**Quick Change** *(I found several versions of this one on-line, and was recommended by Andrew E Schwartz. I liked Andrew’s version and edited to reflect his method)*

This opening activity works well for topics that deal with the challenges of change.

Participants: Any number

This can be adapted to accommodate some who have done this exercise before as long as not the majority of the group. We can ask those familiar with the exercise to be observers and be prepared to share what they observe in the group. This can serve to reinforce their learning.

1. Ask participants to pair-up with a partner, and stand back to back.
2. Ask everyone to make 3 changes to their physical appearance. Instruct them not to change back until the end of the exercise. (give them 60 seconds or so)
3. Have them turn around and take turns to try to identify what the other person changed. They can share what the other person missed.
4. Instruct them to turn backs to each other.
5. Repeat - Ask them to make 3 more changes. (do not repeat instructions not to change back) If they start to complain at this point, emotions start to emerge you can end here or repeat again.
6. Allow everyone to go back to their seats

*Quick Change Debrief* - Notice that each set of questions emphasizes an important learning point by looking back on the activity, relating it to the workplace, and brainstorming appropriate change-management strategies.

Change as removal

\* When asked to make changes, how many of you removed items (such as belt or tie)? Why did most of you choose to remove things rather than add things?

\* Is this how we often look at change? Do we assume that change means things are going to be taken away? How might we address that in real life? What can we do to help emphasize the benefits of the change?

*Ask observers anything to share here, what did they notice?*

Too many, too fast

\* How did you feel when I asked you to make changes the second/third time? Share what you observed in terms of some reactions.

\* How does this relate to the workplace when we ask people to make too many changes too quickly? What are some things that make people resist change?

*Ask observers anything to share here, what did they notice?*

Return to status quo

\* Right now, how many of you have already changed back to how they were originally? This is interesting, because I didn't tell you to change back yet.

\* Is that what happens in the workplace? Without continued support and direction from upper management, do employees tend to go back to doing things the same old way? Why is it difficult to maintain changes once they are made?

\* How can we lead by example to prevent this from happening? What kind of support is needed to maintain change?

**Ice-breaker**

Have participants come into the room and settle into the seat of their choice. After all the participants are seated and you have welcomed them to the session, tell them to get up, bring their belongings, and sit in a different seat. After everyone has settled down again, ask them to discuss how that felt for them. Make this connection to change and how one can find positives in it. (5 minutes)

You can also ask participants to move their watch/ring from the hand they usually wear it on to the opposite hand. Or to try writing with their non-dominant hand.

Lauren Palmer

While fairly simple, I like to focus folks on the fact that all of our lives are a mixture of **change and constants**. I think we often live in a frame that believes that life (or work) is constantly on or the other. So, I often do some variety of an exercise where I ask folks to think of 2 significant changes that have occurred in the past year\*, then think of two significant things in their life that have stayed the same.

Again, depending on how where you are going with your workshop, you can get feedback from one or two folks in the group, or have them share in small groups to get to know each other and report back. I often will start by sharing one or two of my own responses. I also use this as an opportunity to tie the activity into the workshop as a whole, relating it to change research I have done or relevant research in the field that ties this to where we are headed in the workshop.

\*You could vary the time frame, depending on the group, the time frames you want to focus on and the like.

Polly Silva

One of my favorite warm-ups for a variety of settings is **Concentric Circles**, since it gets people talking and building relationships, which can set a positive tone for the collaborative work that lies ahead. Also, the questions they discuss can directly relate to the topics for the day - e.g. you could get folks talking in pairs about changes they have been through, things they find exciting/fearful about the changes facing them at the moment (after you start with easier questions of course). Description is available online:

http://www.movingbeyondicebreakers.org/includes/activity.php?video=concentricCircles

My favorite book for warm-ups is Moving Beyond Ice Breakers, which describes this activity and many others:

http://www.movingbeyondicebreakers.org/inside

(Disclaimer: I'm on the Board of the organization that produced it, but I'm on the board because I believe in it! ;-)

Andrea Condit

An activity I have seen comes from Moving Beyond Icebreakers. The focus is on generating a discussion through a warm-up question. That question is: If there were a **headline in the paper** about our group/agency, what would it be?

