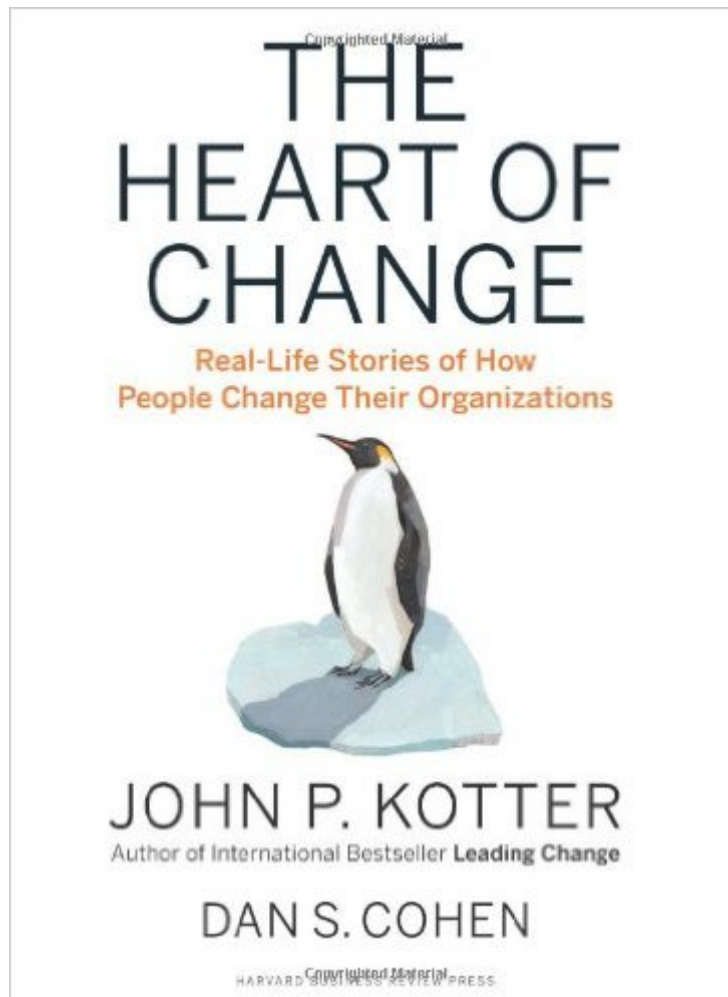


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The Heart Of Change: Real-Life Stories Of How People Change Their Organizations



Synopsis

Moving beyond the process of change Why is change so hard? Because in order to make any transformation successful, you must change more than just the structure and operations of an organization—you need to change people's behavior. And that is never easy. The Heart of Change is your guide to helping people think and feel differently in order to meet your shared goals. According to bestselling author and renowned leadership expert John Kotter and coauthor Dan Cohen, this focus on connecting with people's emotions is what will spark the behavior change and actions that lead to success. Now freshly designed, The Heart of Change is the engaging and essential complement to Kotter's worldwide bestseller Leading Change. Building off of Kotter's revolutionary eight-step process, this book vividly illustrates how large-scale change can work. With real-life stories of people in organizations, the authors show how teams and individuals get motivated and activated to overcome obstacles to change—and produce spectacular results. Kotter and Cohen argue that change initiatives often fail because leaders rely too exclusively on data and analysis to get buy-in from their teams instead of creatively showing or doing something that appeals to their emotions and inspires them to spring into action. They call this the see-feel-change dynamic, and it is crucial for the success of any true organizational transformation. Refreshingly clear and eminently practical, The Heart of Change is required reading for anyone facing the challenges inherent in leading change.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is the distilled summary of 400 detailed interviews from over 130 companies on the topic of managing change. The common thread across success stories is 1. Change is best done in big leaps than in gradual increments. 2. Change is an EIGHT-STAGE process. 3. The vital challenge at each stage is to bring about change in behavior - not strategy, systems or culture. 4. The "see, feel and change" approach is sustaining than the "analyze, think and change" approach since it influences feelings. The book goes on to explain each of the "eight stages" in detail with relevant case studies or stories narrated in first person. At the end of each chapter there is a small exercise that is recommended done with a team. There is also a crisp summary of what works, what does not work and stories to remember. It is interesting to see that at the end of the book, it is recommended that to introduce change, it is better not to attempt to change the Culture at the outset. ("A controversial but very important point. In a change effort, culture comes last, not first"). Such an attempt would be futile since culture evolves over a long period. It is the change in behavior through the eight-stage process that is key and cultural change would follow. Each of the eight stages - Increase urgency, build the guiding team, get the vision right, communicate for buy-in, empower action, create short-term wins, don't let up, make change stick- are equally important. There are several examples to reinforce the importance of each stage and also to demonstrate that the lack of attention to any one of these is a prescription for failure. The "see, feel and change" approach appeals to the heart.

This book was first published in 2002 and I recently re-read it, curious to know how well John Kotter's core concepts have held up since then. My conclusion? Very well indeed. The Heart of Change is in several respects a sequel to Kotter's previously published classic, Leading Change, in which he observes that "Over the past decade, I have watched more than a hundred companies try to remake themselves into significantly better competitors...Their efforts have gone under many banners: total quality management, reengineering, right-sizing, restructuring, cultural change, and turnaround. But in almost every case the basic goal has been the same: to make fundamental changes in how business is conducted in order to help cope with a new, more challenging market environment. A few of these corporate change efforts have been very successful. A few have been utter failures. Most fall somewhere in between, with a distinct tilt toward the lower end of the scale. The lessons that can be drawn are interesting and will probably be relevant to even more organizations in the increasingly competitive business environment of the coming decade." Whereas in Leading Change Kotter examines the eight steps people tend to follow to produce new ways of

operating, in this volume he and Dan Cohen examine "the core problem people face in all of those steps, and how to successfully deal with the problem." And the central issue is never strategy, structure, culture, or systems. "All these elements, and others, are important. But the core of the matter is always about changing the behavior of people, and behavior change happens in highly successful situations mostly by speaking to people's feelings." (Those who do that effectively have what Daniel Goleman characterizes as "emotional intelligence.

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