The Facilitation and Hindrance of Personal Adaptation to Corporate Restructuring

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop a reasonably comprehensive scheme of categories that describes what facilitated and hindered adaptation to corporate restructuring. Interviews were conducted with individuals who worked in a company during reorganization and adapted. The Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) was utilized to elicit 543 incidents from 28 participants. Thirty-four categories emerged from the analysis of the reported events and were organized into five clusters. Several procedures were employed to examine the soundness and trustworthiness of the categories.

The results indicate that adaptation was hindered by: enduring a negative state, receiving increased workload, experiencing negative attitudes of colleagues, termination of colleagues, destabilizing moves, encountering a demoralizing situation, removed from a position, experiencing devaluation of company, excluded from decision making, blocked from accomplishing a task, not receiving support, receiving a threat about job, experiencing estrangement, receiving disaffirmation for job competence, and vital information withheld. However, individuals can take action in four ways to facilitate adaptation. First, they can shape the work environment by: refusing exploitative requests, making a decision concerning work, discovering and adhering to a firm guideline, making a beneficial change in the work setting, accomplishing a task, experiencing a challenging task, creating a work position, creating space to work, and dissociation from a bad person. Second, they can gain support by: receiving advice, receiving personal support, receiving assurance about job, experiencing camaraderie, receiving affirmation for job competence, receiving vital information. Third, they can help others by: giving

empathy, using humor, forming a relationship, looking out for others, providing practical help, securing work for others. Fourth, they can help themselves by: realization of a positive perspective, preparing for change, initiating a change outside of work, and engaging in an activity outside of work.

The category system attempts to provide a reasonably comprehensive description of what helps and hinders adaptation to corporate restructuring. Such an organization of factors may be valuable in planning counsellor training programs and useful for therapists working with individuals adapting to corporate change.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Adjustment in the work environment is becoming an increasingly significant and major area of study in counselling psychology. Changes in the contemporary corporate environment make our understanding of work adjustment increasingly urgent and intricate, not least because of the rapidity with which change now occurs in the work environment plus its complexity that is expected to continue in this, the 21st century (Gowing, Kraft, & Quick, 1998; Weick & Quinn, 1999). The expansion and competitiveness of the world market demand appropriate and flexible responses on the part of business undertakings if they are to survive and prosper. Staff will continue to face the challenge of adjustment to work environments that are undergoing unprecedented change as companies strive to meet market demands. This type of corporate change is often harsh and disturbing for the people involved. It demands new structures, procedures, rules, responsibilities, and relationships in both the work arena itself and its culture (Hall & Moss, 1998; Jaffe & Scott, 1998). While change is usually planned, initiated, and carried out by a small group of people, it eventually affects everyone in that particular work environment. Each individual is expected to adapt quickly and to work efficiently to attain the company's objectives. The individual worker is, therefore, one of the most critical factors in determining the future success of a company undergoing transformation (Nelson, 1997).

Organizational development theorists speak of these changes as altering the organizational culture. Corporate culture is defined by Schein (1985) as:

> A pattern of basic assumptions — invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration — that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore,

to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 9).

Because culture is learned and becomes a safe, familiar, and mostly automatic way of life, it is often very difficult to assess the tasks that are involved in adapting to another culture (Oberg, 1960; Schein, 1985).

Adjustment often involves a dual dimension of personal change and role change (Jaffe & Scott, 1998; Munton & West, 1995). In the literature, the terms adjustment and adaptation are used interchangeably. Although the management of change in the work environment has been a major topic of concern since the early 1980s, personal adjustment to the changes effected continues to be a problem for many workers (Jaffe & Scott, 1998; Quinones & Ehrenstein, 1997). Moreover, an increasing number of people have to face an increased intensity of adjustment because of the tempo caused by an expanding world market (Weick & Quinn, 1999).

Thus, counselling psychologists must be prepared to assist an ever-growing number of clients to adapt to changes in their work environment (1998; Hansen, 1999). A growing number of consultants and businesses recognize counselling as valuable support in helping individuals adapt to major corporate change (Borchard, 1995; Burke & Nelson, 1998; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; Schkade & Schultz, 1992; Zajas, 1995). A comprehensive map of what has facilitated or hindered adaptation can be an informative reference when counselling employees who find it difficult to adjust to change.

