

Staff Development Services

building strong businesses one employee at a time.

If you missed or, would like to review, the first six articles of this series please click on the newsletter of your choice. These newsletters cover Emotional Energy (18), Stress (19), Self-Esteem (20), Optimism (21), Work (22), Detail (23) .

Change — During our early years of marriage, when we had more energy than money, my wife and I decided we wanted to restore an old home. We found a real fixer-upper in a beautiful and peaceful rural area north of Charlotte, NC. ‘The house’ (or the remnants of a house) set in the middle of a pasture field in a grove of cedar trees. You could stand on one side of the house and see daylight through the other side. The roof of the front porch was precariously supported by two boards wedged between the ground and the underside of the roof. Most of the few remaining shutters were dangling by one corner and cows were using the ‘the house’ to provide shade from the afternoon sun.

Word quickly spread through the community that someone had actually bought ‘the house’ and was going to fix it up. (I am sure this provided a lot of chuckles around many dinner tables for quite a while.) It was not long before the locals began dropping by to get a glimpse of the people who were going to fix up ‘the house’. One of these locals was a man we soon started calling Uncle Walter. Uncle Walter lived across the road on the farm where he was born and, other than serving his country during World War II, he had never been out of Rowan County. Uncle Walter had driven the same car since the 60’s (it still had fairly low mileage at the time of his death) and he always took the same route to the same barbershop, the same restaurant, the same grocery store, and the same church his entire life. He got up in the morning, ate the same breakfast and then drove to the local cotton mill where he stood in front of a piece of machinery that turned cotton into thread, repetitively doing the same thing for eight hours a day, five days a week for over 30 years.

Many of you reading about this man may feel that you would rather ‘put a gun to your head’ than lead that kind of life. But, for Uncle Walter, that was the kind of life that suited him. He never took the Simmons Survey but, if he had, I am sure that his desire for **change** would have been low. He did not have a need for much variety in his life and he was not a very flexible person. In fact, if his routine was interrupted or changed much, it was very stressful for him. The status quo was his comfort zone.

Perhaps it is difficult for some of you to understand why **change** is one of the 13 character tendencies discussed in our hiring reports. But, when you think of **change** as being a person’s ability to deal with variety or to adapt to varying demands of their time and effort, then it is easier to understand why this is a key trait in matching the right person to the right job.

We seldom see a potential candidate whose **change** score is not well above the mid-range. That is probably because the majority of people we survey are people who are attracted to jobs that include a good deal of variety. However, if we were doing surveys on people being considered for repetitive work like Uncle Walter did for many years, we may see more candidates with a lower change score.

I think that you would agree that having a high IQ does not guarantee success. In fact, there are probably many people with very high intelligence who are living a dysfunctional life in poverty. But, instead, it is one’s character make-up that is the foundation for determining success in both our professional and personal lives. And, that character make-up is determined by a combination of genetics and our environment. And, that leads me to my next point.

I am not sure that it will be easy to find workers to fill factory jobs in the future because this generation is growing up in a very different environment from previous generations. It is hard to find a young person today who is not under almost constant



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stimulation from a variety of technology or that does not have the ability to be mobile and go just about anywhere they desire at any time. They are always looking for some new way to entertain themselves or to see something that they have not seen before. Their environment growing up is very different from the environment of previous generations.

Although it is usually beneficial for people to be more flexible than Uncle Walter was in order to meet the demands of a job in today's world, it is also possible to be so **change** oriented that a person cannot do the same thing, the same way twice. People with high change continually modify what they do and, if they tend to be impulsive (low **detail**), they may make unnecessary changes that lead to confusion in the workplace. In other words, they cannot 'leave well enough alone'. Factor in someone who has very high **emotional energy** and you can have someone who behaves like a 'bull in a china shop' and achieves little other than creating a chaotic work environment.

Every job has an appropriate level of change needed by a person to do that job successfully. But, if an organization allows employees to do their jobs as they wish, it is beneficial for the person to have a little higher change so they can experiment with various methods of doing the job to figure out what works best for them. However, if the job has rather tightly controlled procedures that people are required to follow, then having a little less change is beneficial.

Each of us has the potential to do great things and some will make the required changes necessary to meet the demands of their personal life and their job, while others will spend their lives blaming others for changes they could have made, but didn't (excessive **self-esteem**).

"When you are through changing, you are through." ~Bruce Barton

Best wishes to all of you!!

John

Staff Development Services
john@staffdevelopment services.com
910-253-6471

THE NEWS