Being a Catalyst for Change:
Using Communication Skills to Bring About Influence in your Organisation ...

by Carolyn Russell
Definitions....

**catalyst [ˈkætəlst] n**

1. (Chemistry) a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself suffering any permanent chemical change (Compare inhibitor)

2. a person or thing that causes a change

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**Thesaurus ......**

1. catalyst - (chemistry) a substance that initiates or accelerates a chemical reaction without itself being affected

   - accelerator
   - chemical change
   - chemical science, chemistry - the science of matter; the branch of the natural sciences dealing with the composition of substances and their properties and reactions
   - activator - (biology) any agency bringing about activation; a molecule that increases the activity of an enzyme or a protein that increases the production of a gene product in DNA transcription
   - biocatalyst - a biochemical catalyst such as an enzyme
   - enzyme - any of several complex proteins that are produced by cells and act as catalysts in specific biochemical reactions
   - anti-catalyst/inhibitor - (chemistry) a substance that retards a chemical reaction or diminishes the activity of a catalyst

2. catalyst - something that causes an important event to happen; the invasion acted as a catalyst to unite the country
What change, or important event, do you want to see?

- Administrative
- Educational
- Geographical (position of the desks or pews!)
- Political (I.T. versus no I.T.!) (organ vs NO organ)
- Personal growth
- Interpersonal / Relational
- ?

Is it needed?

- Question about YOU....
  - Style may be always wanting change (stimulated by it)
  - Others may not need it as much as you desire it
  - Is the change you wish for going to be of benefit to others?
  - Can you tolerate ‘life’ if change does not happen?
Some encouragement for us

- Change happens!
- Even without our intentional input, change can be seen because of other catalyst reactions in the environment --- look for those and be encouraged by them. Observe how it happened, and work with that.

You decide Change is necessary ..... 3 parts

- Components
- Process
- SAFETY
1. What are the reagents, the chemical components?

System - both local and wider world flexibility?
resource?
commitment and vision
Persons - others and YOU!
Roles and procedures - fixed, and authoritative, or more collegial
SO:
› Understand the system
› Understand the people who make up the system
› Including yourself!

Components

2. Compare to a chemical reaction.... (process)

- Physical process
  › Temperature of the laboratory
  › Time of day?
  › Age and condition of the reagants
  › Size of the glass container?

- Knowledge of chemistry and reagants
  › Is this the appropriate test for these reagants

- Capacity of the Laboratory staff eg tired, excited, apathetic, focussed (HALT syndrome)
2. Are there any Inhibitors?

- Things which slow or halt the reaction process........

- *anticatalyst* - (chemistry) a substance that retards a chemical reaction or diminishes the activity of a catalyst

2. What are the inhibitors to change in your organisation?

- What is it?
- Where is it?
- Have people tried to overcome this before?
- What was their success rate?
- How deep/wide/long is the problem?
Is this you?
Has everyone else despaired too?
BE REAL.... Change can be difficult and long in coming

- How realistic is it that YOU will change this and cause a valuable reaction?

(Archbishop Romero/Christine A Mallouhi)

“You cannot carry 2 watermelons in one hand”

2. Who is with you in the process?

- Some want the same change as you.
- Some are ambivalent about change
- Some resistant to change - it will bring about tension for them that is not palatable
- Some are apathetic, (or perhaps tired of attempting change)?

What is your response to each of these people as you assess the process?
2. Being with that person in the process.....

- Challenges of staying connected with those with whom we have differing views and conflicts.....
- First step: recognise the Stage of Change that your organisation/ that person is in....

Change theory...

- Many theories and ideas..........  
- Personal challenges in being the catalyst  
- Today I will choose 2  
  - TransTheoretical model of change (Prochaska and DiClemente et al 1985 to present)  
  - Tension vs Support (Cognitive Institute picture 2009)
Transtheoretical model of change (TTM)

- **Precontemplation**: not likely to change in next 6 months
- **Contemplation**: considering change in next 6 months
- **Preparation**: intentionally exploring the inhibitors to change and reducing them
- **Action**: making the changes, and experiencing the challenge and tension of this
- **Maintenance**: continuing the change, being more able to resist the times when the temptation to go back is high
- **Termination**: do not think of the earlier time anymore > change something else!