Some employees who have had to adapt to a changed corporate environment continue to live with further ongoing challenges to their work culture. Workers in this situation have valuable adaptive experience (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Documenting such experiences can stimulate new ideas and approaches that will be of benefit to those who still struggle with change in their work environments.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore and discover, by interviewing people with personal experience of major corporate restructuring, the events that

facilitated and/or hindered their adaptation to the changes that occurred. The events were organized into a category scheme of the unique and powerful experience of adapting to corporate restructuring. The category scheme contributes to the development of an interdisciplinary theory, provides therapists with a documented picture of adaptation, and suggests possible therapeutic interventions specifically tailored for clients experiencing corporate change.

Rationale

Since the mid-1980s, change has become a central theme in business. Adjustment to rapid change has become a prerequisite and its effective management is a key to success in the present global market (Dreilinger, 1994; Hall & Moss, 1998; Martin & Freeman, 1998). Although many companies organize training seminars and hire consultants to facilitate the change process, the failure to success ratio of these initiatives is disproportionately high (Dreilinger, 1994; Kotter, 1995; Lin, 1998; Nelson, 1997). Therefore, it would appear that both existing research and applied theory on adaptation to corporate change are limited and require further study.

Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and top management teams are crucial to the success or failure of corporate change (du Pont, 1996; Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1993; Klien, Gabelnick, & Herr, 1998; Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). Executives appointed to manage change are sometimes imported from outside the organization and sometimes even from outside the industry itself (Nelson, 1994; Salama & Esterby-Smith, 1994). Between 1988 and 1994, within the insurance industry alone, approximately 500 CEO and Chief Operating Officer (COO) posts changed hands (Nelson, 1994). Although some companies create change by finding new executives, this type of solution is costly (Farr, 1995). Even top executives with significant experience in initiating change and handling responsibility for change implementation are unable to manage it themselves (Galpin, 1998), so that consultants specializing in change management are frequently called in (Worren, Ruddle, & Moore, 1999). The problems that emerge are novel, so clear-cut

answers and solutions are few and far between (Baldwin, Danielson, & Wiggenhorn, 1997). Management positions require the skills of managing, and of adjusting to, change. There are many in such positions who will lose their jobs if they are unable to demonstrate such skills (Klien et al., 1998).

Parallel with this increase in people experiencing accelerated change in their work environment, there is a growing need for therapists to acquire the necessary information and skills to counsel such people. The changes are disturbing and anxiety producing to all involved because of the complexities of the disruptions to personal, social, and work issues (Callan, 1993; Kets de Vires, 1988; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; Noer, 1998; Williamson & Vine, 1998). Many companies undergoing restructuring have seen a significant increase in non-occupational disability claims received from employees who retained their jobs (Koco, 1996). Counsellors will be confronted with a growing number of clients for whom work adjustment is a key issue. Although personal change is a primary factor in the therapeutic process, how this personal change is affected by the demands for adaptation in the changing work environment requires a specialized focus.

Existing theories of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Hershenson, 1996; Nicholson, 1984) do not reflect today's context of change in the work environment. Its pace and complexity, and the adaptation required of the worker, are not adequately addressed in the literature. Research has usually focused on a set of prescribed variables, without exploring the full range of possible adjustment factors.

The field of organizational development has generally looked at the comprehensive picture of managing change and change methods. Typologies of responses to downsizing have recently been identified in attempts to synthesize the range of responses found in the literature (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998; Noer, 1998). However, individuals and their involvement in corporate restructuring have not, in general, been adequately addressed (Allen, Freeman, Reizenstein, & Rentz, 1995; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; Kuczynski, 1999; Robertson, Roberts, & Porras, 1993). Some researchers claim that a large

proportion of change initiatives fail because personal human factors are inadequately addressed (Doe, 1994; Godkin & St. Pierre, 1999; Gurin, 1998; Nelson, 1997). Certain researchers in the field assert that what is most needed is research and theory that describes the underlying dynamics experienced by individuals involved in the restructuring processes (Burke & Nelson, 1998; Callan, 1993; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; Robertson et al., 1993). More research is needed because each individual company must visualize how it will work internally after a restructuring, given that change always impacts each individual worker (Galpin, 1998; Gurin, 1998).

Several arenas of research shed light on this topic (i.e., coping and stress research, family systems, cross-cultural research, etc.). These arenas have tended to test a range of variables, to isolate personality traits, or to develop theory that is as yet unproven by research. Although much may be gained by the volume of research in these areas by suggesting factors that relate to the topic, concrete examples of adaptation variables pertaining specifically to corporate change need more specification, and integration of the volume of research related to this topic would be helpful.

