



## The Positive Perspective on Change

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I train many organizations and at large conferences all over the globe in Strategic Change in these troubling times.

The questions remain the same; with all of the change coming so fast how do we keep up?

Maybe it is just too much and we need to revamp the entire system of child welfare and mental health. Maybe leaving is the only answer, all of this change is killing me.

Handle change well and you will more likely prosper than not.  
Handle change poorly and you put yourself and others at risk.

Many organizations and individuals don't even see the need for change yet, not authentic, real change. I see this every day in my work; the executive team who is stressed and frustrated and taking it out on their staff, who get stressed and frustrated and take it out in unconscious ways on their clients, who have come to us to help them deal with their stress and frustration.

You can not give away that which is not yours to give.

If an organization and the individuals who make up that living organization can not handle change well, we simply can not teach our family clients to change well either. Period.

The Chinese use a symbol to represent change which is an integration of Challenge and Opportunity at the same time. We in the Western World tend to see change as negative, scary and may helplessly shrink through it. We see the challenge, but how can we come to see the opportunity as well and learn to not only cope with change but grow from change?

What I experience in our child and family serving system is antiquated services being delivered by stressed out and tired clinicians on a regular basis. Don't get me wrong, there are many optimistic,

trauma informed, well intended and effective providers in our system, but the truth as both you and I know, is that there are far more ineffective and stressed professionals who simply can not provide peace and healing because they have little peace and healing themselves to share with others.

I have felt at times that we are on an iceberg melting into the ocean desperate for a strategy to help us stay 'cool'.

Just because the system is in crisis, does not mean that you have to be.

I see parents and professionals in these times of uncertainty, begin to act in haste, become polarized and give up hope. The danger in this is that fear begins to dictate our next move, drive our behavior and our coping mechanisms shift back to the primitive fight, flight or freeze mode.

It happens in families, and organizations alike. Silos are established, parents split, we have little capacity to look for common ground and we lose sight that we are all here for the same reason; peace, joy and healing. All of us, not just some of us, are in need of peace, joy and healing.

Healthy change in these times will require that we match our heart, mind and spirit to the core issue at hand, healing.

Healing does not happen in the rush.

We must work to get regrounded mentally and emotionally in the office and at home in order to revive hope in healing.

True opportunity is hiding in the pain and fear, and in the chaos.

What is behind the challenge of change, is the opportunity for personal and professional growth and learning, on an individual, organizational and global level. We must work toward a change not only in leadership and management styles and not only in clinical paradigms, but also toward a jump in consciousness.

Sometimes it takes crisis to ignite change.

Our system is in a state of crisis. All of the talking about what should not happen, but is happening will not get us to the needed change. It is time to shift, to move beyond what has led us here, personally and globally and to rise above. Every audience, regardless of size, has those who are open to, ready for and energized by the needed change, and inevitably also has some participants who are angry, tired, stressed and unwilling or unable to hear the positive message in change.

We know from research that the resilient spirit is part genetic and part environment. Some of us are born with a sunnier temperament than others. However, what we also know from research in trauma and healing is that we are not limited by genetics.

We are shaped by genetics, but not limited by genetics.

You can learn to be happier and more at peace even in troubling times. I know first hand how true this is. I was once the unhappy, unfulfilled, stressed out foster parent and employee in child welfare. I was running ragged. I was happy to tell you how unhappy I was! For me, much like for my partner, employees, children or my foster children, the key to unlocking my potential for peace and happiness came in relationship to others who knew more, could show the way, teach me what I had yet to learn and lead the way when I was in the dark.

Change in these times requires that we are realistic and can put our intentions into action. We have to look for what is working, honestly, and begin to change, today, that which is not.

We have to work together, come back together, know that isolation kills, unity gives life. Research is clearly indicating that the resilient, happy adult who handles change well is the adult who still wants to connect with and stay in relationship to others. Staying connected increases empowerment and people feel better overall. We learn that serving others helps us as much as them.