You will then need to process the answers, reflect back what they told you. This may get things moving seeing your goal is change management.

Jovonte Santos

Divide group up – have them write one item that they all have in common that’s not obvious (ex: all like to cook, all born in Boston etc…). then have each person write one thing know one (in the larger group knows) that’s unique to them. Have larger group guess who the unique trait belongs to!

Lauren DeMarco

***Self-Check Change Activity***

***Give Instructions***

1) Explain that this exercise gives people a chance to perform a quick self-check on their feelings and attitudes about change.

2) Give each participant a handout (see \* below). Ask participants to check whichever box (“Negative” or “Positive”) best reflects their initial reaction to each word or phrase. Tell them to go with their initial “gut response”, not to over think it. If they feel neutral on a word, have them do their best to decide if their reaction is closer to the positive or to the negative side of the range.

**\*The following should appear on the handout:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Positive** **(+)** | **Negative** **(-)** |
| 1 | Uncertain |  |  |
| 2 | Postpone |  |  |
| 3 | Impose |  |  |
| 4 | Adapt |  |  |
| 5 | Reorganize |  |  |
| 6 | Opportunity |  |  |
| 7 | Retrain |  |  |
| 8 | Cancel |  |  |
| 9 | Plan |  |  |
| 10 | Shift |  |  |
| 11 | Re-deploy |  |  |
| 12 | Transition |  |  |
| 13 | Ambiguous |  |  |
| 14 | Let’s try something different! |  |  |
| 15 | Starting from scratch |  |  |
| **Totals:** | |  |  |

3) Allow participants about 1 minute to complete the list.

***Self-Check Debrief Exercise***

4) Instruct participants to count the number of positive and negative responses and note them in the Totals row. Ask how many people had more negatives than positives and vice versa. Make the following points:

 We tend to view change either as a challenge or opportunity.

 Even those of us with many positives have some concerns about different aspects of change.

***Participant Introductions (Optional)***

*Time: 10 minutes*

If you would like to wrap the participant introductions into the icebreaker:

1) Tell the participants you’d like them to take about 30 seconds each to introduce themselves and tell the group a little about their attitude towards change. Each person should share:

 Their name and department

 The word from the Exercise they had the most positive reaction to

 The word from the Exercise they had the most negative reaction to

*Be sure to keep track of words/phrases that were mentioned the most as a negative or positive.*

2) Thank the participants for sharing their responses. Comment on the following:

 Some words elicit both positive and negative responses

 Some words can be one person’s most favorable and another person’s most negative.

3) Divulge which words were seen most positively, and which were perceived most negatively. (If there is time, you can always expand on this.)

4) Summarize by saying that each person reacts differently to change — even when we are only reading or hearing words that represent change. Change gets to our “gut” as much as it gets to our heads – and many of our strongest reactions come from there. Reactions that arise from our “gut” are just as valid as those that arise from our heads.

5) Transition to the next activity in your change management training session or discussion.

**Change Your Seat**

**Duration:** 5 to 15 minutes (depending on debrief)

**Number of participants:** unlimited

**Materials required:** none

**Description/Process:** This is another quick and easy game. Participants are asked to change where they are sitting so they can experience the emotions and feelings often associated with change. After the class gets situated and comfortable, the facilitator should ask participants to change seats.

**Discussion Questions**

* How did it feel to be asked to change seats?
* Did you view changing seats as an opportunity to sit with someone new or as an uncomfortable or undesirable change? Can you find any positive in having made the change?
* What are some things that make people resistant to change?
* What can you do to make it easier for people in your organization to accept the changes?
* If participants move back to their old seating arrangements after the exercise is over, ask the following questions:
* Why is it difficult to maintain changes once they are made?
* What kind of support is necessary to maintain the changes?

**Facilitator Notes**

Encourage participants to consider and share their own personal emotions related to making changes. This is what makes the exercise powerful. Another twist to this game might be asking participants to change seats frequently, which also can help them enhance their personal ability to deal with change.