

Change and Coping with Change

In business and life, we have observed and experienced both major and minor changes. Looking at the new digital world, the top two characteristics that we are facing are change and uncertainty. It is anticipated that, inevitably, there even will be increasing changes in faster speed. A voluntary and prepared change is cheerful and refreshing, but a forced change is not. Being uncomfortable with change is a natural


cheese at the end of one of the corridors in Cheese Station C. And every morning after that, they headed over to Cheese Station C to have their cheese. They had no idea where the Cheese came from or who put it there. They just assumed it would be there. They were becoming very comfortable that they had found the Cheese. Hem said, "This is great, there is enough Cheese here to last us forever." They felt happy, successful and secure. After a while, Hem's

a long time trying to decide what to do and all they could think of was to keep looking around Cheeseless Station C. Haw also noticed that Sniff and Scurry had gone.

Sniff and Scurry were well on their way looking for Cheese in every Cheese Station they could find. They finally found Cheese Station N. On the contrary, Hem's response was, "I like it here. It is comfortable. It is what I know and it is dangerous out there." So every day, Haw and Hem continued to go to Cheese Station C and found no Cheese. Hem said, "...if we just work harder we will find that nothing has changed that much. The Cheese is probably nearby. Maybe they just hid it behind the wall." They used a tool to make a hole in the wall of Cheese Station C and peered inside but found no Cheese. Haw was beginning to realize the difference between activity and productivity. Finally, Haw began laughing at himself — we keep doing the same things over and over again and wonder why things do not get better. Haw also realized that it was time to find new Cheese. Haw said to Hem, "...sometimes things change and they are never the same again ... This looks like one of those times..." Haw wondered, "Why didn't I get up and move with the Cheese sooner?" But Hem refused to leave Cheese Station C.

As Haw tried to find his way, he decided that if he ever got the chance again, he would get out of his comfort zone and adapt to change sooner. It would make things easier ... but better late than never.

As Haw looked back on things, he realized that the Cheese at Cheese Station C had not just disappeared overnight, as he once believed. He now realized that the



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human reaction. Yet how can we make the change more voluntary and enjoyable? What is the coping strategy? And how do we turn the change into an advantage? In the midst of mid-summer reading, I revisited a book entitled *Who Moved My Cheese?*

In this book, Dr. Spencer Johnson illustrates the spirit and reality of change in a light and humorous way. In this book, "cheese" is a metaphor reflecting what you want to have in life in both material and spiritual aspects — a good career, money, a loving relationship, health, etc. Four imaginary characters representing four types of acts in dealing with changes are Sniff, Scurry, Haw and Hem. Following is an excerpt:

Every day the four ran through a maze looking for cheese to nourish them and make them happy. They each found their own kind of

and Haw's confidence grew into the arrogance of success and became so comfortable they did not notice what was happening.

As time went on, Sniff and Scurry continued their routine, arriving every morning to inspect the area to see if there had been any changes. They had noticed the supply of Cheese had been getting smaller every day — the situation at Cheese Station C had changed. So they decided to change, taking off and running through the maze in search of New Cheese.

While Sniff and Scurry had quickly moved on, Haw and Hem arrived at Cheese Station C and found no cheese. Hem hollered, "Who moved my cheese?" Haw did not want to know the Cheese supply gradually had been getting smaller. He believed it had been moved all of a sudden. They spent

change probably would not have taken him by surprise if he had been watching what was happening all along, and if he had anticipated change. Maybe that is what Sniff and Scurry had been doing. As he started running down the corridor he began to smile — he was discovering what nourished his soul. He started to enjoy himself and painted a picture of having new Cheese in his mind. He then raced through the maze with greater strength and agility. He now realized it was natural for change to occur continually, whether you expect it or not. Change could surprise you only if you didn't expect it and weren't looking for it. He knew when you change what you believe you also change what you do. It all depends on what you choose to believe.

As Haw thought back on where he had come from, he was glad he had written on the wall in many places to serve as a marked trail for Hem to follow through the maze if he chose to leave Cheese Station C.

Haw proceeded along a corridor that was new to him and found new Cheese at Cheese Station N where piled was the greatest supply of Cheese he had ever seen. Sniff and Scurry welcomed Haw. He knew he had learned something useful about moving on from his friends, Sniff and Scurry. When the situation changed and the Cheese had been moved, they changed and moved with the Cheese. Haw reflected on the mistakes he had made in the past and used them to plan for his future — keep things simple, be flexible and move quickly. For Hem, he had to find his own way, beyond his comforts and past his fears. No one else could do it for him, or talk him into it. Haw knew he had left a trail for Hem and that he could find his way, if he could just read the handwriting on the wall:

- Change happens
- Anticipate change
- Monitor change
- Adapt to change quickly
- Change
- Enjoy the change
- Be ready to change quickly and enjoy it again and again.

Sniff sniffs out change early. Scurry scurries into action. Haw learned to adapt in time when he saw changes leading to something better. Hem denies and resists change because he fears it will lead to something worse. Which role do you want to play? **SMT**

G. P. Putman's Sons, Penguin Putman Inc., New York, NY, 1998.

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REFERENCE

- ¹ Spencer Johnson, M.D., *Who Moved my Cheese?*,