PROCESS OF CHANGE

Author: Anna Książek

Main objectives:

- Getting familiar with the process of change

During the workshops participants will (specific objectives):

- Understand what the process of change looks like.
- Know how to approach the process of change, both in our lives and lives of other people.
- Get motivated to introduce changes in their life and be realistic about their implementation.

Time:

1,5h

Place:

indoor (or outdoor with access to projector)

Materials:

- Stationary: posters, markers, paper, pens
- Equipment: computer, speakers, projector

Note: there is a presentation prepared for this workshop which contains every step of it, including some diagrams, theories and inspiration quotes. You can find the presentation here: https://jamboard.google.com/d/11N-mTrZ9jxoTnuiTCLukya51YnlzRMPWzSGAu6Olr6I/viewer?f=5. It's good to use it as a background guide through the workshop.

Course:

1. Introduction – fist exercise

Welcome participants in the workshop. To warm up, ask them to find one person and sit together in couples. Let them decide who will be Person A and who is Person B. Person A closes the fist and the task of person B is to try and open it. After a few minutes, change the roles. When they finish, ask each couple what their strategy was to open the fist. Probably at least some of them (if not all) tried to open the fist with force, although it was never said in the instruction they need to use violence and neither it was said that the fist has to resist (be mindful about that when you explain the rules). Summarizing exercise, ask participants: what can we learn about change from this exercise?

2. My experience of change

Ask participants to find another partner and share with her a story of change which happened in their life. What kind of change was that? How did they feel? What did they think?

3. Stages of change

Divide participants in small groups of 4-6 people (spreading pairs from previous exercise in different groups). Based on the talk they had before as well as their general experiences, ask participants to prepare a poster which shows different phases of change. What phases can they identify? What emotions and thoughts are connected with every phase? After 10 minutes of work, ask them to present the results to other groups. Summarizing, show to the participants the diagram with the process of change and explain to them that this is one of the theories of how the process of change looks like (you can find examples of diagrams here: https://www.slideteam.net/powerpoint/Change-Management-Timeline or https://leadershipthroughchange.com/2012/12/10/using-the-change-curve-in-communication-during-change/).

It doesn't have to be so in every case, what's most important is that change is always a process. Things like regress, anger, feeling down are completely normal and we need to accept them as a part of change.

Diagram in the jamboard presentation shows the so-called Hero Journey which can also be read as a process of change, which has its specific stages like Call to Adventure, Crossing the Threshold, Going through the Dark Cave (death and rebirth), etc.
Every time we come close to Threshold, close to the border of our own comfort zone, different emotions and reactions may appear, as we see in slide number 8 in the presentation. We may experience fear, cynicism, disbelief, lack of energy, etc. Coaching question which may help us to recognize that we resist going out of our comfort zone, to start our adventure is: If I wanted to sabotage myself, how could I do that?

4. How to overcome obstacles?

Brainstorm with participants and write down what we can do when we encounter resistance and obstacles in our process of change. Then compare answers with suggestions from slide number 10 (mentioned also below):

- Recognize your resistance
- Discuss with your inner voice (of fear, cynicism, disbelief, etc)
- Remind yourself WHY
- Prepare yourself (research, mental rehearsal)
- Identify even smaller steps and take them
- Find allies (I can't, we can)
- Feel the fear and do it anyway
- Develop frustration tolerance

(Those answers as well as other inspirations of the workshop are based on the book "Find Your Power – a toolkit for resilience and positive change" by Chris Johnstone.)

