Leveraging Optimism to Make Mission-Centered Change Work

Terry L. Paulson, PhD
“Believers are not optimists, they are people of hope. Their only reason for so huge a hope is the story of how the Maker of the world only once came into this world, died, lived again, and still intends to come back and fix his world once and for all.”
Keep the clock and altimeter wound up.

Warn the passengers against throwing their cigars and cigarettes out the window.

Keep an eye on passengers when they go to the lavatory to be sure they don't mistakenly go out the emergency exit.
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA  
10-27-1945

Cape J. F. Fenderson

IN ACCOUNT WITH
LISENBY HOSPITAL, Inc.

PATIENT'S NAME  

ADDRESS

ADMITTED  

DISMISSED  

10-27-45

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Credits

Paid by check

Balance Hospital Bill  

Doctor's Fee  

TOTAL  

50.00

96.02

MCCONNELL FRTG CO.
“In a recent study by George Washington University, the evening news was monitored for 100 nights. The research found 6,500 negative news items and only 370 positive news items.... The conclusion is that we are grossly over-informed about catastrophes we can do little or nothing about.”
“Learned Helplessness”

Many give way to “victim thinking” and the depression of our age, “learned helplessness”—“Nothing I do will make any difference in what happens to me.”
“We have a nation that has a constant need to be entertained, a short attention span, and an inability to look at anything in depth.”
“In times of rapid change, experience could be your worst enemy.”
“The new economy is a dangerous place. It is unforgiving, and it measures human life in dog years: Three years wasted on the wrong pursuits, or, just as bad, in avoiding the right ones, leaves you 21 years older and farther off track. There’s never a time for comfort. Now, can you act as though you know that? The interesting challenge is to know that if you don’t go far enough, you’ll never know how far you can go.”
“Take the notion of ‘zero defects.’ Yes, it has stimulated major improvements and efficiencies. But it also can create a fearful, risk-averse environment where people take safe avenues and play games to cover up errors. Furthermore, since zero defects cannot routinely apply to new products, services and processes, the concept can encourage people to stay with what they know.”
“There has been an alarming increase in the number of things I know nothing about.”
“The illiterate of the future are not those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”
Finding Your Own Keepers

- What’s worth keeping?
- Develop Keeper Notes and a Keeper Audio File.
- What three “Keepers” will focus your strategic change efforts on your return?
- Access Dr. Paulson’s free e-mail series, “30 Days to Change Your Life” at www.terrypaulson.com/change
Your Challenge

Share one keeper from today’s program that you want to continue focusing on your return?

Be specific.
Wayne Gretzky

“You miss 100% of the shots you never take.”
“Don’t get engrossed with things over which you have no control, because that will adversely affect the things that you do have control over.”
POSITION, PERFORM AND PERSIST
“The only man I know who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measures anew each time he sees me. The rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them.”
Helping Others Hear the Music?
"You don’t have to have a burning platform to make your case for change. There are compelling business cases out there that can be leveraged to make your people aware of the dangers on inaction. There’s nothing wrong with sharing nightmares so that you don’t have to live them yourself. Such lessons can create the motivation for changes worth making."
I’m sorry you had a rough day at the office, but you have the wrong house.
Your Challenge

What story would help you be “the music” for your organization’s needed change?
Impact Comes from Driving Your Vision, Mission and Values
“One of the biggest advantages that any non-profit executive can enjoy is the ability to put on Strategy Glasses. ... Strategy Glasses give the wearer the ability to look into the future and see patterns, trends, and developments that will affect their organization. That insight then helps the wearer position the organization accordingly.”
“Vision without action is only a dream. Action without vision is just passing the time. Vision with action can change the world.”
“Spend as much time on opportunity management as you do on operations management.”
“If you’re not serving your mission, you’d better be serving someone who is.”
John W. Gardner

“The first and last task of a leader is to keep hope alive.”
“You need clarity on your own non-negotiables. You need to know what you won’t budge on, or you’ll be buffeted by the winds.”
“When in doubt, do right.”
Your Challenge

What organizational values will help drive and guide you in selling needed change?
Resource Management and Priority Shifts in a Cost Containment World
Zen Wisdom

“After Ecstasy, the laundry.”
“Nothing inspires genius like a tight budget.”
There’s no rush on this, Hendricks. Take all night if necessary.
“The essence of strategy is denial.”
Lou Gerstner

“We must right size and right skill.”
“Lack of planning on your part does not constitute a crisis on my part.”
Your Challenge

What must you say “NO” to in order to have the resources needed to say an emphatic “YES” to the needed mission-focused initiatives?
Caring Enough to Be a Problem Solver not a Problem Evader
“People want to have influence. They want to be involved, and getting involved means conflict. Collaboration does not occur in some happy world, where people always work in harmony. Meaningful collaboration requires relationships that can take punishment.”
“No problem is too big or so complicated that it cannot be run away from!”
“The search for someone to blame is always successful.”
“When one person calls you a horse’s ass, don’t worry. When four people do, go out and buy a saddle.”
Your Challenge

Trouble happens and trouble must be resolved quickly to keep the change process on track. How have you made it safe to confront problems quickly?
The Power of Story
Getting Heard Above the Noise
“Up-flow is what happens when a non-profit executive...sets up a situation in which positive information (and therefore power) flow subtly from those lower in the hierarchy up and through the CEO. Up-flow is not about CEO pride. It’s about positioning the organization. The employees who helped gain the recognition feel justifiably proud.”
“There are two ways of spreading light: To be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it.”
“I’m often introduced as being ‘in charge of change.’ I’m not in charge of anything. My role is to create mirrors that show the whole what the parts are doing—through coffee talks and small meetings, through building a network, through bringing people together who have similar or complimentary ideas. ... You seek out the positive deviants and support them. You feed them; you give them resources and visibility.”
“Every person I work with knows something better than I. My job is to listen long enough to find it and use it.”
Bridge Building Strategies to Make Collaborative Teams Work
“We teach collaborative problem-solving. In school that’s called cheating.”
Abraham Lincoln

“I don’t like that man. I must get to know him better.”
“Networks are very important, especially for building credibility. We have leaders, but they’re not appointed. You’re a leader by having followers. People have to be able to trust you, and networking becomes the way you build that trust. Once you have it, you can initiate change.”
“The best way to win someone over to your cause is to ask them to help you.”
Newt Hardie

“Our role as leaders is not to catch people doing things wrong but to create an environment in which people can become heroes.”
“If you aren’t having fun in your work, fix the problem before it becomes serious; ask for help if you need it. If you can’t fix it and won’t ask for help, please go away before you spoil the fun for the rest of us.”
Making Change Work Starts with You...
John Wooden

“Make every day your masterpiece.”
“Excellence isn’t a sometimes thing. You have to earn it and reearn it every single day.”
“The most important part of the meeting is immediately after. What are they going to do with it once it is over?”
Your Challenge

Inventing the future is everyone’s responsibility. What three keepers from this event will define your personal change efforts in support of your organization’s critical mission-focused initiatives?
Priceless Proverbs

“"A miss is as good as a... Mr!"”

“Laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry and...
...you have to blow your nose.”

“A penny saved...
...is not much.”

“He who marries for money...
...better be nice to his wife.”
Our story continues with you.