The issue here is not that one method of research should replace another. Rather, that a more integrated approach be used when researchers look for more specific and holistic descriptions of adaptation including the factors that result from qualitative and quantitative research that have focused on those with experience from adapting to corporate change.

Approach to This Study

A large multiform set of helping and hindering variables exists in the literature that relates to adapting to corporate change and has been developed from many diverse disciplines. However, these diverse variables have not been examined in a single study nor have they been examined with regard to their relative impact on personal adaptation to corporate change. Accordingly, the present study was designed to document a more

holistic range of facilitative and hindering variables involved in the adaptation of those who have experienced corporate restructuring.

For the focus of this study, adaptation involves the changes one makes to feel settled or resolved in a situation, to bring oneself, one's acts, behavior, or mental state into harmony with changed conditions in the environment (Grove, 1971). Therefore, adaptation is ongoing. Adaptation may also involve a shift in a sociological or cultural disposition (Reber, 1985). Although adaptation itself is necessary in a changing environment, it has been documented that adaptation to a negative work environment can cause serious psychological and physical health problems (Karasek & Theorell, 1990; LaBier, 1986). Therefore, caution must be used when assessing and investigating adaptation.

One difficulty in conducting research on adaptation to organizational change is that a wide variety of typologies are used to identify an individual's coping strategies (Ashford, 1988; Callan, 1993; Gabel & Oster, 1998a; Jugde, Thorensen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999). Another difficulty is the variety of disputed questions about the origins of work stress, and the attributes of stress that may be included in adaptation to work changes (Adkins, 1998; Ashford, 1988; Barone, 1991; Dowd & Bolus, 1998b; Harris, 1991; Monroy, Jonas, Mathey, & Murphy, 1998; Shaw & Barrett-Power, 1997). The results of the present study help to identify, from the array of factors implicated by related fields of research, which factors specifically pertain to individuals attempting to adapt to corporate restructuring.

The Critical Incident research method was employed in this study to gain specific accounts of the personal experiences of men and women who had adapted to a major corporate restructuring. The direct reports of personal experiences provide a categorical framework of what facilitates adaptation and what hinders it. It provides one system of integration of the volume of research related to adaptation to corporate change.

Delimitation of the Study

The 28 participants in this study are all white-collar workers who hold positions ranging from administrative assistant to director. The participants have a relatively high socioeconomic status.

The focus of this study is on people's experience of adaptation. Therefore, this study did not focus on the influence of a particular type of restructuring (i.e. Total Quality Management), nor did it focus on a particular aspect of restructuring (i.e. laying off workers).

The Critical Incident Method used in this research focuses on categorizing particular events critical in adapting to corporate restructuring. The limitation of the categories is that the events are not contextualized. Therefore, narratives are given in Chapter 5 to contextualize individual events in personal adaptation stories.

Overview of the Dissertation

The first chapter of this paper has provided the background and relevance of this study. In Chapter Two, literature relevant to adaptation to corporate change is discussed. The research method is explained in Chapter Three. Categories and clusters are described along with examples of incidents in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, tests for validation employed in this study are described. Narratives that provide individualized examples of the categories in context are given in Chapter Six. The implications of the categories for theory, practice, and future research are discussed in the last chapter.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature relevant to what facilitates and what hinders a person in adjusting to major changes in their work environment is reviewed in this chapter. The character of corporate change is discussed with specific focus on the adaptation problems that employees undergoing corporate restructuring experience. This research review is interdisciplinary because many arenas of research have addressed different facets of adaptation. Theory and research are drawn from the disciplines of career counselling, cultural adaptation, work stress and coping, organizational development, and family systems. Relevant concepts from these diverse arenas have been brought together to provide a provisional integrated list of categories (as suggested by previous research) that appear to facilitate or hinder people in adapting to major changes in their work environment. This provisional list has been tentatively extrapolated from a variety of research in supportive fields to give an illustration of variables that imply help or hindrance in adjusting to corporate change. A general critique of the literature follows and ends with a description of the research approach chosen for this study.

Corporate Change

Since the mid-1980s, business enterprises of all sorts have experienced an onslaught of downsizing, rightsizing, mergers, takeovers, and internal operations' restructuring (i.e.,

Re-engineering and Total Quality Management). All of these events change the internal culture and former structure of the organization (Schein, 1985). Experts predict that these changes will continue to be a natural characteristic of the business world in the 21st century (Weick & Quinn, 1999).

