

Module 4: Change Theories Script

Hello and welcome to the GPS 200 Module 4 presentation on “Change Theories.”

The late Leo Buscaglia, lecturer at University of Southern California, once noted that “Change is the end result of all true learning.”

As we examine change for the rest of the term, we are going to notice that there are two factors that exert their power over change. Internal factors, which are ourselves, and things that we have control over. And external factors, our environment. We have no control over this. For our purposes, we are going to focus on the internal factors.

In this presentation, we are going to explore Kurt Lewin’s theories of change. We are going to examine Force-Field Analysis and Unfreezing-Changing-Refreezing.

Force-Field Analysis (sounds like Star Wars, doesn’t it?) suggests that in any condition of change there are forces that pull us in one direction while, simultaneously, there are other forces pushing us in another direction. We get caught between these two fields of force sometimes moving more intensely toward the center of one field and away from the other, and then at other times, moving intensely in the opposite direction. Navigating between these two fields of force can be difficult and tricky.

For example, being in school is a great thing. Taking courses, learning new things, and considering new possibilities are all wonderful. You may feel that your courses illuminate new strategies or concepts that make you feel differently about yourself or the world. You may be feeling a force which appeals to you so strongly that you feel “pulled” toward this beacon of knowledge and are willing to put up with the rigors of classes and homework and tests for the rewards that these things bring.

But, at the same time, you may be feeling a “pull” from another direction. You may hear your kids or your significant other complain that you are not spending enough time with them, or that your school schedule is in conflict with their social schedule. You may hear your colleagues at work say things to you with a crisp tone of voice that makes you understand that they are a bit envious of you being

in school or that they think you are getting too “uppity.” They pressure you to fit in, to get along, to be one of them, or they just plain create pressure with their displeasure. You feel the pull of how much easier life would be if you just gave up school, just walked away from all this nonsense.

This is what Force-Field Analysis is talking about: simultaneous, competing pressures to move in different directions.

Let’s watch a quick video on Force Field Analysis put together by MindTools.

VIDEO

When we have a tough decision to make, many of us write a list of the pros and cons. Then if we have more pluses than minuses we should surely just go ahead with it. Though, not necessarily. If you've ever made one of these lists, you already know the problem. Most of the time the pros and cons aren't equally important. For instance, you might just have three cons on your list, but one of them might be particularly significant, more so even than all the pros you've listed, so it's hard to make a balanced decision with a simple list. One way around this is to use Force Field Analysis. This technique helps you weigh the forces for and against change and represents them in a visually clear way. Once you’ve done this you'll have a more accurate assessment of your decision. Conducting a Force Field Analysis is easy. Take a piece of paper and think about the decision you are making. On the left-hand side list forces for change, that is the pros of the decision. On the right-hand side, list the forces against change or the cons of the decision. Next, go through and assign a score of between “1” and “5” for each of the pros and cons. A score of “1” means that this element isn't that important. A “5” means it's very important. When you score the pros and cons on the diagram you can represent the importance of each force by drawing arrows around them. Use bigger arrows for the forces that have greater influence on the change and smaller ones for those that have less. Once you've done this add up each column. You now know whether it's worth going ahead with the decision. You can find more about using Force Field Analysis in the article that accompanies this video.

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Kurt Lewin also offered another model to help us view how individuals and organizations change, called simply Unfreezing-Changing-Refreezing.

This perspective suggests that we do not really like to change. Change is hard. It is uncomfortable. We may like the results that occur from change, but we don't necessarily want to "experience" or go along with change as it is happening. Or, we may want everything to change around us, but WE don't want to have to change. We are "frozen" in our current state.

So, in order to make us change, we are going to have to "unfreeze." This is the hard part. Change may occur quickly or gradually. The act of giving in or giving up (even a little bit) is a reflection of an "unfreezing" process. When we are in a state of unfreezing, we are open to change. This is the time when influential factors, especially education, will have a great effect on us. After we have been shaped or molded, we will reach a point at which we will stay frozen and resist pressure to change until we can't stay frozen anymore and will go through the process all over again.

Let's watch a quick video on this change theory by MindTools.

VIDEO

If you've ever tried to implement a major change program in your organization, then you'll know it's often difficult. People can resist change and it can be hard to make change stick in the long term. This is why it's so important to understand the change process. Then you can manage it effectively and get people's support at each stage. A useful way to get a better understanding of this process is to use Kurt Lewin's Unfreeze, Change, Refreeze model. This is based on the analogy of melting a block of ice and then refreezing it into a new shape. The first stage of the model is "Unfreeze." This is the part of the change process where you have to communicate why this change is necessary. Make sure everyone who will be affected by the change knows this, and make sure you deal with people's doubts and concerns. Next comes the "change" itself. This is where people begin to get used to the idea that things will be different. Keep communicating how the change will benefit the people involved so they continue to support it, and remember, that the change itself doesn't happen overnight, so give people plenty of time to adjust to it. The last stage in Lewin's model is "Refreeze." This is when

the change is set in place and becomes part of your organization's culture. In this last stage, make sure people have the training and support they need to stay on the right track and regularly check that the change has happened and that people are using the new processes that you celebrate everyone's hard work in making the change a success. This helps people find closure and it helps them believe that future changes will also be successful. Now read the article that accompanies this video and learn more about the strategies you can use at each stage of the process.

So, now that you know more about these two theories, which of Kurt Lewin's change theories best depicts where you are on your journey?

Thank you for your time and attention during this presentation.