

Bluestem Breezes  
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## **Change is Normal**

This week's column is from Extension Feedlot Specialist Chris Reinhardt's "Management Minute". As we wrapped up a year of drought and begin another seemingly dry year, it seems that many parts of our operations are indeed changing. High output AND input costs are forcing us to look at our business models and tweak (overhaul) many seemingly 'normal' activities. I believe it makes this column evermore fitting for all of us to contemplate:

In Dr. Henry Cloud's book *Necessary Endings*, he discusses "pruning" of activities in our professional or personal life which may be using up precious resources that may better be implemented on higher impact activities---those very activities that we'd really like to be "about".

One factor that keeps some managers from initiating the pruning process and holding on to unproductive activities is simple, good ol' fashioned resistance to change. More than just uncomfortable, much of this resistance comes from a deeply held, even subconscious, mindset that change is bad, change is dangerous, change is risky, etc.

Although change always brings with it an element of uncertainty, the simple fact is that change is inevitable. In other words, change is NORMAL! To deny this is to deny the very realities of life on earth. Sooner or later all businesses, industries, families, and organizations will undergo change. How can we doubt this? One adage from sales highlighting the need for constant new customer recruitment is this: "clients eventually all die, retire, or move away." But these outcomes are true of our colleagues, friends, and family members as well. Change is as normal and inevitable as anything we choose to hold true.

Unfortunately, that doesn't alter some managers' emotional response to change: change is still uncomfortable. It's been said (by me anyway) that "Everybody likes change---when they are the one driving the change!" Consider buying a new pickup. We lo-o-o-o-o-ve that kind of change. But when change is thrust upon us we all feel controlled and out of control, like walking on jello.

But that doesn't erase the aforementioned truism: change is normal and inevitable. So the effective manager has really only one decision: get out of management, or become pro-active, embracing and managing through change whenever necessary, and initiating change whenever possible.

Procrastination in the face of change doesn't improve the final outcome, it only limits the number of pathways available in negotiating the rocky slope ahead. By constantly searching trends in order to anticipate oncoming change, and pro-actively initiating adjustments of internal operations to accommodate the changing internal and external environments, the effective manager can minimize the ultimate impact of change on the organization.

For further information, visit the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; [kamayer@ksu.edu](mailto:kamayer@ksu.edu); 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out [wabaunsee.ksu.edu](http://wabaunsee.ksu.edu).

Mark your calendars: KSU Cattlemen's Day is Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. Tractor Safety Training is June 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> at KanEquip in Wamego.