Embracing Change

developed and presented by:

Kenda Swartz Pepper
nrg communications
We are surrounded by change

There is much mythology about change. Many people have been brought up to distrust it, to treat it with caution, to try and avoid it. Some people are change **resistors** others are change **embracers**...

Which are you?

**Notes**
Resistance to Change

Factors and Causes

Environment
Weather, noise, traffic, and pollution play a role in one’s energy levels and attitudes.

Social Stressors
Deadlines, financial problems, job, disagreements, demands for your time and attention, loss of loved ones, financial reasons, and habits play a role in one’s energy levels and attitudes.

Physiological
Changing bodies, developmental stages, aging, illness, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and sleep disturbance play a role in one’s energy levels and attitudes.

Thoughts
Our brains, which interpret changes in our environment and our bodies, determine when to turn on the stress response, and thoughts play a major role in one’s energy levels, feelings and attitudes.

Notes
Your Thoughts are in Charge

Thoughts are unspoken words we say to ourselves and hear in our minds. This is also called *self talk*. Sometimes, the more we think about a situation (be it a charged or neutral situation), the more intense our feelings become. A situation fuels the thoughts which fuel the feelings. The thoughts fuel the feelings which, in turn, fuel a behavioral reaction. It can become a vicious cycle, yet you do have the power to **stop** the cycle and change your action, reaction or inaction – thus giving yourself a chance to create a new experience.

According to Cognitive Psychology, all people have core beliefs. There is some speculation about from where these beliefs derive: early childhood, various experiences in life, etc. The one thing that is known, in addition to being overgeneralized and rigid, distorted or *maladaptive core beliefs* have a grave impact on individuals and their reactions to self and others. These beliefs are so deep-seated that they often do not even get acknowledged let alone articulated by the individual…until they are brought to awareness. While core beliefs create emotions and ultimately behavioral reactions, one does not have to know his/her core beliefs to change his/her behaviors. One simply has to catch the automatic thoughts that surface as a result of core beliefs. Some of these automatic thoughts get trapped in our minds never to see the light of day and others freely come out of our mouths as semi-conscious streams of spoken words. Most often one will hear these thoughts spoken in absolutes such as: ‘I can’t…’ or ‘That will never happen’ or ‘You always…’

*The graphic on the following page illustrates the path of Maladaptive Beliefs.*

**Notes**
The Path of Maladaptive Thoughts

Maladaptive Core Belief

The world is an unpredictable or out of control place, and I am unsafe and alone.

Core beliefs influence intermediate beliefs, which consist of our attitudes, rules and assumptions.

Intermediate (Maladaptive) Belief

If I don’t control my environment, then I can’t control my life thus I can’t guarantee my safety.
(Most people spend a great deal of time and energy trying to hide these beliefs from others)

Situation

You are part of a project team. The project leader didn’t complete an expected and promised deliverable to another group.

Instead of approaching the project leader, a co-worker from the other group shares her frustrations with you about how her team is very negatively impacted by this delay and that ‘heads are gonna roll’.

Automatic (Maladaptive) Thought

These thoughts are more surface-level and easier to ‘catch’

Why do I have to do everything myself?
Or
I can’t rely on anyone to help me. These people are incompetent.
Or
I know my manager is going to come down on me for this.

Reactions

Emotion

Fear or Anger

Behavior

Take over the project lead’s responsibilities or talk about the project lead in a negative way to others or to the manager.

- possibly feel heart palpitations (Stress response/reaction to feeling unsafe and alone)

Automatic Maladaptive Thoughts are also called Self Talk.
Putting it into Practice – Understanding Maladaptive Thinking

Consider a “healthy risk from the past that you didn’t take, a current healthy risk that you would like to take or a risk you envision taking in the future. You may want to grab a piece of paper and a pen to jot this down or write it in the space below.

What are your automatic thoughts/self talk (about the situation, yourself, or another person involved in this situation) associated with this risk? Focus on an automatic thought that could be causing a disservice.

Try to be objective and write down the specific thought *verbatim*. 
Thought Reframing

Now we get to the fun part! Thought reframing. Thought reframing is just like how it sounds - reframing or changing your thoughts. Thoughts hold enormous amounts of power in our minds and bodies. Change your thoughts, change your life.

The following steps are useful for working toward reframing or restructuring those maladaptive thoughts that are causing a disservice. There are four main steps to Thought Reframing:

**Step #1 – Catch**

Catch the automatic thoughts that seem to be causing negative emotions or reactions. Many people repeat the same patterns and automatic thoughts for various situations. These thoughts are at the tip of your brain. If you stop and listen, you will catch them.

