**11. Change – Self and Project**

**Immunity to change**

**Instructions**

***Step 1 – Identify commitment goals***

What is important here is to indentify a goal that is so important that it really engages you deeply. This will require consistent, on-going effort, so you need to choose something that is really worth the effort.

It is strongly encouraged that you get input from important people in your life- people at work, at home and in other contexts in which people may know you such as a sporting team or church. Often those aound us have a clearer view of us, than we do ourselves.

When writing out your commitments, you might start by stating what you want to stop doing. For example, stop interrupting when people talk. But it will work better if you are able to state the goal in positive terms such as what you will do instead. In this example, that could be something like to be present in conversations.

***Step 2 – Identify what you are doing or not doing instead***

This is the beginning of the investigation process of your immunity to change. Yes, you want to identify the behaviours that are not aligned with your improvement goal. We will be using these clues to identify your immunity to change.

We will start from the outside and work our way in. Once you have a list of behaviours, it will be easier to go onto the next step of the process, which is to identify the commitments you have that support your immunity to change. Once you identify commitments, you will have a greater ability to go on to the next step, which is tyo identify the big assumptions that underlie the commitments. These are at the heart of your immunity to change and when they shift you take your foot off the break, and the change will occure much more easily.

It is time to identify all of the specific behaviours that you are doing (or not oing) that are contrary to your commitment goal. You want actual behaviours, not thoughts or feelings. In other words, people around you would be able to observe them or if you videotaped yourself in action and then watched yourself afterwards, you would be able to see the behaviours (or lack of them) during the replay. The more bahaviours you identify and the more specific you are, the easier the next step will be.

Again, seek the input of people around you.

***Step 3 – Identify your hidden competing commitments***

In this step we start to step into the beliefs that are maintaining your immune system. This is the beginning of the truly introspective work. You can start this work by first imagining yourself doing the opposite of the behaviours you have identified in the previous step. Then identify what worrying or concerning feelings come up for you.

For example, if your improvement goal was to become a better delegator, then you might have identifies the contrary behaviours in step two such as: you don’t give people enough freedom to come up with their own approach to the problem, you intervene as soon as the assignment deviates from your idel path, you chastise people when they make mistakes, and so on. Now imaging doing the opposite of these behaviours such as giving people freedom to develop their own approach to the assignment, waiting before you intervene and so on. What worrying or concerning feelings arise for you when you consider doing the opposite? In this example, this might generate answers like, feeling helpless or feeling out of control or fear of looking stupid and so on.

Then ask yourself, what might you be internally committed to that would result in such fears. This will produce the first insights into what is actually powering your immunity to change. In this step, we are exploring the underlying commitments we have that prevent the thing we fear from occuring.

Continuing on with this example, competing commitments could include: to be the person that people can depend on at crunch time, to never look foolish in front of your co-workers, or bosses, to not allow people who work for me to make big mistakes, and so on.

***Step 4 – Identify your big assumption***

Our big assumptions are at the core of what powers our immunity to change. Assumptions are what we believe to be true about ourselves, about others and about the way the world works. They are the rules of thumb that we live our lives by. Most of the time they serve us well. If we had to respond to the situations in our life with no guide as to how to respond to them, then we could easily repeat the same mistakes over and over or be overwhelmed by the newness of each moment. So our mind protects us from this eventuality by drawing conclusions about us, others and the world based on our experiences. Often these conclusions are accurate, but sometimes they are not and they become embedded in our internal operating system. They act like hidden programs that guide our perceptions and behaviour in profoundly important ways. In the situation you are working through here, they will be acting in ways that put the breaks on the change that you want to make.

The core of adaptive change is to identify these hidden big assumptions and to bring them intot he light of concious examination. Often in the light of day, we can see the part or all of our big assumption doesn’t make much sense, or needs to be re-examined in the light of the wisdome and life experience we have gained since we developed that assumption.

So the question to ask here is: what are my big assumptions? In other words, what would I need to believe about myself, about others or about the way the world works that would sustain the competing commitments that you identified in the previous step?

***Step 5 – Test your big assumption***

Oftentimes, we need to take small, low-risk experiments that will challenge our big assumptions. Sometimes just bringing them into the light of day isn’t enough to shake off their power. We see them clearly but we still believe them.

Now, let’s take a look at the immunity to change worksheet.

**Immunity to Change Worksheet**

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| **1. What are you deeply committed to improving?** | **2. What are you doing or not doing that is contrary to that goal?** | **3. What are your hidden competing commitments? What are you afraid might happen if you behave in ways that are opposite to your entries in the previous column?** | **4. What are your big assumptions? What beliefs do you have about yourself, others and the way the world works that would sustain the commitments in the previous column?** |
| Example:  Become a better delegator, specifically to:  \*work together with the person to develop clear outcomes at the beginning  \*leave them to develop the approach to the assignment  \*put out any potential pitfalls or things to watch out for  \*identify resources they can use  \*establish clearly what they are accountable for and how progress will be measured | Example  \*I intervene as soon as the assignment deviates from my ideal path.  \*I chastise (punish) people when they make mistakes.  \*I don’t give clear instructions.  \*I sometimes change the parameters along the way.  \*I go directly to the people that work for the person I have delegated to, instead of going through them.  \*I am prescriptive about how the wrok should be done. | Example  \*I worry that I will:  -feel helpless  -feel out of control  -look stupid in front of my collegues  \*To be the person that people can depend on at crunch time  \*To never look foolish in front of my bosses or peers  \*To not allow people who work for me to make big mistakes | Example  \*I assume that my career depends on getting points at work, and being the go-to person in crunch-time gets me lots of points  \*I assume that it is just a matter of time before someone working for me makes a big mistake and that my career will be on the line if that happens  \*I assume that my collegues will think I am a fool if the project gets out of control |
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