



Next Is Now

5 Steps for Embracing Change — Building a Business That Thrives Into the Future

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

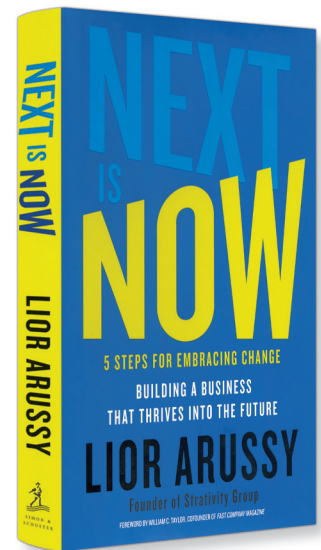
The old business model of adapting to change for continued success is dead. Change is the new normal. There are no more periods of stability and predictability. There is only change. This continuous upheaval can undercut morale, decrease productivity and decimate profits, or it can be a game-changing opportunity.

A leading authority on customer-centric business transformation, Lior Arussy illuminates the path to opportunity. In *Next Is Now*, he helps corporate leaders and their employees view change as an opportunity to become invested, drive that change, and achieve more success and job satisfaction than if change were simply implemented from the top down.

Based on his experience working one-on-one with major corporate clients, Arussy shares his five-step Future Ready Impact program and guides change-impacted employees and business owners from a victim mentality to one of participation and ownership. For organizations seeking to thrive in the drastic, continual change that is now their everyday reality, *Next Is Now* offers groundbreaking, essential guidance.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why we fear and resist change and how to overcome those fears.
- To find your core cause and use it to ride the waves of change.
- A five-step process for not just managing but thriving in change.
- How to lead change resilience.



by Lior Arussy

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: NEXT IS NOW

by Lior Arussy

The author: Lior Arussy is the founder of Strativity Group and is one of the world's leading authorities on customer experience, culture design and customer-centric transformation. Many of the world's top brands work with him to drive successful change efforts: Mercedes-Benz, Royal Caribbean, Thomson Reuters, HSBC, E.ON, Pizza Hut, FedEx, Walmart, the *New York Times* and Johnson & Johnson, among many others. He is the author of seven books, has written more than 500 articles for publications around the world and has been featured in a multitude of magazines and media outlets.

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Change Resilience

Entire industries are disappearing and undergoing fundamental changes at a pace we have never encountered before. The music business was altered forever with the creation of iTunes and streaming services. The automobile industry is starting to feel the pinch from ride-sharing companies like Zipcar. Banking is now done online with a slew of new financial empowerment tools that turn every millennial into an educated banker. Travel agents? A distant, fading memory.

Our natural reaction to all of this change is resistance. And the more change thrown at us, the greater our resistance.

If we are not future ready, we reject it. But the price of our aversion to change is a loss of marketplace relevance. It hinders our ability to continue to make an impact on a world that's evolving faster than ever before.

If employees are emotionally ready for change, the chance that a new strategy will succeed is exponentially higher.

The human body can only handle so much change — and the same is true of an organization made up of large groups of human beings. So whether you're leading a change at your organization or being asked to take part in one, take heart: In this approach, we start by remembering everything that doesn't change.

We do this by identifying our “core cause”— our individual or organizational responsibilities, our mission, our values. Your core cause is a bridge that stretches from your past or your company's earliest days into the future. If your connection to your core cause is strong enough, you'll be supported the whole way.

Defining Your Core Cause

Your core cause is the reason you exist. The higher purpose that drives you. It is usually defined by the people you serve or who are enjoying the benefit of your efforts: How do your customers use your product or services? What does it empower or inspire them to do? How does it make their lives better or easier?

For teachers, a core cause might be to educate and inspire, not the tests and quizzes they give. For bankers, it is the creation of financial confidence among their clients, not the spreadsheets or formulas they use.

When you feel deeply connected to your core cause, specific tools and processes lose their power over you. The tools will always evolve. The core cause will not. ●

Fear of Change

People's responses to change have nothing to do with logic. We're hardwired to hold on to the Now instead of embracing the Next. After all, the Now is comforting and predictable. We do not want to leave this presumably safe, familiar place. It is reassuring and comforting. Losing it is like losing a piece of ourselves.