Adaptation to corporate change is multifaceted as well as complex and there are many people who still struggle to adjust to change. Studies have indicated that employees are often reluctant to face and deal with the changes that their company has to make to remain competitive in the world market (Berg, 1998; Ettorre, 1994; Kotter, 1995; Maubler, 1994). Changes in work culture mean that management personnel have to modify their own personal values and strategies if corporate culture change is to be successful at all levels of the corporation (Gabel & Oster, 1998b; Klien et al., 1998b; Salama & Esterby-Smith, 1994). Some researchers suggest that managing change involves the management of the psychological processes of the individual and of the organization (Farr, 1995; Levinson, 1994). Employees may sometimes need to go through their own self-restructuring process just as many corporations do. If employees are themselves unable to adjust to change, they are usually unable to lead and assist with the changes that their company needs (Farr, 1995; Stewart, 1991).

Corporate change efforts take on many diverse forms, although the main goal is usually to change the way business is conducted. Change can include anything from initiation of new information systems and technology to the initiation of new management relations or to massive layoffs. The failure rate for facilitating adaptation among employees so that the company remains productive and profitable continues to be high (Gurin, 1998; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; Kotter, 1995). This suggests that

information and applied research addressing this topic is not yet adequate. There is a need for more studies to detect and isolate the specific factors that facilitate or hinder adaptation based on the personal experiences of those who have lived through corporate change (Allen et al., 1995; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997).

Theory of Work Adjustment

The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) is a theory that specifically addresses personal adjustment in the work environment. TWA was developed by Dawis and Lofquist (1984;1993). It is a matching model in which work adjustment is the process of achieving and maintaining correspondence. Correspondence is a continuous dynamic process involving two factors: (a) a job which requires the individual to have certain skills and abilities to match the requirements of the position, which is labeled "satisfactoriness", and (b) an individual who has needs and values that must be met and reinforced by their work, which is labeled "satisfaction". Therefore, correspondence is indicated by the satisfactoriness of the person with respect to the demands of the work and the satisfaction of the individual with respect to need gratification.

Dawis and Lofquist (1984) maintain that the individual and the work environment are mutually responsive to each other and that each seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence. TWA delineates four aspects of an individual's adjustment style used to maintain correspondence: (a) flexibility (tolerance for discorrespondance), (b) active (acting on the environment), (c) reactive (changing something about the self), and (d) perseverance (length of time one will attempt to adjust). Dawis and Lofquist's (1984; 1993) theory neither specifically addresses adjusting to the intensity and rapidity of

change in the present work arena nor has it been thoroughly tested. However, it is one of the few theories that specifically attempts to address adjustment at work.

This theory suggests that adjustment has occurred when one experiences a personal sense of correspondence with the demands and rewards at work. In its simplest form correspondence equals adaptation. Some possible adaptive events that could follow aspects of TWA are specific situations in which a sense of accord was experienced with the job changes, because personal skills and abilities were used more fully to perform new job tasks (for example, when the job changes require the leadership of a small group task force for which one had previous experience not as yet used in job duties). Another type of adaptive experience could occur when personal values and the new values demonstrated at work corresponded. A worker might value the change from a hierarchical management structure to a flat structure.

In this theory, the environment is also actively involved in the correspondence process. Therefore, events describing a modification made by management to a new job-description to match a person's skills and/or values would facilitate adjustment.

TWA also identifies active attempts to gain correspondence with the work demands. Following this aspect of the theory, reports of learning a new skill that corresponded directly to new work demands, as well as reports of specific decisions that were necessary to accommodate new work demands, could be other examples of types of possible adjustment events, according to Dawis and Lofquist (1984).

Theory of Work Role Transitions

A second theory specifically addressing work adjustment is Nicholson's theory of work role transitions (TWRT) (Nicholson, 1984). The central premise of this theory holds

that "individual differences in the characteristics of people and the transitions they undergo mediate the relationships of change vs. stability and individual vs. situational adjustment" (Nicholson & West, 1988, p. 172). Nicholson (1984) and Nicholson and West (1988) argue that work-role transitions involve two independent adjustment processes: personal development and role development. Work-role transitions indicate flux and discontinuity where individuals must search out a new synchronization between their skills, their personal desires, and the work-role expectations. The transition process has a major impact upon the employees and their effectiveness in the work arena.

