placing them in the low maturity scale in relation to teamwork.

M1 – Where there is little or no ability and no willingness, the maturity level will be low. i.e. at the beginning of a Lean or Six Sigma change program. People being asked to move away from their current belief structure (out of their comfort zone) know very little if anything at all about Lean or 6σ and have no wish to be active within it.

This is why effective and thorough communication from HRT focused leaders is essential in these early stages.

In addition to this, the introduction of a new person to a team, or the loss of a mature person from a team will impact the over-all maturity of the team and subsequently effect performance. (Not considered in today’s accounting methods – unfortunately. If it was, perhaps the trend toward ‘contract’ employment may be re-considered in reaction to work-load and long term job security would become an HR consideration once more and considered of



more benefit than no holiday or sick pay for contractors – bottom line driven accounting choices strike yet again!).

M2, M3 – The various stages of complexity where education, experience, attitudes, beliefs, psychology et al get's thrown in the pot. (These are the stages most companies find themselves in most of the time – due a lack of consideration regards communication complexity and team size / structure).

M4 – Where belief has moved on, experience has been gained with the passing of time. A few mistakes have been learned from (M2, M3). There is a common understanding regards the effort expended individually, in relation to the benefits received – (I.e. a more efficient profitable and higher salary paying business, with long term security, that has developed in such a way that Continuous Improvement is “the way we do things around here” and mature teams are comfortable with and inspired by constant change – providing the company with the flexibility to stay competitive in an ever changing market).

Consider the old phrase – **“where there is a will, there is a way”**. This embodies everything alluded to above – but also proves, when simplified too much, our language fails to deliver understanding – this is why effort has to go into communications first and foremost, with consideration for psychology and culture above all other issues – the tools and techniques can follow.

Best regards
CONCRETE HEADS