



Are You a Change Master?



Creativity is change. To create is to “combine separate and distinct elements into a cohesive new whole.” In other words, you change what was into a new what is.

The ability to transform not just external things, but to grow and transform ourselves is what gives life meaning. This is why being creative is so satisfying and pleasurable. Creativity is a lure that calls us to take the spiritual journey of becoming who we are meant to be. And that means changing who we are, creating a new self from the old.

The metaphor of a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly is often used to illustrate this process. It’s a soothing idea. A caterpillar doesn’t need permission, approval or a Bush grant. It just does it. Becoming a butterfly is natural, organic and beautiful. Who wouldn’t want to become a butterfly? There is always the subtle, unconscious hope that our next change will turn us into a butterfly at last and we won’t have to change again!

But the ego and soul of a human being are apparently more complicated than that of a caterpillar, so we need many transformations to become who we are truly meant to be. Add to that the demands of everyday life and it becomes apparent that we all have to be skilled in managing change.

If you want the extra thrill of being pro-actively creative, instead of just reacting to whatever the environment throws at you, you need be a master of change.

In a marvelous piece of synchronicity, I just finished an assignment to research and develop a training program on change for one of my corporate clients. What I learned increased my ability to embrace

change and added another layer of appreciation for my students and clients who are also becoming creative change masters.

As I did the research, I kept thinking about how what is being discovered about organizational change applies to individuals and their creativity. I’ve written a series of articles translating the Eight Stage Change Process as presented by John Kotter, the corporate change guru. (If you’re interested in reading the original source, check out Kotter’s *Leading Change*, 1996.)

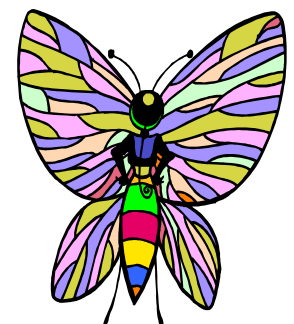
The 7 Stages of Change for individuals are:

1. Recognize the Urgency
2. Enlist Allies
3. Discover Your Vision and Develop a Strategy
4. Share the Vision
5. Empower Action
6. Generate and Celebrate Intermediate Success
7. Anchor the Change

The first step is discussed in this newsletter. The remaining 6 articles will be available every 3 to 4 weeks to give you time to apply the information to the creative change you want to make.

You can find the articles on my new website, www.RosanneBane.com. If you’d like to receive the newsletter via email, send your email address to Rosanne@RosanneBane.com and I’ll add you to the ezine mailing list for free. If you’d like a paper copy mailed to you via U.S. mail, please send \$10 to cover costs to: Rosanne Bane, Imagination Ink, P.O. Box 7063, Minneapolis, MN 55407-0063.

And now let’s take a look at the first step, **Recognize the Urgency**, which you’ll find on page 2.





Step 1: Recognize the Urgency

The first step in Kotter's Change Process for organizations is to create a sense of urgency. Individuals

don't need to create urgency; we need to recognize the urgency that is inherent in our lives. We have an abundance of things we'd like to do, have and be. But we have limited time, so we have to choose. How sad then, to further limit ourselves by ignoring the significance of each and every day.

The urgency is just this: you will not have enough time on this earth to do all the things you want to do, but you will have enough time to do the things that are truly most important to you if you take action.

Urgency is not anxiety. Anxiety is fear based. Urgency is awareness based. Urgency is not getting yourself into a frenzy or wringing your hands about how little time you have left. It is consciously, deliberately accepting the reality that you have limited time and choosing to act accordingly. Anxiety does not support change. Urgency does.

A User's Guide to the Brain

When you get anxious, a part of your brain called the amygdala prompts you to seek the comfort of the familiar. Your amygdala wants you to do the same thing over and over — brush your teeth the same way every day, drive to work the same way, watch the same TV shows or read the same kinds of books.

While the amygdala resists change, the neocortex, the higher brain, seeks novelty and change. Your neocortex is the part of you that wants to be creative. The challenge is to find ways to balance the two contradictory desires.

This may be why it helps to have an opening ritual for your creativity. If you always light a candle or play certain music or wear the same hat every time you start creative work, the familiarity may soothe your amygdala enough to allow your neocortex to play with something new.

But when you're embarking on a big change, a ritual may not be enough to soothe your amygdala. This is why most people get very anxious about big

changes, even the ones that will make life more enjoyable. To be a change master and make the changes you want, you need to reinforce your higher brain's commitment.

To do that, you need to know why you're making the change. You have to make the significance and urgency of the change absolutely clear.