This theory presumes that the area of personal development encompasses what a person adjusts in him/herself in response to the changes in the work-role. This can include frame of reference, self-concept, other identity-related attributes, values, and/or life-style. Personal development, in Nicholson's view, is a function of desire for control and desire for feedback. The sphere of role development includes how one adapts a new role to fit one's skills and understanding of self. Role development is a function of role discretion (amount of latitude one has to change work tasks) and role novelty (the degree to which the new role is different than the previous role). Developmental change in these two clusters can be retrograde, reactionary, or destructive. Therefore, caution must be used in interpreting the adjustment outcomes because the person may not be positively adapted but experience short-lived and/or personally destructive consequences instead.

TWRT maintains that personal and environmental factors also affect adjustment outcomes (Nicholson, 1984; Nicholson & West, 1988). The theory specifically includes these factors: prior occupational socialization, motivational orientation, life events, and organizational socialization/induction processes. Any or all of these factors can offer

constraints or opportunities for the person in transition (Nicholson, 1984; Nicholson & West, 1988).

The adjustment factors in TWRT have received mixed support in recent studies (Allen, Freeman, Reizenstein, & Rentz, 1995; Ashforth & Sacks 1995; West &Rushton, 1989). TWRT was not developed to address adaptation to the rapid and extensive changes in the present work environment. Nevertheless, it was intended to address the usual changes an employee experiences following a change in job status. According to TWRT, adjustment occurs when a person has so personally developed as to meet the new demands at work and has redesigned the situational demands at work to meet personal requirements.

Following the premise of this theory that personal adjustments need to be made, events that hinder or help adaptation could include: (a) events that bring a challenge to the compatibility of one's self-concept with the requirements of the new work role (for example, a new team system is introduced to someone who preferred being viewed as an independent worker); (b) events in which personal values of fairness and truth came into conflict; and (c) events when work role and life-style compatibility affected adaptation (for example, when the separation of work and home-life was challenged because the implementation of new information systems required some of the work to be done from home).

According to this theory, other incidents that could facilitate adaptation include acting upon the work situation, e.g., when feedback on positive job performance is requested from a superior, or when more latitude is acquired in deciding how to accomplish work tasks.

Lastly, another type of variable that could help or hinder adjustment, according to Nicholson (1984), is a disruptive personal event.

Hershenson's Model for Work Adjustment

Hershenson (1996) defines work adjustment as the interaction among three subsystems in the person and the work environment. The three subsystems (work personality, work competencies and work goals) develop sequentially, shaped by a particular stage-specific environment (family, school and peer group), and development reached by each subsystem limits development in the others. Relationships between subsystems are viewed as dynamic. As the person continues to interact with many cultural and sub-cultural systems, adaptation may cause a change in one subsystem that will usually precipitate changes in the others. Within the work cultural system there are work-setting demands to which each person must adjust. Hershenson (1996) proposes the following interconnecting elements for consideration when counselling persons struggling with work adjustment: (a) the work setting has behavioral expectations which affect the person's work personality and may call for adjustments in their work role behavior; (b) the work setting has skill requirements that affect the person's work competencies and may require adjustments in their task performance; and (c) the work setting provides rewards and opportunities which affect the person's work goals and may call for adjustments in their level of satisfaction.

Hershenson's (1996) model is systemically descriptive and developmentally focused. Adjustment appears to be a constant balancing movement that one must make to seek satisfaction between demands in the work setting and one's work personality, work competencies, and work goals. Therefore, types of helping and hindering events that

could affect adaptation according to this model are learning new relational skills or work skills that the restructuring has made necessary for office relations, and any changes in personal work goals that are made to match the new work opportunities offered from the restructuring.

Cultural Adaptation

Literature on cultural adaptation is considered relevant to this study because of the cultural factors that appear to change when the corporation's internal structure is changed, requiring those involved to adapt to the new corporate culture (Schein, 1985). Wide varieties of diverse studies exist in the area of cross-cultural adaptation. Three types of research are discussed here because of their particular relevance to the topic.

Challenge to self-identity. Corporate restructuring brings about many varied changes in the interactions required of employees. Diverse reactions to these changes are common as they adapt to the new corporate culture. One possible set of factors that could affect adaptation is described by a specific body of cross-cultural theory and research, which views a crisis of personality or identity as characteristic of culture adaptation because of the person's inability to maintain a sense of sameness or continuity in the new situation (Adler, 1975; Antokoletz, 1993; Bennett, 1977; Oberg, 1960; Zaharna, 1989). The new culture brings challenges to self-identities and identity-bound behaviors because these aspects of the self do not have the same effects in the new culture as they did in the old. The need for self-validation is essential and will overpower the ability to adapt if the shock to the self is intense enough (Adler, 1975; Antokoletz, 1993; Zaharna, 1989).