5. Connect the dots

After mentioning Developing frustration tolerance in previous exercise, invite participants to connect the dots challenge. Ask them to draw 9 dots in three lines, as the one below:
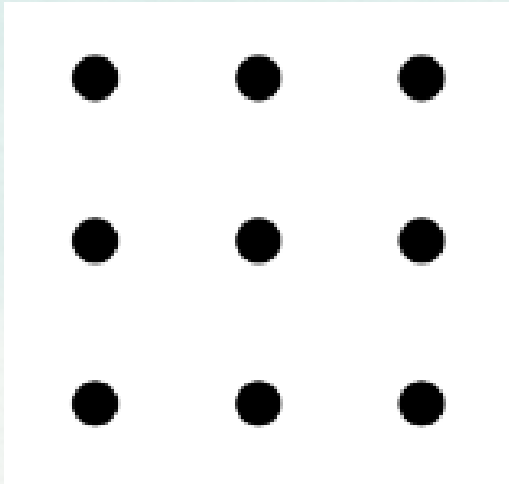
Their task is to connect 9 dots with 4 straight lines. Once they put the pen on the paper, they cannot take it away anymore (so 4 lines have to be connected together, drawn in only one shot without taking away the pen and putting it again).
After a few minutes, you can give them the tip: you need to think outside the box. Literally.
At the end show the correct answer (but also appreciate any other creative solution):
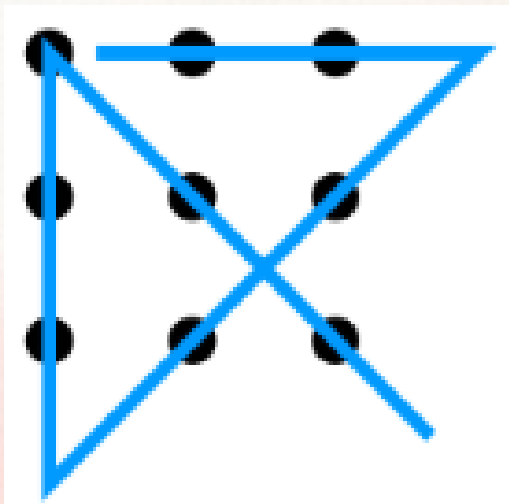
This brings us to the next important point of how we can overcome obstacles: think outside the box. As Chris Johnstone points out in his book, we look for answers with the frame, created by our assumptions and if we can't see a solution inside this space we tend to assume that there isn't one. Sometimes it's our view of reality rather than reality itself that stops us finding a way forward.

Coaching questions which can support us in thinking outside the box are for example:

- What would somebody else (your father, your best friend, your superhero) do?
- If you had as much courage, wisdom and determination as you would like, what could you do?

6. Triangles

You can do this exercise outside, if you have proper conditions and the weather is good. Ask participants to stay in a circle and choose two people from the group. They shouldn't say who the people they chose are. Then, when you say start, their task is to create an equilateral triangle with the people they chose, by moving their position. Because everybody tries to do it at the same time, there will be quite a lot of mess at the beginning but sooner or later the group should be able to stop in a configuration which allows everybody to have their equilateral triangles. At this moment ask once again if everybody is sure they created triangles. Most probably somebody will move a little bit to adjust, which forces others to move as well. If there is not much movement, you can take one person and change her position, to see what will happen and how the rest of the people will have to adjust. When they are sure and stable, thank them and invite them to sit and discuss the experience.

Auxiliary questions:

- How was it? Easy? Difficult? Why?
- What helped you to create the triangle and what made it more difficult?
- What did you notice?
- How the move of one person influenced the others?

What can we learn about change from this exercise? What does it tell us about how the systems change?

One important conclusion can be that the system doesn't want changes. Very often during exercise you start to hear voices like: Don't move anymore! Stop! Why do you change again?! Those voices and reactions of people around us will appear with every change we will try to introduce.

The good news, and the most important conclusion from the exercise, is that if one element of the system changes, all elements need to rearrange. If you change, others have to react, there is no other way. We may not know what the exact reaction will be, but something will change for sure. If we want to influence the system we don't really need to change it all at once, it's enough to change some elements. Interesting question will be which element of the system we need to change to have the biggest impact.

To summarize this part, invite participants for 4 minutes movie "How wolves change the river": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q&ab_channel=SustainableHuman

7. Summary

Invite participants to the final round, asking for their thoughts, learnings and impressions from the workshop. Ask them to fill an evaluation form.