

Don't Let Change Manage You: 4 Characteristics of a Change Agent

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Some people love change. Some people hate change. Some people are just along for the ride. No matter where you fall in the continuum, we know that change is difficult – because change necessarily involves loss. In the workplace, change can mean loss of job security, loss of relationships, loss of identity, loss of routine, loss of benefits, the list goes on and on. We stand to lose a lot when change comes around.

We are all too familiar with the loss that change brings, which is why many of us show some sort of resistance to it. This resistance can look very different from person to person, however. Some resistance is intellectual – where you might disagree with a conclusion or a decision being made. Some resistance is emotional – where you might be reacting out of fear or anxiety for what the change might mean for you.

Despite the threat of loss, we know that not everyone responds to change in the same way. There are generally three ‘characters’ who might show up when a change occurs. One is the **Resistor**. This person is having a very difficult time with the change and has strong emotions related to the change. They might engage in behavior that pushes back against or even attempts to sabotage the change. This is the most destructive character to show up during change. Another character is the **Spectator**. This person often takes a ‘wait-and-see’ approach and hopes that the change doesn’t impact them. They want to keep their head down and hopefully weather the storm with as little disruption as possible. The last character is the **Change Agent**. This person accepts the change very quickly and learns ways to thrive inside the changing environment.

The good news is that becoming a Change Agent is something that can be learned, and, to that end, here are four differences between the Change Agent and the other characters that show up during change:

- **Change Agents display emotional intelligence:** The more in touch you are with how the change impacts you and your emotional reaction to that change, the less ‘stuck’ you become when change comes along.
- **Change Agents look to the future:** Rather than dwelling on the past, people who manage change well learn from the past – and use what they learned to make the future better.

- **Change Agents create change:** One of the major reasons why people have difficulty with change is the loss of control they feel during change. Change agents maintain more of their sense of control, as they are involved in actually creating the change.
- **Change Agents find opportunities:** Even if a change has been foisted upon you, finding ways to make yourself better and add value to the organization is a hallmark of the most successful leaders.

These four characteristics of Change Agents are what set them apart from everybody else. How many of these descriptions fit you? To learn more about how to proactively manage change, please download our free eBook called “Managing Yourself Through Change.” Tell us what you think on our [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) page, and feel free to share this post.