



The Personal ABC's of Change Management

Agents of Change: Think about it; the big project you're working on right now, a special relationship you're worried about preserving, a community or family event in which you are participating, *you are an agent of change.*

ABC's of Change Management: *Do you manage change, or do you manage the results of change?* Because change often deals with some thing that is not totally predictable, you may feel that change is happening to you.

The ABC's is a set of tools for helping you manage change.

A = Assumptions: Simply stated, an assumption is a supposition, or belief, that something is true. Based on this definition, it can be concluded that assumptions do, in fact, help define our reality. How we act and what we do is based on a number of assumptions that we make, many of which have become subconscious. However, assumptions are perhaps the most insidious and dangerous of all of the unspoken. Everyone in every situation makes assumptions about everything that is happening. As a change agent it is key to *test your assumptions*. Data that you deal with can be true or not true. Otherwise you must "assume." You must thoroughly understand the key objectives that you are trying to accomplish and the problem that you are trying to solve. Whether the problem deals with only you and an inanimate object, e.g. fixing a shelf, or if the problem deals with other people and a complex project, you must test your assumptions.

B = Biases: The word bias often elicits an emotional response from people. In its most pronounced form, bias deals with the generalization of attitudes towards people, groups of people, or things based on personal views that may not deal with any direct contact or experience with the elements towards which one is biased. A technical definition of bias is "a highly personal and unreasoned distortion of judgment." (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Merriam Co., Springfield, MA, 1977) While "unreasoned distortion of judgment" sounds rather stark, bias is stark. Our biases based on any experience, or reaction, distort our judgment. Biases deal with our own filters. It is the shading or the coloring of the glasses that we look through to understand our own reality. Biases are ever present, but we rarely check their influence. It is critically important to *check our biases* and either understand how they are influencing our decisions or understand that they are in effect.

C = Check Yourself Out: Change agents and managers of change are "present" in the change environment that they are working in. They are physically present, and they are consciously present. They are, by definition and design, involved in the change that they are affecting or managing. Being involved in a change program, they are always subject to being changed by the very program that they are in the midst of implementing. So how do change agents survive being changed, or possibly consumed, by the very change that they are responsible for managing? Check yourself out! Check yourself out is administered by the practitioner on the practitioner. Check yourself out deals with a conscious, out-of-body experience. The practitioner must be able to step out of her body and look at herself as she is working as a change agent. This is a third-party point of view. At the same time the practitioner must be capable of critiquing herself as she is performing her required role as a change agent. Check yourself out deals with running this frequent diagnosis on what you are currently doing, in your role as a change agent. Two key questions are: 1. Are you present in the now (the current moment)? 2. Are you working the current business of change?



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SUMMARY: 1. We are all agents of change; 2. ABC's of Change Management provides useful change tools; 3. Test your assumptions; 4. Check your biases; 5. Check yourself out.

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