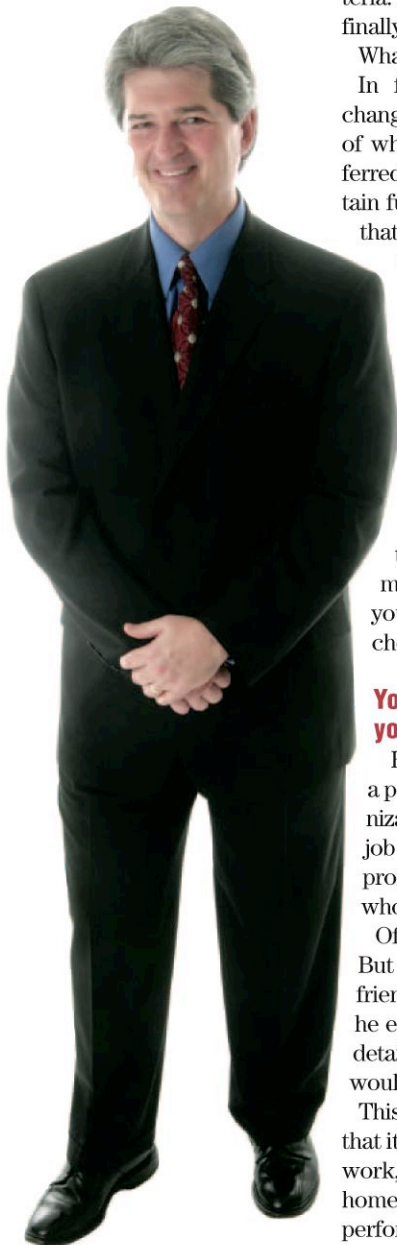


Overcome your fear of change

Three decisions that enable you to triumph over uncertainty



“**T**he new owners are changing everything, and there are rumors that my entire division will be reorganized,” my friend Bob said to me over lunch. “I can’t believe this is happening. Why couldn’t things have stayed the way they were?”

I know my face showed the astonishment I felt, not over the changes in his company but over the change in Bob. For as long as he had worked there, Bob had been the resident expert on all that was wrong in the organization, from poor management and shifting priorities to the quality of the food in the cafeteria. And now he was upset that things were finally changing?

What had happened?

In facing one of the most significant changes of his life, Bob had become so afraid of what might happen that he actually preferred his negative situation over an uncertain future. His fear made him unable to see that this change might create the very outcome he had wanted for years.

Fear is always at the heart of our resistance to change. Like Bob, it’s not really the changes we fear; what we fear is their uncertainty. One of the greatest lessons in the business of life is that we have the power to choose how we deal with uncertainty.

If you are faced with the uncertainty of change, remember that there are three decisions you will inevitably make. The decisions are not optional — you will make them — but what you choose will always be up to you.

You will decide what you’re going to focus on

Every change has the possibility of either a positive or a negative outcome. The organizational change that might eliminate your job could also create the opportunity for a promotion or align you with a new leader who will become your greatest mentor.

Often, both outcomes are equally likely. But which one do you usually focus on? My friend Bob not only focused on the worst, he envisioned a bad outcome in such vivid detail that he became almost certain it would happen.

This imagined outcome was so real to him that it affected his health, his performance at work, and ultimately, his relationships at home. At a time when he needed his best performance, all his energy and the full sup-

port of his family, he chose a focus that robbed him of all three.

Why not decide to focus more broadly on all the possibilities and consistently envision something good coming from them? No matter what actually happens, choosing this mindset every day will channel your fear of uncertainty into the kind of attitude and performance that create opportunity.

You will decide what you’re prepared to do

Change forces choices. Whether you have to take on expanded responsibilities, learn a new skill, or adapt to a new boss, times of change don’t allow you to stand still. Each new demand forces you to decide what you are willing to do.

But how can you make these decisions if you don’t know what you want?

Use this time to make a new plan for your career and for the life you want. Without a plan, every new demand is just more work. But if you know where you want to go, you could find that the new skill you are being forced to learn moves you closer to your dream job for the future.

You will decide who you will become

No matter what changes you are facing, the most important change is happening inside you. Are you becoming bitter and angry, or are you seeing the hopeful possibilities and encouraging the people around you? Are you becoming inflexible and difficult, or are you stretching out of your comfort zone and learning new things?

Take a hard look at yourself. Others may have created the changes you face, but you are choosing who you become because of them.

Change is inevitable. But based on the decisions you make, it can be a resentful struggle, or it can be a time when you learn your most valuable lessons, discover inner strength and capacity, and reveal who you really are.

The choice is up to you.

JIM HULING is CEO of The Jim Huling Group, a strategic consulting company enabling leaders and their teams to achieve extraordinary results. Jim’s leadership experience spans over three decades, including eleven years as CEO of a leading technology company named multiple times as one of the “25 Best Small Companies to Work For in America.” Jim is a nationally recognized keynote speaker and is also the author of *Choose Your Life!* a powerful proven method for creating the life you want, now available on Amazon.