**Step #2 – Look**

Take a good look at those thoughts. The goal is to assess their validity and usefulness. Is the thought true or false? If you have no evidence to prove the thought is true, then it is false until proven otherwise. How is this thought serving you? Draw an objective conclusion about the thought. What are the gains of this thought? Sometimes there are secondary gains to maladaptive thoughts. The secondary gain could simply be the habit of feeling miserably comfortable around a thought that brings you grief and anxiety.

Dispute the maladaptive automatic thought: Ask yourself, “What is the best argument against this thought?”

**Step #3 – Shift**

Work toward changing the maladaptive thought by shifting perceptions from those that are unrealistic and harmful to those that are more rational and useful. Find or create evidence to support the best argument against the maladaptive thought. This is where you give yourself the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes it’s just a matter of letting go of the maladaptive thought by acknowledging that it no longer serves you. Ask yourself, ‘what’s the worst thing that can happen?’ When you have the answer to that question, continue to ask yourself, ‘and this is a problem because...’

For example: If the worst thing that can happen is ‘this person will be upset with me', do a quick evidence check. What evidence do you have to validate that thought? Anything? Perhaps you've observed this person getting upset in the past. Does this mean for certain s/he will get upset again?

Okay, so let's say there's a 51% + chance s/he will get upset. Continue on and ask yourself, 'This is a problem because...?'
Thought Reframing continued

‘I won’t know how to handle his reactions’.

And this is a problem because, ‘If I don’t know how to handle his reactions, I will have anxiety’.

And this is a problem because, "If I have anxiety, I will feel useless or sick to my stomach".

Continue to ask yourself these questions until you get to a problem that can be easily resolved. For example, if the final statement is, 'I’ll feel sick to my stomach" then you know that you can do something about it. You can drink some calming tea or take deep breaths to ease your stomach discomfort.

The irony in many cases is that often maladaptive thoughts are about protecting our vulnerabilities, which are exactly what the maladaptive thoughts harm in the first place. Let me explain: If I'm worried about upsetting you because your reaction is going to give me anxiety, but yet I have anxiety worrying about your reaction, what's the point? The maladaptive thought is doing me more harm than you ever could!

Consider the reality: it is much more likely that the story you are making up in your head is not nearly as challenging or difficult as the reality you would experience if your thoughts didn't run the show. Shift those thoughts to something more realistic and healthy.

Step #4 – Create and Practice

After you have shifted the maladaptive thoughts, create a new thought and practice using it over and over again. By changing thoughts, emotions change, and by changing emotions, behaviors change. THIS is how you release yourself from the inaction or reaction of maladaptive thinking.

Thought Reframing Table

The table on the next page is a guide to help you understand the process of thought reframing based on the example from Page 4: You are part of a project team. The team leader didn’t complete an expected and promised deliverable to another group. Instead of approaching the project leader, a co-worker from that other group shares her frustrations with you about how her team is impacted by this delay and that ‘heads are gonna roll’.

Your automatic thoughts are: Why do I have to do everything myself? Or I can’t rely on anyone to help me. These people are incompetent. Or I know my manager is going to come down on me for this.
### Thought Reframing Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATCH</th>
<th>LOOK T/F?</th>
<th>LOOK</th>
<th>SHIFT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maladaptive Automatic Thought</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dispute the Maladaptive Automatic Thought</strong></td>
<td><strong>Change the Self Talk and/or support any evidence to the contrary of the Maladaptive Thought</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Why do I have to do everything myself?</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>When one uses an absolute (such as everything, all, none, no one, everyone, etc), it automatically puts the thought in the False category. Rarely do absolutes occur.</td>
<td>What’s the worst thing that can happen? Seriously, ask yourself this question and continue to ask ‘And this is a problem BECAUSE…?’ after each time you answer. In this case, the worst thing that can happen is what? You have to eat some pride pie because your team didn’t deliver an expectation? Does this impact WHO you are as a person? No. It does not. Does this mean you are alone in the world? It does not. Does it mean you have some frustration? Sure. That’s normal. It’s how you deal with the frustration that determines if you are a healthy communicator or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can’t rely on anyone to help me. These people are incompetent.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Again, the absolute ‘anyone’ automatically puts this thought in the False category. The broad, general thought, ‘these people are incompetent’ can also be argued. To determine that an entire group of people, let alone one person, is incompetent, is in itself, a false statement. What are the observable behaviors? In the above situation, one person didn’t carry out a responsibility. That’s it. When you allow yourself to be the victim in a situation (that’s what these maladaptive thoughts can lead to), then you create your own mental imprisonment. Liberate your mind and focus on behaviors instead of broad judgments.</td>
<td>What’s the worst thing that can happen? The worst thing that can happen is that you may have to support the project leader on completing the project deadline. Or perhaps you will have to defend your project team instead of chastise them. Perhaps you simply do not have control over another’s behaviors, and (breathe) that is okay. And this is a problem because…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know my manager is going to come down on me for this.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>False again…unless of course you have psychic abilities.</td>
<td>What’s the worst thing that can happen? Okay, so your manager blames you for this situation, which is highly unlikely. But still, let’s play…and this is a problem because…? You don’t want to be blamed, right? And this is a problem because…? You don’t want to look inept. Are you inept? No. You are not. Perhaps there is something for you to learn from this experience if you can get some clarity about the specific issue at hand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thought Reframing continued