Adaptation, according to these theories, appears to occur when a person gains a sense of self-congruence and validation in the new environment. As described by this body of

research, different types of self-validation and different experiences of self-sameness would therefore characterize events facilitating adaptation. This could include events such as when a new self-understanding of personality traits is gained because of the work environment's new interactions. Another adaptive variable could be when a person experienced a continuity of self in the work environment. For example, following the rigid application of a list of empathic terms employed in staff reviews, the interviewer discovered that they actually felt empathic. Lastly, another adaptive event could occur when receiving validation for a specific personality characteristic from a colleague.

Cultural Conflict Model. Ishiyama's (1995) model of Cultural Conflict is an extension of the previous viewpoint and identifies specific needs of the self that are key factors requiring validation. He discusses the nature of cross-cultural adaptation specifically in terms of five self-validation themes. According to Ishiyama (1995), all cross-cultural adjustments inevitably involve resolution of these psychological themes:

(a)   security, comfort and support vs. insecurity, discomfort and abandonment

(b)   self-worth and self-acceptance vs. self-deprecation and self-rejection

(c)   competence and autonomy vs. incompetence and helplessness

(d)   identity and belonging vs. identity loss and alienation

(e)   love fulfillment and meaning in life vs. lovelessness, emptiness, and meaninglessness.

Those who experience invalidation of self in one or more of these five categories, which would be characterized by negative psychological themes during cross-cultural transitions, have the subjective experience of not feeling at home in their current cultural environment. Individuals adjusting to a new culture may also experience conflicts and

ambivalence in all areas of life and must therefore learn new ways to validate themselves in their new environment.

According to Ishiyama's (1995) theory, a person can adapt to a new cultural environment when they are validated in the five self-validation areas. This indicates that events in which validation of some aspect of self occurs can facilitate adaptation. Such events could include receiving support from others concerning their possible contributions to the new job and receiving validation for competence in the new job requirements by supervisors. Validation of positive aspects of identity from self or others also facilitates adaptation.

Events in which validation was experienced as the outcome of an event are also indicated by Ishiyama's (1995) theory. Events in which a job position was secured could validate the need for security. Incidents of obtaining autonomy in dealing with the new demands at work could validate the need for competence and autonomy. Any event that confirms a meaning in life could also be self-validating. An action that was initiated to build relationships with colleagues is another event that could help adaptation because it could lead to a sense of belonging.

Expatriates. Another body of research in cross-cultural issues has focused on a relatively large population of "expatriates", who not only has to adapt to a new job within the international corporation but also to a new country culture. It is not everyone who decides to work and live in a new country that can adapt. US employees of multinational companies who are transferred to work in another culture have a premature return rate of 20-25 percent because of their inability to adapt to the new circumstances (Briody & Chrisman, 1991; Copeland & Griggs, 1985; Gregersen & Black, 1990). Through informal

interviews of 200 people involved in international assignments, Copeland and Griggs (1985) found seven "success traits that define the internationalable person" (p. 218). These seven success traits, which can be used as a guideline to assess probable cross-cultural adaptation, are: (a) "hard like water" which means the ability to be flexible, yet possessing a strong self-concept, (b) resourceful self-independence, yet welcoming what others can contribute, (c) curiosity, (d) positive regard for others, (e) emotional stability, (f) technical competence, and (g) motivation. These themes appear in other research in this field (Benson, 1978; Cronshaw & Lord, 1987; Early, 1987; Gao & Gudykunst, 1990; Gregersen & Black, 1990; Hoffman, 1989; Pottinger, 1987; Searle & Ward, 1990; Walton, 1990).

The focus of Copeland and Griggs (1985) was to identify traits that facilitate cross-cultural work adaptation. The seven traits are not delineated in helping and hindering event possibilities; however, they are traits that may lead to or help precipitate a key event. For example, a strong self-concept with an ability to be flexible may help someone to find new ways to self-validate in the new situation. If a person is curious, they will probably be more open to learning the intricacies of a new work system. Resourcefulness coupled with welcoming contributions by others should lead the person to seek information from colleagues about the new work culture. According to Copeland and Griggs (1985), when a person is truly motivated to do a job, they will find the energy and resources to push on and do it even when the work demands are great.

Work Stress Theory and Coping Theory

Stress and coping are not the same as adaptation. However, the literature on adapting to change includes stress as a common symptom. Coping with stress in the workplace has

received extensive attention in stress and coping research. A few studies have concentrated on coping with stress during corporate restructuring. Therefore, further studies in this area will provide possible critical helping and hindering categories of events that may facilitate adaptation to corporate restructuring.

