

DIGNIFIED CHANGE

THE FIVE PATHS TO DIGNIFIED TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES



Changes are part of life and will accompany us from the cradle to our deathbed. Nothing stays as it is. Everything changes. That is the way of things. Nevertheless, we find ourselves in a new era of change. Everywhere there is a call for it, it must come quickly, and it must work. But hasty and ill-considered changes usually fail. In my view, the difference between change that successfully support us in our challenges - leading us down new, hopeful paths - and change that feeds on the old and the worn-out depends to a great extent on whether dignity is the foundation of the change process.

DIGNITY IS THE KEY

Lasting change is, above all, inner work. It is necessary to recognize problems in advance and prepare to face difficulty. We may have to ask ourselves unpleasant questions and deal with the consequences of our personal decisions on surroundings, relationships, and work-life. Only when we have done this can effective change processes be set in motion. Everything but this type of prepared, dignified change are useless shams.



Because recognizing a problem and visualizing its consequences are not simple processes, we should ideally be accompanied by experts - often in the form of coaching. With an expert at our side - and dignity as a compass in our hands - leadership can be revolutionized to a standard suitable for the 21st century. Sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion, are necessary solutions to our biggest problem: the climate crisis.

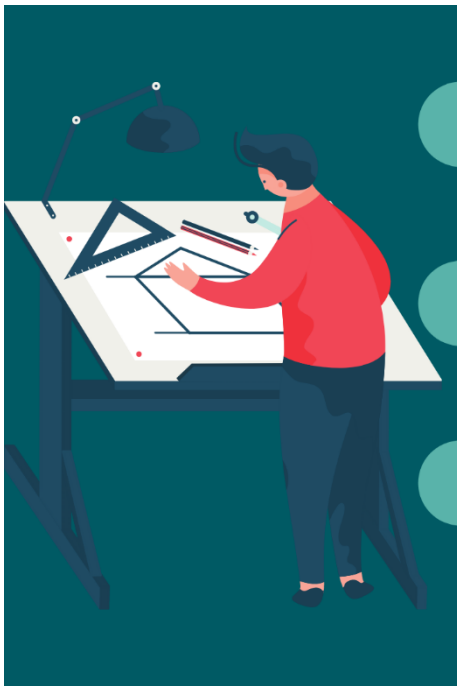
The time is ripe. We have been actively working on dignified change processes on a systemic level for years. This article is meant to serve as an inspiration for you to integrate dignified change processes in your life.

HOW WE CAN BUILD ON OURSELVES WITH DIGNITY AND THUS GROW BEYOND OURSELVES:

Transformation processes are far better than their reputation. As a coach, I see quality-of-life enhancements as the most important reason for change. If we cannot internalize the reasons for change, the transformation process will be less successful and likely fail. As mentioned earlier, change is integral to all of our being. The better we become at embodying change processes and actively co-creating them, the more fulfilling our lives will be. As a transformational architect, I feel a deep love and respect for dignified change processes. In all transformation processes, dignity plays an essential role. Changes that do not stem from dignity in both myself and others are not sustainable. All our actions must be governed by dignity, especially change processes. Dignity as a quality needs a new approach and a new definition in our new age.

The fact that I repeatedly use the term architecture in connection with transformation processes is no coincidence. I like to compare this process with building a house. At the beginning there is an idea, a plan, or a vision. The framework is the first step to give these thoughts a structure. This is followed by the foundation. And finally, building.

All change processes are preceded by a vision or a wish. This is the beginning of the inner house building. Similar to architects, I ask three questions at the beginning of building a project:



- HOW DOES MY VISION LOOK LIKE?
- HOW DO I DESIGN THE WAY TO GET THERE?
- WHAT AM I WILLING TO DO AND GIVE FOR IT?

FELT AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

It is important for dignified change processes to come from a feeling, from borrowed knowledge, felt knowledge, and lived experience. There is a big difference between borrowed and felt knowledge. By borrowed knowledge I mean knowledge that we get from outside (e.g. from technical literature), but which is based on external experience. We capture this knowledge in our heads. We need specialized knowledge to be able to implement successful changes. For effective, sustainable and dignified changes, however, we need above all felt and lived knowledge. We need to enrich the knowledge in our head with the feeling in our heart and our gut instincts to create lived and felt knowledge. Only when we start to feel knowledge in our own body, will we move from passive "taking in" to active doing.



Participation is another essential component of dignified change. Successful change processes ALL have one thing in common: they invite participation. Changes that are not supported by a critical majority of those involved will not be successful.

THE THREE QUALITIES OF CHANGE PROCESSES

From my experience in accompanying change processes, three qualities are essential for dignified change.



APPRECIATION

It is important to recognize and appreciate one's own value as well as the value of others and their position. Appreciation should always be rooted in sincerity.

INTERACTION/RELATIONSHIP

Ask yourself the following questions: What do my relationships look like? Are they secure? Do I have trust? Am I being seen and heard? Is my counterpart present in the decision making process? Are my boundaries being respected? Am I respecting the boundaries of others? Security of connections is of critical importance in one's life, but also in change processes.

INNER ATTITUDE

Inner attitude is about balance and perception - both towards myself and towards others. How do I see my counterpart? Smaller or bigger than me? How do I see myself towards others? Smaller or bigger than my counterpart? It is important to always meet each other

at eye level, no matter in which position we see ourselves or others. Strengthening our inner attitude can set a lot in motion. But it always brings us to an inner (adult) place where our full resources are available to us.

BEFORE CHANGE PROCESSES

... processes! always ask my clients the following questions, which I see as important impulses:

- What allows eye level for all involved?
- What is the strongest win:win situation we can imagine?
- What honors what has already been done?
- What should definitely not change?
- What is allowed to change?
- What does security and trust mean?
- How can both values be lived?

THE FIVE PATHWAYS TO DIGNIFIED CHANGE

Since change is natural and we cannot avoid it anyway, it makes sense to accept it instead of fighting it – to change our attitude and, above all, to approach it with dignity.

In this way it is possible to

1. BE ACTIVE

Get actively involved in the change process. Think, what can I actively contribute? Find a place where you can actively contribute. Ask yourself, what do I want to keep? What do I want to change? What is the opportunity in doing so?

2. BREAK THE FORMULA

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{E} & + & \mathbf{R} & = & \mathbf{O} \\ \text{EVENT} & & \text{REACTION} & & \text{OUTCOME} \end{array}$$

Even though we sometimes can't control the event, we have power over our reaction to it. Often much more than we realize. It is this reaction of ours that has a decisive effect on the outcome. The event itself plays a subordinate role. Or to say it with the words of Viktor Frankl: *Between stimulus and reaction there is a space. In this space we have the freedom and the power to choose our reaction.*

3. CREATE A STORY

Think about what story you want to be a part of, how do you want your legacy to be remembered?. Then start writing it and living it. The story you write is far more important than any story someone writes *about you*. Use the paradigm of a self-fulfilling prophecy! Tell stories that you would like to see turned into reality.

4. FOLLOW YOUR INTUITION

Listen to your intuition. Most of the time we know very well when a change is about to happen. The sooner we listen to our inner mood and give it space, the easier it will be for us to make a change. A walk or 5 minutes of silence a day can make you feel better and create space for your inner voice to sing.

5. DO

Don't put off pending changes, build necessary resources. DO nourish and recover from one change before tackling the next one, but don't let this process drag on. Procrastination saps valuable energy.

If we take these five points to heart, change is not a fearful process we must go through, but an opportunity for an improve our quality of life.

Are you ready for dignified change?