The Next, on the other hand, is hard. Why? In a word: *fear*. Anything that deviates from the status quo scares people. We reflexively resist new ideas and new ways of doing things because we cling to the past.

People will frequently express concerns about the future such as “What will it be like?” Such statements, however, are deceiving. If you attempt to address them, you will miss the deeper, underlying issues.



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Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; Sarah T. Dayton, Editor in Chief; Ashleigh Imus, Senior Editor; Kylie O'Connor, Graphic Designer; A. Imus, Contributing Editor

Underneath every future-based fear, there are two deeper fears: fears rooted in the past and fears triggered by the challenge to one's identity. When people are stuck in the past, they struggle with how to contextualize their past performance with a need for change. They need to place their performance in a positive light before they can engage with the future-based fears.

Identity-based fear takes this a step deeper. Often people feel that the upcoming change is a threat to who they are and not just what they do. They struggle with more existential questions about the impact of the future on their values and how they define themselves. Addressing those deeper fears is essential to preparing for the future.

The Judgment of the Past

Sweden is rapidly becoming a cashless society. One in five transactions happens digitally, and cash payments amount to less than 2 percent of the value of all payments in the country. Retailers aren't required to accept physical currency and many don't, preferring payment by credit card or smartphone. Swedes can't even use cash to pay for public transportation and many other key services.

As a result, many Swedish banks no longer keep cash on hand or allow deposits. ATMs are vanishing rapidly. Most financial transactions of any kind are completed electronically, and the trend is only accelerating.

For a Swedish bank teller with decades of experience at the counter, cashless banking tells her, "You're useless." She will struggle to reconcile the hard work she has invested over the years with the shiny new technology that renders all of it obsolete. She will wrestle with accepting what is, to everyone else, an unambiguous improvement.

Typical change initiatives are so preoccupied with celebrating the future that they fail to recognize the importance of the past and those who labored to get the organization here. It is only when we respectfully acknowledge the significance of the past that we begin to get people unstuck. This requires proactive communication and a genuine understanding of the history of the organization leading up to the change.

If you're leading a change program at your organization, it's your job to make people comfortable by creating a meaningful transition between the past and the future. If you're an employee tasked with adapting to a new change, you have the opportunity to help your colleagues and customers embrace the change by demonstrating the connection between the past you've lived and the future you will build. ●

The Secret to Change Resilience: Engagement

If you're currently resisting a change, ask yourself, "Am I truly engaged with the process or its proposed outcome?" Be honest.

If you don't know the answer, here are some other questions to ask: "When asked to make a change, do I think creatively about how to approach it?" "If I'm driving the change at my organization, do I ask employees for their ideas?" "When charged with making a decision or solving a problem, would I prefer to defer to my managers so I'm not held responsible?" "Do I give my employees opportunities to solve problems related to change?"

Much like good customer service, creativity around change cannot be dictated from the top. Employees need to personally decide to change — and to think creatively about how to change. A paycheck only buys your employees' passive attendance — but compliance isn't enough. You need engagement.

In 2016, the consulting group Strativity launched a nationwide study of 30,183 adults, in an attempt to better understand employee engagement. The study found that when people are inspired to act, understand the need they are addressing for their customer, and have their role in making an impact clearly communicated, they are ready to make a difference.

In other words, people demonstrate the highest engagement not when their personal needs are being met but, rather, when they feel empowered to make an impact and help others. People in the study felt most engaged when they were doing something meaningful with a clear impact on a real human being.

An organization that provides its employees with the tools to make a real impact on people's lives is the company that will have the most engaged employees. Consider these three drivers of engagement:

- **Engagement Driver #1:** Give people the power to have an impact on someone else's life.
- **Engagement Driver #2:** Put customers at the center, and empower people to serve them.
- **Engagement Driver #3:** Give employees personal ownership of the strategy.

Whether you're being asked to embrace some new change at work or you're willingly embarking on a personal transformation, the same drivers apply. If you want the change to stick, ask yourself how it could benefit others.

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Are You Future Ready?

Are you ready to embrace the unknown? To be proactive and stay ahead of the game? To own your destiny — and use your skills to help others?

The following five-step Future Ready Impact process was designed to help you get there — and to take your colleagues and your organizations with you. These five steps are designed to accelerate change and guide you to the next place you belong. They will empower you to be the authority of your life. ●

Step 1: Face It!

