

Preparing for Change:

RELATIONSHIPS

You cannot lead change, or persuade others to choose change, without understanding the competing interests of your team or stakeholders. People need to know that their feelings, relationships, and social status will be considered during change, even if they can't be fully preserved or protected in their current states.

THE APPROACH

Work with team members one-on-one or in small groups to discuss how to implement the change and to persuade the reluctant to at least try the change. Given a chance, people are generally reasonable and understand that during change, their roles and relative statuses may evolve; this is uncomfortable, but can be accepted if they know that they will be respected.

PRO TIPS

This phase is critical, because no matter how brilliant the vision for change is, you've also introduced uncertainty into the lives of your team.

1

Even positive change will alter the roles, statuses, and lives of your team members; if you can demonstrate your empathy by paying attention to these factors and showing that you understand that change may be uncomfortable or difficult, you will create an environment in which employees can speak up — and feel heard and respected.

2

People who feel heard and respected will consequently be more generous with their time, intelligence, and commitment — increasing the likelihood that change will be successful and benefit the group as a whole.

REMEMBER!

In order of priority for your team, their needs are: 1) security, 2) relationships, and 3) meaning. Effective change leaders meet these needs in *reverse* order. Unless you start with **meaning**, the need or hope for change, you'll just seem nosy as you ask people over lunch about their worries, their jobs, their inner work lives, and/or their organizational social statuses.



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