

SOME THOUGHTS TO STIMULATE THINKING ABOUT REAL CHANGE

David E. Hartl

Real Change from organizational and community life today to the life we want for tomorrow...

- ...will take a long time (e.g. maybe decades); might produce only subtle indicators of progress.
- ...will require courage, initiative, resolve, perseverance, and patience.
- ...will involve tolerating and learning from and through some discomfort, pain, and anxiety.
- ...will have to resist and overcome temptations for false change, quick fixes, hollow outcomes.
- ...will possibly span multiple generations of participants and leaders.

Real Change will involve...

- ...changing the way we think about ourselves, others, organizations, and communities.
- ...learning new words, languages, concepts, and creating new meanings for words we use now.
- ...surfacing, challenging, and changing our assumptions about people, leaders, and systems.
- ...choosing to do different things, embrace different values, seek different outcomes.
- ...letting go of some cherished but dysfunctional patterns of thinking and ways of behaving.
- ...changing the criteria by which we recognize and reward individual and group performance.

Real Change will...

- ...produce resistance in most or possibly everyone involved as a normal response.
- ...reveal our "blind-spots" and irrational thoughts; perhaps even cause embarrassment.
- ...require us to learn new ways of taking risks, receiving/using feedback, and communicating.
- ...challenge us to use heightened mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical energy.

For Real Change to occur...

- ...it must start by redefining/envisioning the meaning of the organization and the people in it.
- ...it must be balanced, simultaneously at all levels: mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical.
- ...it must be embraced by each individual at all levels: mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical.
- ...it must shift the fundamental paradigms that shape current values, thinking, and behavior.

Real Change...

- ...is guided by our beliefs about and visions of the future and will require paradoxical thinking.
- ...is implemented both incrementally and holistically; both sequentially and simultaneously.
- ...is both predictable and unpredictable; orderly and chaotic; rational and emotional/spiritual.
- ...is inevitable. The only question is whose spirit, values, and energies are guiding it?