I've just been speaking to some friends who're doing some changes in the way they operate their business. Well they're not 'just' changes, they're actually transforming the structure and the way they communicate with each other and their customers.

There are five stages to pass through and seven fears to overcome when making bold moves to make your world and everybody else's, a better place to live and work. You'd think everybody would be up for the challenge, but that's not usually the case. That's why Tom Collins advises leaders in his book; *'Good to Great',* that before you decide where your business bus is going, you need to:

'get the right people on the bus, and sat in the right places'

Unfortunately, it may be time for some people who are already on the bus, to get off your bus and find a bus that suits and supports their particular journey in life.

That doesn't mean you have to throw people off the bus just because they disagree with the move. There could be many reasons for the resistance, so it is important to engage the team at the earliest and listen to their objections. This helps to instil ownership within the team. They could have valid reasons for resisting the move and the team will probably be a source of great ideas you hadn't thought of. So understand what you're dealing with before making any decisions about the future of the team and start kicking team members off the bus just because they disagree. Constructive dissent is a valuable characteristic of high performing teams.

The five stages in transformational change are as follows:

Disillusionment: There is usually a reason that the need for change arises and it is because we're fed up and frustrated. Whether it is about your job, the level of performance in your business, the way the world is, the way you feel and look in the mirror. People need to experience some form of disappointment and feel disillusioned with the present reality before they'll consider doing something different. In the case of my friends, they realised that there was so much more potential locked up within the team and their business and they wanted to unleash it.

Realisation: Of course, unless you or the people in your team realise that it doesn't have to be the way it is, then everybody will continue on the same path. Most people who're winning in this reality or are scared of change, will try their best to keep that

change from happening. But with a new insight to a better world comes motivation. When the present reality and the brave new world are held up in the mind's eye for contrast, that difference creates the motivation to initiate changes. It eventually becomes more painful to remain stuck and that pain increases with time until it hits a threshold point.

Ideation: Is the creative process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas, plans and pathways towards the new paradigm. This is the time for divergent thinking, research and assessing the options that are available. Out of this, eventually, comes the pathway towards the new reality. Whether it be changes to your diet, getting out and doing more exercise or to breaking up the silos in the organisation. You'll need to learn to do things in a different way and you'll need a series of steps that will seem unfamiliar at first.

Velocity: When breaking out of orbit, Elon Musk's Space X Rockets have to build up enough velocity to escape the Earth's atmosphere. It is the same with breaking out of your present operating system. There is resistance built into the present situation which hampers any form of conscious evolution. First there was paradigm blindness, i.e. you don't know what you don't know, which is that there are other possibilities. Then there is the paradigm inertia to overcome. Try this exercise. Fold your arms. Now try to fold them the other way by placing the arm that went over the top and put it below the other one. It feels strange because we develop habits in our thinking and behaviour because 'thinking' is expensive in terms of energy consumption. We all know it's much easier to stick with a habit and maintain the status quo than break and change them.

There are often fears associated with transformation which have to be overcome:

1. **Letting the other person be right:** When confronted with an opposing viewpoint people will often argue for their point of view, much like politicians. But this often sets up a false dichotomy of views. People always have a viewpoint which is probably right some of the time. But instead of acknowledging that, people with views which challenge the zeitgeist are

usually attacked and ridiculed. Whistle-blowers experience this and are usually sacked when they bring warnings of doom and gloom, even if they're right.

2. **Accepting reality:** As Churchill said, people will fall over the truth and then pick themselves up and carry on regardless. Cognitive dissonance can result when people who hold strong beliefs about a subject, even when confronted with evidence to the contrary, will reject the new evidence.

3. **Being vulnerable:** People and especially entrepreneurs and leaders, don't like to admit that they are not the font of all knowledge. Being vulnerable is not a position most people like. But unless they can allow themselves to be open to new information, then they will remain stuck at their present level. Sometimes it is a good idea to ask the team how to proceed, you may be pleasantly surprised by the answers.

4. **Stopping:** Have you ever been to the cinema or watched a movie at home, which turned out to be terrible, but you carried on watching anyway. That's because the default setting for most people is to carry on doing what they're doing now. You can predict that most people will be doing the same thing their doing now, in five minutes and be right most of the time. We carry on doing activities which are not satisfying, hoping that it will get better. We get used to being comfortably uncomfortable in our comfort zones.

5. **Letting go:** Whether it is old ideas, beliefs, clothes or relationships which no longer serve us, letting go is something that threatens our inner monkey. The inner monkey is scared of only two things. Not getting what it wants, then when it's got something, letting go of it.

6. **The unknown:** The known and comfortable, even if it is not satisfying, often gets chosen over the unknown. But stepping into unknown territory is the preserve for adventurers, those who will discover new worlds. As John Shedd espoused: 'A ship is safe in harbour, but that's not what ships are built for'. Are you going to live in your barrel bobbing along the river of life, or are you going to build yourself a ship and sail across the sea of potential?

7. **Transformation:** It's often said that people don't like change. That's not strictly true. People change all the time to stay in the same place. They make small adjustments because nothing stays the same, so they have to do something to remain feeling the same. People change the channel on the tv, they change

their minds, but rarely do people transform their situation if it is not working for them. Transformation is what scares people.

It is for this reason that velocity is needed to gain enough momentum to overcome these fears and other forms of resistance.

Endurance: As if making the change wasn't hard enough, you're not out of the storm yet. After the enthusiasm for the new changes has passed, and it usually passes quickly, now you've got to have the endurance for the longer haul to help the change initiative stick. The Harvard Business Review did some research on change initiatives and came to the conclusion that the success of them is dependent on four factors.

- **Duration:** Leaders often worry that if change takes times that it will fail, but that's not usually the case. What helps is if the hard factors such as goals and milestones are focussed on with regular evaluations and their impact on the business assessed.
- **Integrity:** The team must be well led and the manager or team leader should be a good problem solver, focussed on results, methodical in approach, tolerant of ambiguity, socially intelligent, willing to make decisions and is motivated. These champions must also remain humble enough to share the limelight with success with the rest of the team.
- **Commitment:** As mentioned earlier, commitment from the leader and the team is essential. Get the team engaged early, let them have a say and listen to their feedback and respond accordingly.
- **Effort:** It's important to assess the extra workload that the individuals within the team will have to put in. The extra work shouldn't be much more than 10% otherwise this will cause resistance, especially over the long term.

For the leader this will mean being supportive. Encourage communication in meetings and show continued enthusiasm for the vision and the purpose. Celebration of small wins along the way is essential, let the team know that there is progress being made and that there are benefits being reaped. You might find at this point that some people will leave the ship because being accountable and having higher levels of expectation put upon them doesn't suit them right now.

The Butterfly Effect

When a caterpillar is getting ready to undergo metamorphosis, it begins the process when certain cells in its body begin to act differently. These 'imaginal' cells as they are known, act differently to the rest of the cells in the body. Eventually when there is about ten percent of them in the body of the caterpillar, they all cluster together and this then is the threshold point when the caterpillar turns into a butterfly. When around ten percent of your team members are all working in an aligned new way, then the new behaviours will spread around the whole team and they become the new norm. It is a good idea to help this process by sharing new best practices around the different teams so that the new knowledge being learned, spreads quickly and is implemented.