



Quick CLIX for CHANGE ◀ No: 7

The 5 Change Conversations

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Real change isn't built on 1-hour briefings, snappy presentations or elegant flowcharts. It's built on good conversations. Change comes about first through conversations. Change leaders use conversations to shape shared vision, talk over strategies, goals and actions, connect, understand differing viewpoints, allay fears, reduce resistance, solve problems, make decisions and formulate action.

➔ Here's some of the different kinds of change conversations to be prepared for...

1. The WHY ARE WE CHANGING Conversation. The startpoint of most change conversations must cover the question: *Why is this change happening?* You can't motivate without first addressing WHY. People won't tune into your vision about what needs to change if they don't understand why. Many change conversations neglect to give a rationale that makes sense to the people you're talking to – resulting in confusion, which turns to scepticism, cynicism and resistance.

2. The VISION Conversation where the leader takes the opportunity to talk about the change, reinforce the direction or share the vision. Don't sell. Lead into the conversation with open-ended questions that promote exploration, option-seeking and even dissension. For example: *How is this working? What do you think about this idea? Are we on-track? What do you think is important? How is this making a difference? What's your vision of how it could be better? How would you approach/solve this? If you were in my shoes, what would you do?*

3. The OBSTACLES Conversation – the 'what's getting in the way' conversation. When working with your team or in one-on-one situations, open-ended questions encourage people to share their thinking and ideas. Problem-solving questions should flow from the global to the specific: *In your opinion, why is this approach going to work/not work? What do you see as the obstacles we face? What results have you achieved so far? Where are you stuck? What problems are you encountering? What solutions have you tried? What are your options at this point?*

4. The COMMITMENT Conversation – the 'action-planning' conversation where you discuss what actions might be taken to move forward or improve further. You talk about what commitments to action people might make, what changes they will try out, what the milestone might be and what support they need to keep these commitments: *What can we do to move this forward or make this work? What specific actions will you take? What milestones can we establish to measure whether this is working better? What can I do to better support you?*

5. The RESISTANCE Conversation where you engage with/challenge resistance. This is a graduated approach, where you listen first with empathy to understand objections, connect with thoughts and feelings around the change, discuss possibilities and consequences of not changing and see what can be done to get the person on board: *What do you fear most about this change personally? ...professionally? What is holding you back or getting in the way? Under what conditions might you give this change a go? What are the consequences of not changing?*



Learning Solutions
for Leadership & Change

BILL Cropper
Director &
Principal Consultant

Fax: 07-4068 7555

Tel: 07-4068 7591

Mob: 0429-687 513

E-Mail: coachingclinics@thechangeforum.com

Web: <http://www.thechangeforum.com>