I am often asked how our students and graduates apply their coach training within work and/or life. This section of our newsletter is dedicated to conveying the variety of coaching applications and outcomes I'd usually only share with those who are inquiring about our coaching certifications. My hope is every time these stories are passed on they will in some magical and unpredictable way multiply the power and expansion of coaching. Our first story highlights how life-coaching can influence change within corporations.

My mother still charges me 50 cents every time I use foul language yet my four-letter words (that I barely use) are not nearly as offensive or impactful as one six-letter word that is used all the time. The people she should go after are the ones that throw around the word "change". While I could possibly upgrade my vocabulary, my mother could definitely increase her bottom line if she redirected her focus toward them rather than me (which would significantly improve my bottom line as well).

The word change, while appearing harmless, is one of the most feared words in the English language when it is placed upon us. As humans, we are all designed with a sense of agency which means we have an innate belief and desire that we can shape our world in a way that meets our needs today and feeds our hopes for the future. When change is imposed upon us, it directly impacts our agency. It often triggers our fight, flight or freeze mechanism ingrained in us to protect us from harm. Our reaction causes turmoil internally and often externally as well.

Andie Olthoff, MCLC, MA is a graduate of our Practitioner and Mastery Certifications. She is also a Senior Business Partner in Organizational Change Management at Target and a recent graduate of the Master's Program in Organizational Leadership at St. Catherine's University. Daily, Andie sees what change can do to individuals, teams, and organizations. And, as a coach she knows the secret to success isn't about focusing on the change it's about focusing on the people who have to deal with the change. Yet, most change management models put more focus on the process rather than the people, which increases the organization's chance of failure of their change initiatives. Understanding this, Andie decided for her final research project to complete her master's degree at St. Kate's that she would explore employee's capacity to adapt to change. She set out to see if she could prove her hypothesis. Her gut told her that if organizations shifted their focus from process to people, they could experience an increased rate of success when implementing change initiatives.

Andie discovered through her research that more than 70% of change initiatives fail. (Beer & Nohria, 2011) The traditional ways of managing change are no longer effective. The challenge is organizations understand if they intend to survive in the ever-evolving global economy they must be agile. Yet, the amplified adjustments cause employees to experience change saturation which contributes to increased stress, burnout, and disengagement.

I'm not an expert in change management, so I had to do a little research on my own to understand the conventional change model better. I learned that the process starts with top management. They create a vision that is communicated and driven downward. Change is then reinforced at each level via rewards and punishments. Adopters are rewarded, and resisters are

punished or just removed. What I noticed during my "CliffsNotes" education of change management is that it ignores the basics elements of motivation. According to self-determination theory, reward and punishment often stifle people's motivation not stimulate it. A simple model to feed motivation and ultimately embrace change is to include three vital elements (belief + choice + support = motivation). To buy into a change people have to believe in or have a relationship with the change. When people do not have a say in what is occurring (they have no choice), they experience a loss in their sense of control. Any type of support is hollow if beliefs and choice are absent. Even if those elements are present support needs to be individualized to feed motivation. What one person needs is not necessarily what another one will need.

belief **+** choice **+** support **=** motivation
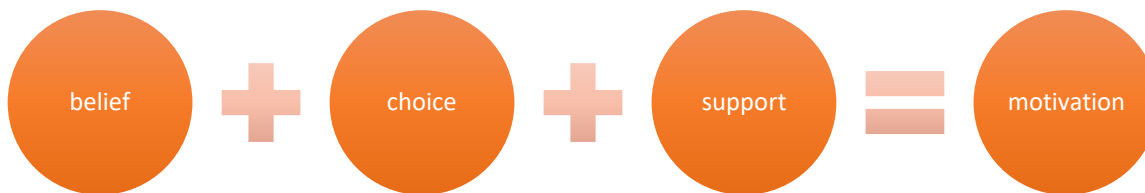
Going back to Andie's research…She was limited to what she could focus on due to restrictions within her master's degree program, so she chose to concentrate on the support piece of motivation. She set out to see how life-coaching could support employees in dealing with change saturation while increasing the success of the organization's change management initiatives. Eleven people volunteered to participate in her research. The participants reported that they began to pause and think before acting as a result of the coaching. This helped most participants stay-the-coarse with their change. They also were provided a coaching tool to help them break down their changes into small, doable pieces. Participants claimed it helped them move through steps quickly, track progress in real time and feel momentum grow in the process.

Overall, the pre-and post-surveys confirmed Andie's hypothesis. All participants were able to increase their capacity to change through the support of life-coaching. Participants moved from a 75% to a 90% confidence rating regarding managing change.

I asked Andie where she wants to take her idea of life-coaching and change management next. She shared she firmly believes the key to companies staying relevant and innovative requires organizations to embrace a human-centered approach. Andie would like to be a part of influencing and implementing this new model. It would include creating change agents at every level allowing employees to co-create the change rather than merely adopt the change. Andie feels if people have a say throughout the change cycle, it will increase their belief in the change, it will decrease their resistance to the change, and change will happen faster. Furthermore, if people receive support via life-coaching throughout the process, they will increase their sense of control, motivation, and engagement.

I have no doubt Andie will take her idea to a new level, and I look forward to the positive impact it will have upon organizations and their employees. However, once her concept becomes a reality, the word change won't have the same negative response or impact. This means my mother will have to find a new source of funding to maintain her bottom line. Thus, I need to start searching now for the next offensive word or words to focus her attention, so she doesn't redirect her energy back on me. I cannot afford her diligence.