(Relapse)

TTM..... Constructs

- **PROS And CONS**: various stages have more Pros than Cons and weighing up constantly!

- **SELF EFFICACY (confidence in temptation)**
  “I can cope if the person who loves the organ wants me to play it, and I do, and I like it, and yet I still believe that using the piano as well AND the cello, is good for us all and will go back to that instead! And I will encourage them to come and enjoy it as well”
1. Experiential
   - Consciousness Raising [Increasing awareness]
   - Dramatic Relief [Emotional arousal]
   - Environmental Reevaluation [Social reappraisal]
   - Social Liberation [Environmental opportunities]
   - Self Reevaluation [Self reappraisal]

2. Behavioural
   - Stimulus Control [Re-engineering]
   - Helping Relationship [Supporting]
   - Counter Conditioning [Substituting]
   - Reinforcement Management [Rewarding]
   - Self Liberation [Committing]

Table 1. The processes of change with alternative labels


3. Finally.... YOU.

- Capacity to promote the behaviours which encourage reflection and change (am I the correct catalyst? Are the conditions in the laboratory correct for this?)

- S.A.F.E.T.Y.
3. Working on problems with others.....

Use the correct process(reagents) for the STAGE of change.

eg. consciousness raising..... ‘what do you think of .....???’
Emotional arousal ...... ‘What was your response to .....?’
Social liberation/environmental reevaluation..... ‘Other libraries are doing (....), that is interesting’.
Reengineering..... ‘What if we changed this printer to an alternate position, and assessed how it worked there?’
Reinforcement management .....‘When we had a lunch together and shared our lives more, the afternoon shift was more productive!’

SAFETY

3. Diagnosis and intervention

- Heart pain>Heart treatment
- Gut pain>Gut treatment

Pre contemplation> information and discussion, dramatic/emotional challenge, waiting
Contemplation> weighing up and hearing stories, waiting
Preparation>problem solving, and presence
Action>all of above and encouragement, hear stories.
Working on problems with others...... Ideas, and attitudes

- In early stages of change, be WITH the people, increasing information, challenging slightly to increase emotional tension, and be available for discussion.
- In later stages of change help with weighing up pros and cons, assessing inhibitors, encouraging, speaking about challenges and temptations to resist change, giving alternative ideas, and supporting (cheerleader).

Working on problems with others ...... Behaviours

a. Invitational posture – attitude and ‘geography’

b. And support: I turn towards others when there is struggle, and am very gently honest and speak the reality.

c. Problem solving: We look at the possibilities together (and yet the ‘bunsen burner is under the correct chair’ or experiment!)
a. Invitational posture – a reflection on our selves in change process

- What it is NOT...
- Person from audience......
- What it IS!

b. Tension/Support model

![Diagram showing regression, growth, stasis, and confirmation]

Adapted from Daloz, 1986
c. Problem solving

- When people are seen to be in the contemplation or preparation stage of change... Or have made some changes and are a little stuck or tempted...

- Look at all options: INCLUDING leaving everything the way it was!
- Ask the other person to choose the option and then assess it

Who/what is in the test tube?
SAFETY ... Essential in change

› S  Size      Start small and be clear
› A  Attitude Care, respect, choice
› F  Face      (not Freeze, Freak, Fantasize, fight, flop)
› E  Empathy  Find the Others’ position
› T  Time      Give as long as it takes if you can
› Y  You       Take care and get support yourself as well as asking about ‘You’, the other in the change process.

Return to Definitions....
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Catalyst....

- Be one.....
- An agent who is being used for the correct reaction, with appropriate SAFETY and at the appropriate time.
- Be supported.

- Remember though, CHANGE WILL HAPPEN, even though you are not always the Agent.