



## Unit: Flexibility and Adaptability

# Skill 11: Seeing Leaders As Catalysts Of Change

### Activity A: Getting Comfortable With Change

#### Activity Skills:

Small group work.

#### Leadership Skills:

Understanding personal reactions to change.

#### Suggested Level:

Beginning

#### Time:

30 minutes

#### Supplies needed:

- String to make line.
- Paper and markers to make labels.

#### Do Ahead:

- Think about any personal stories you would like to share about change.
- Consider possible examples to use during the “Apply” section of this activity.

#### Source:

Developed by:  
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Based On:  
“How Do You Feel About Change?” and “Helping Others Face Change,” in Louis B. Hart, Ed.D.’s *50 Activities for Developing Leaders*.

#### BACKGROUND:

While some people thrive on change, most people are not so comfortable with it. This activity challenges participants to consider some of the reasons why change may be necessary to promote the health of a group or organization, as well encouraging them to consider how leaders can guide others through change.

#### WHAT TO DO:

(OPTIONAL: If you would like, schedule this activity for after a break or lunch. While participants are out of the room, rearrange the furniture and all of the objects at each of the table (including people's notebooks, name placards, etc.) When participants return, provide no explanation or instruction; simply observe how everyone reacts to the change, and then use the experience to introduce the concept of change and discomfort.

Ask everyone to take a minute to reflect on a time when they had to face a change. How did they feel, and what did they do to adjust to the situation? Did things turn out better or worse as a result of the change?)

Create a line across the room using a piece of string; place a label at one end that states “Very Comfortable with Change” and a label at the other end that states “Very Uncomfortable with Change.”

Have participants define their personal levels of comfort with change by choosing a location along the line – either closer to the comfortable end, or vice versa, or somewhere in the middle.

Next, ask everybody to find a partner, (preferably someone they do not know well) and have each pair stand facing one another.

Instruct each pair to turn around so they are back to back and silently make 3 changes to their appearance. (allow 30 seconds to a minute) When everybody has made the changes, ask them to turn around and take turns trying to name all of the changes their partner made. Repeat the previous activity several times, each time requiring participants to change 3 new things about themselves.

#### TALK IT OVER:

##### *Reflect:*

- Why did you stand where you did?
- Why do you think some people are more comfortable with change than others?
- Do you think your level of comfort is fixed or can it change?
- How did you feel when asked to make so many changes?

## Skill 11: Seeing Leaders As Catalysts Of Change

### Activity A: Getting Comfortable With Change

**Notes:**

- How did the people around you help you to overcome the challenges of this activity?

**Apply:**

- What does this activity teach us about change?
- Why is change important?
- Why is our ability to adapt to change important?
- What are some examples of real world situations in which the ability of a group to adapt to change determined its success or survival?
- Can you think of any leaders who have been instrumental in leading people through change?

### BEYOND THE BOX:

**Optional Homework:**

Think about some leaders who have led others through change. Write a paragraph about one individual of your choice. What did they accomplish and how did they do it? What was the change? Why was it important? What else is interesting about this person?

**Resources And Web Links:**

<http://www.coping.org/grief/change.htm>. Provides a tool entitled "Accepting Change," that examines the nature of change, some common misconceptions about change and action steps toward accepting change.

<http://hr.nd.edu/prodevelopment/tips.shtml>

Sponsored by the University of Notre Dame's Office of Human Resources, this website provides tips and tutorials on:

- Coping with the Challenge of Change
- Facilitating Change: Strategies for Managers

[http://www.rezamaze.com/articles/7\\_essential\\_elements\\_of\\_leading\\_change.html](http://www.rezamaze.com/articles/7_essential_elements_of_leading_change.html). This article by Dr. Mike Beitler, author "Overcoming Resistance to Change," outlines seven essential elements to leading change.