**Transitioning from Resistance to Acceptance and Successfully Embracing Change**

Often transitions are confronted with alternative processes and ideally, we select the process that provide us the most comfort and confidence. However, before we are able to successfully deal with a transitional situation there are two realisms common to all processes that need to be recognized.

“The only thing that does not change is change itself.”

“The only real constant in the world is change.”

These quotes, first stated by the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus support the premise that recognizing that change is a continuous process is the first step toward accepting it.

**The journey from recognition to embracement requires:**

* + Awareness of the energy behind our thoughts
  + Understanding our emotions
  + Knowing how we are acting and behaving

How well we control these three elements along the journey directly correlates to our success in dealing with change.

* **Four stages common to a transitional journey include**:
  + Catabolic Stage
  + Defiance Stage
  + Reconciliation Stage
  + Acceptance Stage

The following table overviews typical thoughts, emotions and behavior soften experienced at each transitional stage.

**Stage Thoughts Emotions Behaviors**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Catabolic | Resistance to change is causing processes to breakdown; negative energy is being extended toward the efforts to change. Thoughts include fear and self-doubt. | Guilt, anger or embarrassment. | Team members believe that they are being “picked on” and make little to no effort to participate. |
| Defiance | Fear has now turned to resentment with thoughts focused on opposing all efforts to change. | Stress and frustration. | Behaviors and actions of team members tend to be efforts to prove themselves right and the concept for the change as being wrong. |
| Reconciliation | Rationalization to align with the goal is common at this stage. Thoughts are positive but do include confusion as individuals and teams may still lack an understanding of the overall goal. | Relief and tolerance. | There is much energy and activity with behavioral actions starting to support the process. |
| Acceptance | Commitment is strong as thoughts turn to the belief (and vision) that positive outcomes will occur. | Empowerment and confidence. | Goal setting and the development of action plans are the positive traits. |

***The approaches used to support and provide guidance to individuals and teams during each stage of a transition can and will influence the eventual outcome.***