

Change is in the air

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Adapting to change is challenging. As a result, people often try to ignore, resist and deny that anything has changed for as long as they can. But the world is about change, it always has been, and few things are more constant than change. That old adage, “The more things change, the more they stay the same”, is simply a mantra used by people to justify why they refuse to adapt to change. What they are saying is, “The more things change, the more nothing has changed, so don’t change yourself or anything you are doing.” In reality, the more things change, the more these people change, and you must too. It’s just that simple.

If you are going to be successful in your business, your organization, your community, or in life, you have got to be able to adapt to change. I remember reading a quote from a man who was apparently trying to climb the largest peak on each of the seven continents. On one of the peaks, he had an accident that led to the amputation of both of his legs. Everyone presumed his enterprise was over. Within a couple of years, however, he was being interviewed after having come down from the last of seven peaks that he had climbed as an amputee. As the story goes, when asked how he was able to do it, he remarked, “I just realized that it was not the strongest of the species that survives, or even the smartest. The one that survives is the one most able to adapt to change.”

It turns out the story is fiction, and though the quote has been attributed to Clarence Darrow and to Charles Darwin, it most likely originated with a professor named Leon Megginson, speaking at a convention in 1963. Regardless, the truth of those words is no less powerful. Many people, and organizations and businesses, try to hang on to what they had, or the way things were, in an attempt to maintain some sort of dreamy status quo. They close their eyes to the change they should be witness to, and as a result their present becomes the past. The longer they hold onto that past, the harder it is to adapt to their new reality and to anticipate and prepare for the future. The harder it becomes to adapt to the change, the tighter they hold on to the old fiction, and the tighter they hold on to the old fiction, the harder it becomes to adapt and prepare for new changes. It is a vicious cycle that many people, businesses, and organizations become entangled in, and it leads to their failure.

The world around us is always in flux. We can observe it, internalize it, respond to it, adapt to it, make it part of us, and capitalize on it...or we can deny it is happening. The former means work because it means changing ourselves to meet a new reality and a world of new opportunities. The latter takes just as much work, but it means you can remain comfortably in the past until your business or community or organization join you there.

Change is hard to adapt to, but for the success of yourself, your business, your organization, or your community adapting to change is a matter of survival.

This syndicated content is provided by Doug Griffiths, best-selling author and chief community builder at 13 Ways, a company with a mission to push communities to face their challenges to find their unique path to success. For more information visit www.13ways.ca, or we can start the conversation at info@13ways.ca.