Volume	2	Seven Principles
Chapter	07	Principle Six: Promote a Positive Response to Change
Section	02	The Non-Comfort Zone
Key Word Tags		Responding versus Reacting

NO TIME TO REST

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Quick Summary: Change invariably causes disruption, often resulting in knee-jerk reactions.

Abstract:

The pace of business seems to be ever-increasing, placing more pressure on everyone. Changes always seem to disrupt daily activities. Although there may be obvious long-term benefits, individuals, with their daily pressures, may feel that they simply do not have time to change. Acknowledging this situation and responding accordingly will result in a smoother transition that is more readily embraced throughout the organization.

I remember two predictions that were made many years ago that received almost universal acceptance. One was the prediction of the paperless society, and the other was the thirty-hour work week. Although we have seen a reduction in the number of letters and magazines we receive, I am afraid the paperless society is still a long way off. Although the amount of paper may have been reduced, the amount of paperwork has dramatically increased. Perhaps the reduction in paper has been offset by the amount of red tape required!

Regarding the thirty-hour work week, it seems that most of us long for the forty-hour work week! Most of us are putting in more hours than ever before, and "thanks" to email and smartphones, many of us are literally on call "24/7." In virtually every environment, complexity has increased while the available time has not changed.

As people move through their daily tasks attempting to follow a set routine, any changes can be very disruptive. The reaction is often that "I do not have time to try the new approach and keep up with everything else." Changing processes or behaviors does take time for people to establish new routines and become comfortable. In many cases, the need for change is well beyond the control of any individual or even the entire organization. New competition, economic conditions, and new regulations are some of the issues that can easily upset normal plans and routines. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, just before the Normandy Invasion, said "Before the battle, planning is everything. Once the fighting has begun, it's worthless." Essentially, we must plan for changes and take time to implement them. Stability is short-lived.

There is a saying by sailors in the Navy that the worst base is the next base where they will be stationed, and the best base was the last one where they were stationed. It is natural to be apprehensive about most changes. If a person looks for the worst, they are seldom disappointed. Giving people time to internalize changes is critical.

Taking time to thoroughly explain and help others understand why changes are necessary and what the new expected results will be is critical. In fact, from an acceptance perspective, explaining why a change is needed is more important than what the change actually involves. In the article in this collection, "*There Are only Two Kinds of People,*" the difference between telling people (creating critics) and asking people (creating creators) was discussed. Providing an understanding of the need for change and soliciting opinions is an important component in implementing any changes. Take the time and avoid the trap of "we don't have time."

There can be an exact opposite reaction to change resistance. It is reacting to the need for change. As discussed in Chapter 11 of this collection, there is a fundamental difference between reacting and responding. Once the need for change becomes apparent, a plan to respond needs to be formulated instead of immediately reacting to it. Responding does not necessarily take more time than reacting. It only involves thinking through the proposed actions and the possible reactions that may occur.

Those who "dictate" the change can easily fall into the trap of not appreciating how institutionalized the present process has become by those who perform the tasks. What may seem like a trivial change may, in fact, have significant impacts on others. Taking time for people is critical. There is never a good time to NOT take time for people.