



# THE ONLY CONSTANT

If you've never heard of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, you may still know this quote: "The only thing that is constant is change."

It is revealing that many of the quotes that pop up in a Google search for "change" refer to fear and pain. Author Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley wrote "Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change." Author and feminist Erica Jong notes "I have accepted fear as part of life, specifically the fear of change ... I have gone ahead despite the pounding in the heart that says: turn back." Novelist Raymond Chandler was no cheerier: "To say goodbye is to die a little."

Maybe. But we all say goodbye to things on a regular basis – and not just to fax machines and BlackBerrys. Changes in technology have become part of life for most of us, if only because you can't find needed parts or support after a couple of years. Ideas and ways of doing business, however, can be harder to dislodge.

One of the most telling examples is that of Eastman Kodak Company. Founded in 1888, Kodak pretty much owned the camera and film business until it was decimated by its sluggishness in embracing digital photography. In short, they saw themselves as the leader in cameras and film and didn't want to cannibalize their core business.

Bad call, because it didn't stop anyone else. And here's the kicker: A Kodak engineer invented the digital camera in 1975. The company went on to develop and patent digital technologies that are still in use today, yet didn't introduce their own digital camera until 20 years later, with little enthusiasm. By then it was too late. And it wasn't a fear of new technology that stopped them; they had that before anyone. It was a fear of messing with a "successful" business model.

The problem with success is that it is measured by looking back. By that standard, Kodak was still a success when it finally put a toe into digital markets but found itself on a downward spiral that led to bankruptcy in 2012. A shadow of its former self, its assets consisted largely of patents from its glory days.

A lot can get in the way of managing change: Comfort in doing the same thing; fear of the unknown or of making mistakes; a sense of having arrived. (If you ever do arrive, the bus is about to leave.) It's true that there is only so much planning you can do for change itself; it doesn't always knock. The most important part of change management is

ingraining in your organization the reality that change is as inevitable as the sunrise and sunset. It is something to be addressed and embraced, not feared. Like fearing the sunrise, it's coming anyway.

Accepting change is not easy for many, and adapting an organization's culture to its inevitability takes work. The first step is to examine yourself and your understanding of the dynamics and psychology of change. "Managing Transitions" by William Bridges, PhD and Susan Bridges, and "Leading Change" by John P. Kotter are good places to start. But there's more to change management than good books.

Keep your "Not going to change it" list short, to matters of faith and ethics you will need to guide you through change. Make anticipating, managing, and planning for change a regular part of your company's culture. Some practices, policies, product or service offerings – and perhaps people – may need to go. Don't be afraid to get help in managing the process. It is true that change can hurt, but it won't be as painful as the consequences of ignoring it. A "Kodak moment" isn't always a good thing.

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