The first step in embracing change is getting honest with yourself about the reason for it: anything from industry trends and technology advancements to a changing customer base or environmental factors. Your challenge? Face the change squarely and objectively and decide your next step.

Facing the facts is difficult. Therefore, we wear different lenses when we face any data suggesting that change is needed. These lenses come in many different colors. None of them, unfortunately, are the ones we need: the colorless lenses that allow us to see clearly through to the mirror.

The blue lenses tell us the change is doomed from the start. Why bother changing? It won't help. The red lenses make us mad. The data must be wrong — it certainly contradicts what we believe to be true.

Pink lenses see the status quo as rose-colored, diminishing the intensity of the data and the sense of urgency. "I'm working on it already," we tell ourselves with a smile. "It's all good." The green lenses tell us change is too expensive. Staying the current course is the prudent financial approach.

The black lenses simply will not see anything. We know our job so well that we don't have to pay attention to industry news and trends. Just keep doing the same work, and everything will be fine.

Do you remember the Wells Fargo fake accounts fiasco of 2016? Employees at the bank created millions of fake accounts for real customers in order to boost their sales figures and make more money. This disaster resulted in the firing of 5,300 employees and eventually led to the resignation of the company's longtime CEO on October 12, 2016.

A case of denial on an astronomical scale. How could so many people see the facts and not address them? How could so many people believe they would get away with this? What were they planning to tell their customers about the fees they were charging for fake accounts?

We are not dealing with one rogue person here. This was an institutional approach. Their aggressive sales quotas — the green lenses — biased the judgment of 5,300 employees who were able to put their integrity aside and even risk their jobs to increase profits. For many people, our preoccupation with the here-and-now is enough to keep us oblivious to the inevitable change happening all around us.

What Would a New CEO Do?

That's the question Andy Grove, the legendary founder of Intel, would ask at critical strategic junctures: "What would a new CEO do?"

In his book *Only the Paranoid Survive*, he describes how this little game would help him look at problems with a fresh set of eyes — and without worrying about politics. He wanted to face the facts squarely and without any personal biases.

We can take a cue from Grove whether we're driving a change initiative, being asked to embrace a new tool or system, or approaching a change in our personal lives.

If you're a manager, put your employees in the CEO's seat. Let them face the same facts you've been given and reach their own conclusions. It is amazing what happens when instead of forcing employees to be passive recipients of change, you ask them to join you in analyzing harsh realities. Many initiatives fail because leaders don't take this step, giving employees a perfect excuse not to change. By putting employees in the driver's seat, on the other hand, you allow them to engage with the facts and reach their own conclusions.

As for those of you who've been asked to change or who are proactively diving into the Next, try imagining the advice you would give to someone seeking the same results. Pretend you have no emotional entanglement. As you consider the complexity of the problem before you, you will start to see a clear direction for the future. You will start to sense the urgency — and understand why a change is necessary. ●

Step 2: Analyze It!

Step 1 asked you to suspend your fears and emotions. Now, Step 2 asks you to turn them loose. Without understanding how your emotions are holding you back from changing, you cannot successfully move forward.

A rational decision alone will not turn you into a champion for change. Our emotions often make the choice about whether innovative strategies are adopted or not.

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Emotions matter. They are the bloodline of change. Before developing new skills, we must develop emotional readiness.

Fear of Getting Hurt

When designing a cancer treatment center experience, it's important to consider every aspect — everything from the look of the waiting room to the amenities available in each treatment room. But you can design the most comfortable and soothing center in the world, and if the employees are not engaged, patients will feel no comfort.

When the subject of emotional engagement came up with nurses at the cancer treatment center Strativity had been asked to design, their reluctance to truly engage with patients was surprising. While they knew quite well the importance of connecting emotionally, they worked to maintain boundaries with patients whenever possible.

When asked about it, they explained it was a method of self-preservation. The pain their patients experienced — and the fact that some didn't make it — was incredibly difficult for the nurses. As a result, they were not willing to open up. They were afraid to get hurt. As one nurse put it so succinctly, "I do not want to go to any more funerals."

Many of them saw their patients' suffering and deaths as a sign of the nurses' inability to connect with them. Despite all their efforts, many patients didn't get better. Thanks to that deep emotional insight, Strativity decided upon an approach that addressed the nurses' frustration and sense of helplessness.

