



By Silver Rose

CHANGE YOUR FOCUS CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Step Ten *Dancing with Change*

The steps of learning to dance with change:

- One:** Accept that which cannot be changed.
- Two:** Choose—will you dance or sit this one out?
- Three:** Determine how much of this new dance you already know.
- Four:** Determine your role—Lead or Follower?
- Five:** Focus on learning the *new* dance.
- Six:** Start with the frame—it's *everything*.
- Seven:** If you step on your partner's toes, apologize and *keep dancing*.
- Eight:** Find partners who are better at the dance than you.
- Nine:** Once you've mastered the steps—practice, practice, practice!

Step Ten: Once you've mastered the dance, make it yours! The fundamentals of every dance do not change. That being the case how is it that some dancers can make it look like they're inventing a dance on the spot? Those who are able to do that have mastered the fundamentals and, because of that mastery are able to innovate and make the dance their own.

This is the step that is generally fought tooth and nail in organizations. A good deal of lip service is given to the idea that we want employees to be innovative, to find new and better ways to do things. However, without a structure to support this decree, employees who have the courage to try are often maligned or, at the very least, discouraged from stepping outside the pre-existing boundaries of their jobs.

Some of these employees are what I call Changepreneurs.

Changepreneur™— someone who identifies opportunities within change, applies the necessary action to advance his/her ideas and assumes accountability for the inherent risks and outcome.

If you have Changepreneurs within your organization who are not nurtured, you will lose them. And, when they walk out your door the ideas that could take your organization to the next level leave with them. These are the employees who either join a competitor who *will* listen or they start their own companies.

Changepreneurs are never satisfied with the status quo. When something changes, not only are they the first to see

the inherent opportunities, they are also the ones who act quickly and *assume accountability for results*. This is the kind of mindset every organization *claims* to want in their employees and yet, when those employees show up in the ranks, they are usually seen as threats. Phrases like, "Not a team player," or "Doesn't follow procedures," are often seen in their employee evaluations.

Unlike Status-Quo employees, Changepreneurs thrive on change. They get bored with routine. The phrase, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," merely confuses them. They believe, "If it's working well, why not make it even better?"

I am not saying that Status-Quo employees do not master the dance—they do! They master it so well that they don't want to change one piece of it. When a twist on an established step is introduced, it disrupts their flow and they find the change unsettling and quickly reject it.

If you are a Status-Quo contributor, do not despair. There is great need for you in every organization. The Changepreneurs are the ones who shake things up with the end goal of improvement. They are builders, not maintainers like the Status-Quo employees. Once the Changepreneurs introduce change and generate forward momentum, they usually move on to the next thing, leaving the Status-Quo employees behind to clean things up and calm the waters. Even though you Status-Quo employees will complain about this, you wouldn't have it any other way. There is nothing you enjoy more than creating order out of chaos.

Whether you are a Changepreneur or a Status-Quo employee (or somewhere in between) it is important for you to learn to dance with change because things aren't going to slow down any time soon. We learn a new dance, master it and before we can enjoy our time on the dance floor, the music has changed and we're obliged to learn a newer dance. The more quickly we can adapt, the easier and more productive our lives will be.

Step Ten comes as naturally to Changepreneurs as does breathing. For Status-Quo employees, it is a step that needs to be taken deliberately because you do not have a natural inclination to improvise. You are generally rule-followers and, in order to make a dance uniquely yours, you will have to step outside of the rules.

Every dancer has a style and you are no different. However, before you can put your unique mark on anything, you must first master the basics. Until you've done that, you will find little interest from others in your ideas for how to improve something you've not yet mastered yourself.

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