Those who handle change well also tend to be more creative and focused on external situations. When everything crashes in on you a bit of narcissism can set in. You can become consumed by your life, your troubles, what you will do next. Creativity dies. Until you can get out of the me-mine-I mindset you can not see possibility for positive change. You can not support others in the possibility for positive change. In healthy relationship we more easily make sense of our experiences, our loss and pain, and can see the possibility for growth, evolution of self and present/future possibility. Only then can we help others do the same.

Most of us don't do anything to change until the need for change is imminent.

In my view, the cutting edge of child welfare and mental health is only embedded in Trauma Informed Practice, in part. The other part is mindset while practicing Trauma Informed Care. Talking the talk doesn't cut it anymore. We must all walk the walk. I can not help you deal with your trauma when I am not willing to look at mine. I can not help you look at you acknowledge that we all have trauma, when I can not acknowledge how this trauma filled system and world impact me personally first. And if I am not willing to work toward my own healing, I simply can not be effective at helping you work toward yours.

No matter how much I know in my head, if my spirit and heart are not aligned in healing, I can not effectively help you achieve the alignment, the balance and the harmony you long for.

The most vital need for change in our system today is in the level of awareness and consciousness of the impact of trauma for us first, and then for our clients. But instead we isolate, bury ourselves in caseloads that will never be caught up, get certified in the next great model of therapy that is outcomes based and 'proven effective \_\_\_% of the time' and sounds good on paper. We pay consultants a lot of money for new management strategy while most of us can't stop long enough to really meet ourselves, much less help our employees or clients do the same. We are afraid of who

we have become while trying to help others become someone other than who they have become. No wonder we are tired!

## WHAT TO DO~

1. Get trauma informed and learn to practice trauma informed healing.
2. Share the sense of urgency in your organization or family. We are in crisis, we don't have to stay in crisis.
3. Develop the VISION of change for all.
4. Develop the step by step strategy to implement change and share it with all.
5. Communicate the vision and strategy with the goal of buy in for all.
6. Empower others to act on change along with you, to take leadership for change
7. Set up success in the short term now, and the long term as well.
8. Do not let up. It took time to get here and will take time to change.
9. Make it stick. Create the new culture in you first, get excited and motivated!

You may have to collect data, analyze it and present it in a simple, very clear way to indicate the need for change NOW.

Work to change the thinking of your group, and in turn the behavior will change.

Create exciting and passionate dialogue about the change coming, the benefit to each person and increase the opportunity for them to FEEL good about the change. Feeling different brings about even MORE change!

It is time to come fully awake to this present moment, each moment and to pull back from thinking and worrying about the past and the future. What we have is now, and only now. I can not say enough about the importance of mindfulness as a way to walk through change in our system and through life. We truly need this to survive as a people and as a system.

We must reengage in relationship with each other and the world around us.

If we had been practicing mindfulness in relationship integrated with trauma informed care 20 years ago, we would not be in the crisis we are in today.

How about if we ignite the change now so that 20 years from now we will have left a wonderful legacy of healing and peace?

From Chaos to Calm is one of the most requested workshops at cfL! and focuses on Igniting the Change in Trauma Informed Care. We teach that even in the midst of chaos, you can create, bring and increase calm; but that must start with you, in you, by you.

Physical exercise, even 10 minutes a day

Solitude, alone time, every day, even just 10 minutes a day

Reflection, prayer or meditation, every day, even just 10 minutes a day

Practice of Gratitude, everyday, even just 10 minutes a day

Serving others, every day in some way.

I spend time every day outdoors, I watch the sunrise almost every morning, I journal, pray, meditate and practice conscious breathing every hour. I walk my dogs daily and donate services on a regular basis. I spend time with my children not just in activity but in quiet talk, real talk and relationship.

I play every chance I get. I seek Peace in every step. Life is short.

We simply can not continue to do what we have been doing. It does not work for most of 'our' kids and families.

Change can be good, when handled well. It is time, now, for change~

Peace, Juli

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For further information about our trainings, coaching and consulting work, please visit us at [www.coaching-forlife.com](http://www.coaching-forlife.com)