They began to design the patient experience as a journey, not as a destination, redefining the role of the nurse as a personal guide. No longer did nurses need to feel responsibility for "solving" the patient's illness. Instead, they could act as the patient's companion. By recognizing the nurses' distress and sense of impotence, a new approach to managing change was developed.

The results were phenomenal. The nurses felt a new sense of purpose and fulfillment. The patients' reaction to this authentic care was beyond wildest expectations. Some even got tattoos of the logo of the cancer treatment center in appreciation.

Change may be painful, but there's no use ignoring it. Addressing the root of the pain and fear often helps you come up with the right solution for everyone.

Here's another fear: FOMO — the fear of missing out. FOMO is a term that has gained popularity in recent years, especially on social media.

When it comes to exciting new changes in our world, a little bit of FOMO can actually drive us to overcome our fears and embrace change. If our doctor recommends a new treatment regime for managing a chronic disease, skipping

it would mean giving up on our future, on everything from seeing new places to experiencing our children's growth. Ignoring the latest technologies may prevent us from communicating more effectively with our loved ones.

Every change brings with it a new promise, a promise we will most definitely miss if we do not adapt in a timely manner. You could miss out on a life experience or an opportunity to make an impact on the world. Is your fear worth missing out on something so important? ●

Step 3: Redefine It!

Now it's time to accelerate your commitment to change. Acknowledging our fears does not mean we should let them dictate our future. In this phase, we will bridge the gap between past and future. We will personalize the change and understand the role it plays in our life's journey. This phase enables us to view change as a continuation of — not a departure from — the past.

After attending a session focused on teaching frontline employees to think like their customers, John, a product manager, decided to take action. He approached his colleagues, more than 200 of them, and asked them a simple question: "Who do you work for?" John asked each colleague to write his or her answer on a piece of paper and hand it to him. They all complied without thinking too much of it. After all, the answer was clear.

For the most part the answers were consistent. Employees worked for management: the people who hired them, the managers they reported to, the ones who could fire them.

After reading all the answers, John shared the following insight: "One day, your direct supervisor will retire. You don't work for him. One day, the CEO will get another job elsewhere and leave you behind. You don't work for him. One day, the head of sales will win the lottery and move to Jamaica without as much as a backward glance. You don't work for him either. One day the shareholders will sell their stock and move their investments elsewhere. You don't work for them either. We all have one ultimate boss. It's our customer."

We often forget this simple yet invincible truth. No customer = no business = no job. It is as simple as that. If customers stop entering your store or visiting your website, the game is over.

Recognizing this is a critical step toward discovering your cause. You may not directly interact with customers every day in your line of work, but somewhere down the line there is a customer who needs you. Every job, every transaction has a customer. That person needs you to deliver

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to the best of your ability. The only way you will do so is if you recognize how much that customer needs you.

What's Your Core Cause?

It's time to identify your core cause and assess how it's connected to the change you're facing. The following two exercises will help you achieve this goal.

Exercise 1: Choose your cause. Imagine that you are free of any financial worries or obligations and have the opportunity to volunteer with the charity of your choice:

- Which charity would you choose? An organization dedicated to health-care reform? A mentoring program for kids? An environmental protection group?
- Why would you choose to volunteer there? Is it because you're attracted to manual labor, specialized work or fund-raising?
- How would you feel while volunteering there?
- What would you be known for at the charity? Would you be the comic relief, the one who always sees the silver lining, the person who wears his heart on his sleeve, the strategic thinker or the most dependable volunteer?

Exercise 2: Define your mission. Now use your answers from the previous questions to identify your mission. The previous exercise should focus your thinking and allow you to assess yourself in the most pure, unbiased, unrestricted way.

- What do you love? (your mission).
- Whom would you love to help? (your world).
- How would you like to impact them? (your skills and values).
- What future do you want to create for them? (your hope).

The answers to the above questions should allow you to answer the following questions: 1. What values define you? 2. How would you like to make an impact on the world?

Now that you know your cause, you are ready to redefine any change you face so that it aligns with who you are. Understanding how this change will affect the lives of your stakeholders and what your desired impact is will help you view change as a friend and not a foe. ●

Step 4: Grow It!