CREATE and PRACTICE

Examples of new thoughts in relation to the three maladaptive thoughts shown above:

1. I am not alone here. I am part of something bigger. This isn’t about me. I am not a victim. I am a thriver. I was responsible for my part, and I did it to the best of my ability. OR how about this one: Control is an illusion. I will be okay if I release some control.

2. I will shine through as a supportive team member. I can help others feel more competent. I recognize others have competencies that may be different from my own.

3. I’m capable. This is an opportunity for me to practice communication skills. His reaction is not about me, and I have the ability to handle whatever comes my way.

Now you try it! CATCH, LOOK, SHIFT and CREATE new thoughts. Then Practice Practice Practice!

You have the power to relieve yourself of toxic maladaptive thoughts, to meet your own core needs, and to create a way of life that feels more joyful and more physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATCH</th>
<th>LOOK</th>
<th>SHIFT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maladaptive Thought</td>
<td>Dispute the Maladaptive Automatic Thought</td>
<td>Change the Self Talk and/or support any evidence to the contrary of the Maladaptive Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/F?</td>
<td></td>
<td>What’s the worst thing that can happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And this is a problem because?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CREATE and PRACTICE
*Write a new thought (s) below*
Embracing Change Action Strategy

1. Describe a change you want to introduce or have recently begun:


2. State the need or reason for this change:


3. What are the main driving forces?

  ◆

  ◆

  ◆

  ◆

  ◆

4. What are the main restraining or resisting forces and identify a strategy for overcoming each one:

  ◆

  ◆

  ◆

  ◆

  ◆

5. Identify Steps, Tasks and specific commitment dates for implementing your change

Use the following four pages to outline your change plan by writing a specific measurable goal, specific steps and tasks to carry out the steps. Be sure to include commitment dates.
Step #1

Commitment Date __/20_____

Tasks

-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------

Necessary Resources

-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------
-------------------

Progress Tracking Follow-Up:

Date ___________ Notes ______________________________________

Date ___________ Notes ______________________________________

Date ___________ Notes ______________________________________

Date ___________ Notes ______________________________________
### Step #2

**Commitment Date**

**Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Necessary Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progress Tracking Follow-Up:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step #3

**Commitment Date**

**Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2010 nrg communications
Necessary Resources

Progress Tracking Follow-Up:
Date __________ Notes ___________________________________________________________________
Date __________ Notes ___________________________________________________________________
Date __________ Notes ___________________________________________________________________

Step #4
Commitment Date _____/20_____

Tasks
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Necessary Resources

Progress Tracking Follow-Up:
Date __________ Notes ___________________________________________________________________
Date __________ Notes ___________________________________________________________________
Date __________ Notes ___________________________________________________________________

© 2010 nrg communications
Step #5

Commitment Date ______/20______

Tasks

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Necessary Resources

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Progress Tracking Follow-Up:

Date ______ Notes ________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Date ______ Notes ________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Date ______ Notes ________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Additional Notes
6. State any maladaptive thoughts associated with this change:

- 
- 
- 

7. Reframe maladaptive thoughts with a more proactive/adaptive solution:

- 
- 
- 

8. Determine how you will track and measure the success of the change:

- 
- 
- 

9. Determine how you will reward yourself and others for each success:

- 
- 
- 

Additional Notes

GO FOR IT!
Bibliography, Suggested Resources and Additional Worksheets


The American Psychological Association Website: www.apa.org

Additional Psychology resources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_Emotive_Behavior_Therapy

http://daphne.palomar.edu/jtagg/emotion.htm

http://dognozzle.com/thinking/emotional_reasoning.html

© 1999-2006 Jim Biederman

http://www.ar.cc.mn.us/biederman/courses/p1110/defenses.htm

http://www.guidetopsychology.com/ucs.htm
If you are to be, you must begin by assuming responsibility. You alone are responsible for every moment of your life, for every one of your acts.
- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

The tragedy in life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.
- Benjamin Mays

It is time for us to stand and cheer for the doer, the achiever, the one who recognizes the challenge and does something about it.
- Vince Lombardi

Empowerment is all about letting go so that others can get going.
- Kenneth Blanchard

As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person.
- Paul Shane Spear