Tipping the Balance Towards Change

You not only need a great plan, but also the motivation and co-operation of all those affected!

You can assess the potential for change for an individual or group by using the equation D x V x P >= C. Great if you're a mathematician, but if like me you prefer a picture:

On the left-hand side we have:

- **Desire** for change/dissatisfaction with the way things are now, or why we need it
- **Vision** of the future, or what will be different when the change is made
- **Practical steps** that can be taken to achieve the change

and on the right-hand side:

- **Cost**; including resources such as time and money, and the perhaps hidden emotional costs

Change happens when the balance is tipped in favour of the left-hand side

Assessing change potential

1. First, describe the change you wish to see in one or two sentences.

2. Then assess the balance:

Desire/Dissatisfaction	Vision	Practical Steps	Costs

3. What might you need to do to add weight to the first three columns and reduce the weight of the fourth?

4. Repeat for each stakeholder impacted by or involved in the change.

Tipping the balance

Change leaders can increase the chances of successful change by involving stakeholders in assessing the potential for change and developing ways to tip the balance:

1. Develop a compelling **Desire** for change. Look at the benefits of the change for the organisation *and* for the individuals involved. Equally, "burning platforms" need to matter, be realistic and possible to overcome.

2. Clarify the **Vision**. Ensure everyone is clear about what the future will look and feel like. Involve stakeholders in developing a compelling and common vision of the future, thus giving them a stake in that future. Individuals need to be crystal clear about what it will look and feel like when they are readily demonstrating a new skill or authentically demonstrating new behaviours.

3. Identify **Practical steps**. Once those involved in making the change happen are clear about why the change is happening and what the future looks like, they will also be the best people to identify how to get there, either on their own or with the support of a coach or mentor.

4. Minimise or mitigate the **Cost**. Be honest about any organisational impact such as restructure and role changes. Find out what personal costs people associate with the change and help people to identify their options. Create forums in which team members can raise and suggest solutions for problems. Some perceived personal costs, such as fear of failure or negative self-image, can be identified and addressed through coaching.

This is an ongoing exploration. The full implications of change are rarely known at the start and individuals' perceptions and reactions also change. Keep monitoring the balance and adjust plans and timescales to ensure greatest likelihood of success.

This applies just as much to a change you want to make for yourself. Assess your own potential for change using colleagues, friends or a coach to help you fully explore the individual elements, the overall picture and your options.

Enjoy the exercise and I look forward to the questions it raises and the insights it brings!