Now it's time to build your confidence in your ability to work or live the change effortlessly. To achieve this, we need to grow our skill sets.

During this step we will operationalize the cause that inspires us and apply it to our everyday activities, behaviors and interactions with customers. Operationalizing an idea means bringing it to life, making it real and relevant.

Change needs to be properly scaled — so we're going to start small by practicing our new behaviors in low-risk ways.

To make an impact, you first need to understand your customer. But this is not always easy. If you love music and you serve people who love music, you can relate. But the cardiologist who's never had a heart attack will never be able to fully understand what his patients are experiencing.

Operationalizing your commitment to change isn't just about adding in a new task here or there. Rather, it's about examining how you spend each day and determining where the new change will have an impact and how it will alter the way you perform. Here is a recommended process to "rehearse" the change:

1. Map your daily activities and responsibilities.

What are you in charge of? How are you being measured? How do you fulfill your responsibilities? List all of your activities and the customers who benefit from them.

2. Identify the impact a change will have on your daily operations and activities. How will the change impact your activities? What will you have to do differently? What will stay the same? What might be eliminated altogether? What will the impact be on time available to you?

3. Visualize your new activities with the change. What will a typical day look like for you? How will it make you feel? How will it impact your customer? What does it do to the time available? What tools would you need to execute it? Draw a clear image of the newly delivered activities.

4. Create a step-by-step diagram of the new ideal state. What skills do you need to master? What behaviors should you adapt? What behaviors should you stop?

5. Develop a communication plan. Imagine you are communicating the change to your customers. How will you explain the need for it? How will you communicate the customer's role? How will you explain your future role? What will be your choice of words?

Let's look at a banker whose goal is to start operationalizing her job as the Creator of Customer Financial Security. Yes, the change she's grappling with is her bank's use of a new digital platform. But that doesn't change her role as someone whose job is to help customers feel like their financial lives are safe and secure.

We can actually rehearse how she can deliver the same exceptional service using a new set of tools: A customer arrives to discuss her unexpected divorce. Her husband

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has always managed their finances, and she is now left with no clue as to how to move forward. Her life as she knows it is in ruins, she's an emotional wreck and now her financial world is in an equally dismal state. What does she need right now?

The old banker would have responded that the customer needs a line of credit, a new credit card, maybe a new checking account — all of which the customer can apply for via the new digital channels. But the banker in touch with her core cause will recognize that the customer's real need is for clarity and support. She needs to regain control over her life. She needs to develop new financial understanding. Without an emotional readiness and a sense of control, no financial product is going to make a difference. What she needs right now is a sense of hope and reassurance that the loss and sense of destruction she feels in this moment will not last.

Thanks to digital platforms that can perform a lot of the banker's old tasks, she is liberated to spend more time providing comfort and understanding to this particular customer. She can guide the customer's next steps, helping her see which products will best suit her needs. Helping the customer create a budget and enlisting her in digital alerts that will enable her to manage her budget correctly will create the sense of control — and hope — that she currently lacks.

By fusing the power of digital tools and human empathy, the banker can create a lasting memory and a value her customer will not forget. At the end of the day, in her moment of truth, she was there for someone who needed her. ●

Step 5: Own It!

To own change, you need more than just determination. You need a plan with goals and milestones. You need to celebrate successes and create a process for learning and adapting to whatever new changes come your way.

Many people have a vision of success but have no plan to operationalize it. Others have the opposite problem: They take all the right steps but fail to recognize success when it arrives. They simply let it pass by without any sense of jubilation and accomplishment.

To be change-resilient, we must address both issues. How? By developing an “ecosystem of success”— a set of activities that will allow you to activate new behaviors and weave them into your life. Consider the following activities:

Visualize success. Start by painting a clear picture of success — then move backward to identify the steps to get there. What do you need to stop doing? What do you need to start doing? What steps are required to achieve this journey?

Create daily rituals. A passionate, authentic daily ritual will get you aligned and connected. Building a ritual requires confidence and practice. Such rituals remind us of our commitment, reinforce the rationale behind it and demonstrate that we are making progress. They should refocus your attention on your core cause and remind you of what you need to do differently to bring your commitment to life.