Change Your 'Wait Habit'

It is common to recognize the need for change and at the same time tell ourselves we can always change later. A 'Wait Habit' is a subtle way we resist change.

"There's always tomorrow" is dangerous. For example, I want to write another book, but today I 'have to' do something else and so the new book waits. After all, I can always start tomorrow. Or the next day. Or next month.

We've become modern ladies in waiting (apologies to the men, there is no masculine equivalent). And so tomorrow becomes the enemy of today.

In a recent *Star Tribune* article Kate DiCamillo, Minneapolis children's author, says this about making dreams wait: "I was 29 years old, and I felt like I had wasted a decade. I was disgusted with myself."

Eight years ago, DiCamillo changed her 'wait habit.' She made and honored a commitment to write two pages each morning, and eventually published her first novel, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, which became a New York Times bestseller.

You may not want to write books, you may not win awards for your creative efforts, although you might, (eight years ago I'm sure Kate DiCamillo didn't think she would be a bestselling author), but whatever your creative dreams are, you can make them reality by changing your 'wait habit' into a 'today habit.'

Use whatever emotion you have about the old waiting habit to move you out of it. DiCamillo was disgusted. You might be angry or frustrated or frightened or disillusioned. Whatever it is, use that emotional energy to stomp your feet and declare "I won't wait anymore. I won't let my life slip away unused." Use that energy to recognize the urgency of making the change you know you want to make.

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Urgency Worksheet

1. What, specifically, am I thinking about changing?
2. What will the situation look like when the change is complete?

3. How will my life change as a result of this? (List what will definitely happen separately from what might happen. For example: “I will definitely feel satisfied and proud,” versus “I will probably make or save some money.”)

4. What are the rewards for making this change? How will the change affect me physically, emotionally, spiritually, financially, socially? How will it affect my family and friends? My community?

5. What are the consequences of not making the change? Again consider the full range of physical, emotional, spiritual, financial and social outcomes.

6. Why is it vital to make this change now? How would delaying affect the rewards and consequences?

7. How does making this change support my values? Would delaying this change violate my values?

8. What, if anything, is more important than making this change? What is less important than this change? What am I willing to let of to make this change happen?

9. Will I make this change a priority? (If you’re not willing to make the change a high priority, it probably won’t happen. Review your list of rewards and consequences, then decide whether you’ll make the change a priority or make it wait.)

10. If you commit to making the change, write a summary of the significance of making the change now. Phrase the summary in positive language (rephrase the consequences of delaying into the rewards of starting now). Regularly remind yourself why it is important to make the change. You may need this reminder daily, even hourly, if the change is a big one.

In the next issue of *Imagination InkLinks*, we’ll explore the next step in the change process, the whos, hows and whys of Enlisting Allies.

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It has to be NOW!

The first step is to recognize the urgency of making the change NOW. Not tomorrow or next week or next month. Today.

If you know you’re going to do it eventually, why add the guilt, anxiety and self-doubt that procrastinating always brings? If you’re going to change something, you may as well start now and get the rewarding sense of accomplishment sooner.



Begin by completing the Urgency worksheet above. Then let me know how you want to receive the next issue of *Imagination InkLinks* (see page 1) so you’ll get information about the next step in the change process, Enlisting Allies. If you don’t want to wait until the next newsletter arrives, call me at 612-722-4139 to talk about how creativity coaching can guide and support you through the change process.



**Rosanne Bane, coach
and author of *Dancing
in the Dragon's Den*.**

I Resolve... No More Resolutions!

Have you kept your New Year resolutions? How many resolutions have you kept in your entire life? If you're like most people, the percentage isn't very high. Even in business, where people's jobs and the bottom line depend on following through on commitments to change, the number surprisingly low. The Harvard Business School estimates that only about 30% of corporate change efforts deliver what they promise!

If you're completely content with your life, there's no point in trying to change anything. You know the saying "If it ain't broke..." In fact, if you're thinking about making a change because someone else says you should (for example, lose weight

because of social pressure or even a doctor's recommendation), you will quickly lose interest and energy because it was never your commitment in the first place. That's why New Year resolutions usually fail and why I don't make them anymore. But I do make commitments to change and I've learned how to honor those commitments.

If there is something you've wanted to do for years... If there is something you want to create... If your heart calls you to make a change, change is possible. As you'll discover in this newsletter, change is essential to living a satisfying, creative life. Your chances of making a lasting change are dramatically improved when you understand and follow the steps in the change process. Where do you learn that? Inside this and future issues of *Imagination InkLinks*, of course!

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