The stress and coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) appears to be the basis for much of the vast research that has been undertaken in the area of stress and coping. Therefore, a discussion of their model will provide a very general representation of the stress and coping literature. "Coping" is defined as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.141). The term "coping" is used whether adaptation is successful or not. This theory focuses on the events themselves and not on what happened before or after.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have developed a transactional model of coping which focuses on interactions between the person and the environment. They claim that, when a transaction takes place, the person makes a "first appraisal". This involves an evaluation of the event, which will be either conscious or unconscious. The event will be appraised as stressful if it includes harm/loss, threat, and/or challenge. A "second appraisal" is then made on possible ways of coping with the situation which will include one or a combination of the following mediating processes: (a) problem-focus, (b) emotion-focus, (c) cultivating, seeking, and using social support, and (d) perceived social support which is emotional, or tangible, or informational.

All of the elements in this coping transaction are generalized so that they can be used in the evaluation of any type of transaction or potentially stressful event. Although this

theory does not specifically define adaptation, in a very general way adaptation could possibly be described as consisting of a series of first and second appraisals that are initially experienced as very stressful but gradually become less stressful until the transactions reach a low level of stress that the person finds comfortable. With this understanding, the appraisals become events that help or hinder adaptation depending on the perceived level of stress and the success of the chosen mediating processes in reducing that stress. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) "first appraisal" can possibly be transcribed to a category of helping or hindering events that could include incidents when a conscious knowledge of an initial appraisal of a situation came to light. For example, when the employee found, after a meeting in which the forthcoming changes had been discussed, that their hands were shaking because they felt overwhelmed.

The second appraisal involves the choice of action or the perception of actions by others. If it is assumed that the person chooses an action because they believe that it will reduce their discomfort, some possible helping and hindering events that may unfold during adaptation to corporate restructuring are proposed here that follow Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) mediating processes. For example, these could be events that define and focus on a specific problem. Emotional focus could include incidents when avoidance was used to push aside disturbing emotions about the corporate changes. Social support may include events when collaboration with colleagues was initiated or help was given by co-workers to help accomplishment of the new workload. Perceived social support could include an event when a supervisor or colleague intervened on the employee's behalf. This may be reported as aiding adaptation and be an event category suggested by the research of Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

Religious factors in coping. A person's construction of reality is considered a decisive factor in coping outcomes because appraisal of events is influenced by a person's beliefs. One body of research that has investigated the influence of belief on coping is the study of the role of religion in the coping process.

Elaborating on the transactional model of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Pargament, Ensing, Falgout, Olsen, Reiley, Van Haitsma, and Warren (1990; 1992) examined the relationship of intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religious and non-religious orientations for coping with a significant negative life event in a study involving 538 members of various church denominations. They found that the religious coping efforts, which included religious appraisals, religious purposes, and religious coping activities, predicted the outcomes of stress above and beyond the effects of non-religious coping activities. Maton (1989) reported that spiritual support was positively related to the personal emotional adjustment of people with high life stressors. These studies suggest that religious coping in various forms may be an influential dimension in the coping process. Although coping is not adaptation, this research identifies some possible helping and hindering events that could facilitate adaptation because of the influence of beliefs on first and second appraisals.

Events may be recounted in which an appraisal of purposefulness was made according to religious beliefs, e.g., when a person understands the struggle to adapt to change as God's way of helping him/her develop new strengths. Another type of event category may be an enactment of a religious practice. For example, a person reports that they often prayed while striving to adapt to new changes. Lastly, incidents of religious experiences

could aid adaptation as when a dream is believed to have been given by God to provide helpful insight into the work situation.

Corporate restructuring and coping with stress. A few studies have focused on coping with the stress experienced in corporate restructuring. Although these studies do not deal directly with helping and hindering incidents, they describe factors that can affect adjustment. Ashford (1988) in her study of the AT&T restructure found that the availability of certain coping resources helped to reduce job-level stress during the period of change. She identified uncertainty as the principal stressor associated with corporate change. This stressor might be transcribed into an event that offered a clearer picture of the new work role that could help adaptation by reducing uncertainty.