Plan to fail. We need to recognize the temptations, time pressures and inevitable obstacles, and accept them. We will fail on our journey. We can also forgive ourselves — as long as we know we are ready to get back on track. So plan to fail. Accept it. And keep going.

Capture the success stories. As you venture on the road to personal or professional transformation, you're going to achieve a number of quantitative objectives. But first you will experience qualitative progress. A qualitative result is a story about the impact you've created. These reaffirming stories build your character, confidence and commitment to continue on the journey toward transformation.

Daily experiments. One way to get yourself future ready is to start experimenting in different areas of your life. Push yourself — but do so gently. When was the last time you tried a new PowerPoint template? Animation? Or *any* new feature? As you see that you start reaching your goals, extend your boundaries bit by bit.

Solicit feedback. Ask people for honest feedback. Invite them to rate — and even coach. Most of us rate our own performance as above average and declare victory before it is achieved. Let others help you reflect more accurately and support your progress.

Celebrate success — reward yourself. Reward yourself for sticking to the change plan and making it this far. At every milestone, take some action to make success visible and celebrate it. ●

Leading Change Resilience

Let's focus on how to lead change. If you start making positive changes in your life, you can bet people will start

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asking how you did it. Here's your opportunity to think about how to scale your efforts so that you can help others live their core causes. This requires you to think about how the change will affect those around you and how to bring others on board to support your efforts.

Know your ecosystem. In the world of performing arts, Deborah Rutter is regarded as a true change agent. As the CEO of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, she is working to leverage its rich heritage while ensuring its continued relevance. Her first piece of advice? "Know your cultural ecosystem." In other words, change resilience ought to be developed based on what is natural to people and, therefore, intrinsic. Do not attempt to change who anyone is; rather, make sure your initiatives take into consideration their beliefs and values — and build from there.

The sum total of everyone's decisions. Leaders need to accept the fact that their role is not to decide but, rather, to empower decisions. After all, it is not the BIG decision made in the boardroom that matters much. It is the millions of small decisions employees make every day that activate the desired change in many ways.

Success isn't guaranteed. Transformation is, by definition, risky. You are attempting to do something you've never done. You don't know how it will work. That is part of the excitement and the fear. When you repeat something you've always done, on the other hand, that's safe. Unfortunately, it's also no longer special or distinctive. You can't have it both ways. If you want the excitement of the new, you must assume the fear of the unknown.

Nurturing employee engagement. As a leader, your main purpose is to help others reach new heights of performance. The more they achieve, the better your results will be. Consider the following techniques to create a culture of engagement:

- Set aspirational goals to motivate them. What is the next "exceptional" for them?
- Identify the tools they need to succeed, and empower them to accomplish their goals.
- Provide a safety net that allows them to feel comfortable to experiment and do things they've never done before.

Sharing impact with those working behind the scenes. If your organization does not serve customers directly or only provides back-office support, then sharing impact becomes even more critical. Use stories or

customer testimonials to make the impact on customers clear to everyone at your organization. Every completed task should include a description of the impact it made on real people who live with the outcome of the team's work.

Do the human thing first. When you live by your core cause, doing the human thing first becomes almost as natural as breathing. Put people first, and the rest will follow. Employees who know that their organization puts people first will be more apt to act responsibly and proactively — even in the most challenging moments.

Proud to be here. Take a look around you. Are your people proud to be here? This does not mean just when you participate in a Habitat for Humanity project or during the alcohol-infused holiday party. This means on a day-to-day basis. Do they look happy? Are they sharing their work with pride? Do they see the connection their work has and the impact they are making? Pride is not a passive state of nirvana. It's active and it's powerful. It means empowering everyone to ask, "What's Next?"

Trust your conviction. Fear and doubts are a natural part of any transformation. Hold on to the cause and stay confident. As doubts try to creep in, recognize that the unknown aspect of transformation can be a source of excitement.

We all have the opportunity to start viewing change as a liberation. A world in which people stop changing is a world without progress. Our job as human beings is not to just accept the world the way it is but to build it as we want it to be. ●

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Webinar: *How to Create Behavior Change That Lasts* by Marshall Goldsmith. World-renowned executive coach Marshall Goldsmith examines the environmental and psychological triggers that can derail us at work and in life, and offers a personal playbook on how to achieve change in our lives and make it stick.