

## The One-on-One Change Conversation Guide

Every person's experience with change is shaped by their past experiences with it. These experiences can form biases, fears, assumptions, and perceptions that can negatively affect the individual's ability to embrace and flourish in future change. So, it's important for change leaders to understand and address this reality head-on. The best way to do so is to conduct one-on-one change conversations—*leader-initiated, empathy-driven discussions between boss and each individual employee* (or at least employees that appear to be struggling with the change).

The point is to give employees the chance to share past experiences and emotions, and to voice concerns, barriers, and ideas. You can also assess where the employee is on the “support continuum.” Meaning, regarding the change, is the employee:

- A passive resistor? (quietly opposes it)
- An active resistor? (openly opposes it)
- Neutral to it?
- A passive supporter? (quietly supports it)
- An active supporter? (openly supports it)

Here are the time-tested prompts that serve as the basis of the change conversation:

- “Obviously, we’re going through a lot of change. How are you feeling about it? What questions does it create?”
- “Change often causes us to give up or lose something. What do you fear giving up or losing?”
- “What about this change leaves you feeling uncertain/worried?”
- “What part of this change is creating an obstacle for you?”
- “Do you anticipate unintended consequences as a result of this change?”
- “What’s been your experience with other changes you’ve been through?”
- “How might you benefit from this change? What part of the change presents the greatest opportunity for you?”
- “Do you understand your role in this change?”
- “Do you understand what’s expected of you with this change?”
- “How committed are you to making this change work, on a scale from 1 to 10?” (or use the support continuum described above)
- “What resources or assistance do you need to make this change work?”
- “Any thoughts on how this change might best be implemented or things to watch out for?”