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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

Creating a Change-Ready Culture

My twenty-one year old niece from New York stayed at our house during the last week of December. Ever since her mother, my sister, began a serious, irreversible health decline in 2013 Sarah has spent much of the holiday season with us in Pennsylvania. We enjoyed a fabulous Christmas dinner, baked scores and scores of soft sugar cookies (the kind with the icing and sprinkles on top), shopped for simple gifts for her family members back home, ate a couple of lunches in some of the area's best restaurants, looked at Christmas picture books from my childhood, and went to a movie. She and my husband, Kevin, even played a game of chess.



Quite a few of you know about Sarah. She has a learning disability, moderate visual impairment, hearing problems, and eye-hand coordination difficulties. She's also very OCD. Over time I've noticed that one of the ways she avoids meltdowns is to keep all aspects of her daily life the same—as much

as she can manage it.

While we were sitting at the kitchen table eating breakfast one morning, once again Sarah told me that the changes in her mom's health status scare her. Wistfully, she voiced her wish for everything to remain as it is now so she can feel safe. I let her finish and then I said: "Sarah, change is a given in life for everyone. Change, even the kind you perceive as bad, always offers an opportunity. The only REAL security lies in acquiring the confidence to cope with it." Her big blue eyes just bored into mine.

Here in this message I want to communicate that to you too. You know that changes, large and small, occur on a regular basis at work. It's the name of the game today. Too often, however, people aren't ready for these changes, and that's when problems arise. If you're in a leadership role, you can help to prepare your staff for both inevitable and desired change. My feature article below tells you how.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

6 Strategies for Helping People "Do Change"

Think about meals: They don't just appear out of thin air. Before you can eat them you have to prepare them. Or at least pick them up from a restaurant or store. The same can be said about changes. You need to get ready for them. You must plan for them. For best results you have to set the stage for them. The following six strategies provide the blueprint:

1. **Walk the talk.** It's very difficult to motivate others to make and adjust to changes when they see and hear you in resistance mode. You've got to set an example for everyone watching and listening to you. A note of caution: Your actions and words must be genuine. Folks don't follow phonies.
2. **Communicate the change openly and honestly.** When you anticipate a change, talk about it. Add it to the agenda for an upcoming team gathering or call a special meeting to roll it out. Share as many specifics about the change as appropriate and possible. Don't hide important facts,

and don't dance around the issues. People find that frustrating.

3. **Focus on the we.** Let your staff know that all of you are in this together—that you are there walking alongside them to serve as a resource and to support them as everybody in the department or company navigates this particular change. Be sure to use the words *we* and *us* often during the discussion. Short and long term, collaborative language can have a positive emotional impact.
4. **Invest in your people.** Do it in ways that mean something to them. Treat them as individuals by customizing your comments. Acknowledge their talents and skills. Express your belief and trust in them. Let them know that they matter to you and to the entire organization. Employees need to see evidence of your investment on a daily basis—not just on the day you intend to announce a change.
5. **Demonstrate authentic respect.** Implying or telling folks you have high regard for them but interacting with them in ways that indicate you don't isn't going to work. When it's time to implement changes, don't expect these people to happily hop on board. Instead, expect them to bulk, complain, and fight.
6. **Empathize with their experiences.** Taking an extra minute or two to check in with staffers about a recent illness, follow up on a relative's nursing home admission, communicate your sympathy after a death, or express your concern for them after a major sales loss is not just good PR or good business. It's heartfelt connection...human being to human being. There is no substitute for that.

By habitually incorporating the above six strategies into your daily work life, you'll be more prepared than many leaders the next time you need or choose to introduce a change. I wouldn't go so far to say that what I gave you is a no-fail blueprint, but it's pretty darn close!

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What Clients Say

After putting my personal and professional development on hold for several years, I finally realized I had to do something in order to feel confident and competent in my current position. Long before I decided to work with Sylvia I sensed I was losing my grip as my job description changed again and again within an organization that had come to resemble a moving floor. I also knew that I was experiencing a huge sense of loss as a result of these changes. For example, I didn't know how to come to terms with forfeiting the creativity piece that used to be a significant part of my daily work. Over a period of time Sylvia guided me to accept, own, and embrace my new duties, showcasing my natural gifts and best skills in ways I'd never considered. I was so relieved to get rid of the ugly chip on my shoulder. After milling around in the fog for a while, it felt good to shine.

- Laura D., Nonprofit Middle Manager, Central PA

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Offers and Opportunities

Brief Solution-Based Coaching for 2 Readers

Feeling stuck about how to set the stage for change in your workplace? Unsure about what to say or do? Having difficulty dealing with a change that has been handed down to you? If one of these questions hits home, why continue to struggle? **For only \$99** you can get one hour of focused, individualized attention from Sylvia. To schedule your phone session simply send an email to: sylvia@launchinglives.biz no later than January 15th. Two ezine readers will be the recipients of this special, low priced offer. Don't wait to take the action you know you need to take. First come, first served.

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RESOURCES

A Classic Read

If you are aware that big changes (or even little ones) are right the corner at work, you're wise to invest a few dollars in David Brandt's must-read book entitled: *Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers*. Although first published in 1996, there is absolutely nothing outdated about it. The material presented is both timeless and relevant for a wide variety of industries. I know...I just finished the last chapter. Start the new year by picking up a copy on Amazon for \$16.00 or less. Honestly, this is an easy to digest resource you probably need to add to your personal book shelf.

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TIP

If you are in a leadership position, proactively engage your team or full staff in informal conversations about change in general. You can do this during regularly scheduled group meetings—simply add the topic to the agenda. Invite people to share their fears and concerns associated with making various types of changes in the work environment. Initiating and encouraging such conversations helps to pave the way for implementing both planned and unplanned change without the chaos, resistance, and angst often associated with it. You are wise to make this sort of up front investment.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

Just before Christmas Sylvia attended the 2016 Year-End celebration event for the Mentorship Program affiliated with the Harrisburg Chamber of Commerce. Held at the American Red Cross in Harrisburg, this meeting featured a holiday themed buffet breakfast, recognition of the participating women mentors and mentees, tree ornament gift giving to the mentorship pairs, a special fire prevention and safety presentation by Red Cross staff, and personal daily care donations to the hosting organization for use with their "clients". Sylvia, along with Beth Romanski of Lebanon Valley College, has served as Volunteer Co-Chair for this program since its inception five years ago.

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About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking

services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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