Ashford (1988) measured several personal coping resources including self-efficacy, personal control, self-esteem, freedom from self-denigration, and tolerance of ambiguity. Her data indicated that these resources had significant effect on work stressors. Ashford's list of resources describes personal characteristics that could facilitate adaptation because they lead up to events that affect work- related stress. With this trait of self-efficacy, a person could be assertive and creative in finding ways to adapt. Personal control can allow him/her to continue to function in the midst of confusion. When one does not use self-denigration they might use positive self-talk for self-encouragement in difficult situations. Tolerance of ambiguity can enable people to sustain focus on the work tasks during a time of organizational flux.

Six types of coping responses were also studied by Ashford (1988): (a) cognitive redefinition, (b) cognitive avoidance, (c) information seeking, (d) asking for feedback, (e) monitoring for feedback, and (f) emotional discharge. The results indicated that obtaining

information and feedback did not influence stress levels. They also indicated a possible bipolar helping/hindering aspect of events because if uncertainty is a major stressor, it could be assumed that gaining information would decrease uncertainty and therefore decrease stress. However, the results of this study indicate that the content of the received information may also have an effect on stress levels.

The coping responses measured by Ashford (1988) are specific categories of types of actions that lend themselves to possible new helping and hindering events. Cognitive redefinition may include a reappraisal of the work situation from disastrous consequence to a chance for personal growth. Cognitive avoidance could occur when, say, watching television was used to push aside disturbing emotions and thoughts about the restructure. An incident when feedback on work performance was sought from co-workers is one type of event indicated by her research. Emotional discharge could include incidents when concerns about the work situation were shared with another person (friend, family, co-worker, or supervisor).

Shaw, Fields, Hacker, and Fisher (1993) examined the relationship among coping resources, social support, external coping resources, job stressors and job strains of 110 employees of a company undergoing organizational restructuring. They described three major job stressors that were present during restructuring: (a) role ambiguity, (b) role conflict, and (c) role overload. These classifications delineate the results of experiences that are a consequence of the restructuring events. Alleviating or learning to manage these stressors may help in adaptation. Role ambiguity suggests that an incident that clarifies work roles may also help. Dealing with role conflict may elicit events when

differentiation of roles is attained. Role overload suggests an event in which managing multiple new work roles is accomplished.

Shaw, et al. (1993) expanded on Ashford's (1988) research by adding social support (emotional and tangible) and external coping resources (providing vicarious control or safety) as two additional resource categories that employees can draw upon to cope with corporate change. Their study also found that these factors had a direct effect upon job stress-and-strain levels. The resources suggested by Shaw et al. (1993) can provide the stage for an adaptive event to happen or may take part in the event itself. The results of these events (i.e. providing emotional support or vicarious control) will render the resources as helpful or not. Helping and hindering events can be clarified when they concur with the findings of this study on the influence of social support and external coping resources. This could include incidents when information about the restructuring and its effects was shared by groups of co-workers. Vicarious control may be obtained through incidents of participation in planning change or incidents when a work-related group intervened on the workers' behalf, as when a union official helped to re-negotiate a contract after a job description was changed.

Callan (1993) observed that there has been little research on how individuals cope with organizational change. Therefore, he outlined a speculative coping strategy based on findings of research in related fields. His model delineates personal and organizational strategies that should help to promote coping responses to change. Callan (1993) outlines three types of interacting personal coping strategies: (a) internal dispositional resources for successful coping defined as personality traits, which include internal locus of control (attributing success to one's own abilities), hardiness (strong commitment to self,

vigorous attitude toward circumstances, and a sense of meaningfulness), a sense of mastery, control beliefs, and levels of self-esteem; (b) external resources for coping which include social support from family, friends, co-workers, and managers; and (c) use of coping efforts that are either problem-focused or emotion-focused. These coping strategies generally echo the findings reviewed earlier in this chapter. Callan (1993) has, however, identified several new personal disposition traits that have had an effect on work-stress reduction. As previously defined, dispositional traits may be key elements, which lead up to a key event. These personality traits could elicit attributional types of incidents. For example, when locus of control, level of self-esteem, and/or sense of mastery influence how one attributes success or failure in new work-role adjustment, to their own work or to external circumstances. Hardiness and control beliefs could influence events that describe facing the negative emotions produced by the changes at work.

Research on coping with stress and stress management during organizational change has produced a wide range of personal attributes, personal responses, and external support factors that have influenced levels of stress. Research is needed to synthesize these findings into a categorical map that specifies the stress coping variables that help and those that hinder adaptation to corporate restructuring.

Organizational Development

Generally, literature in the field of organizational development (OD) and organizational behavior has focused on the processes of learning and managing corporate change from a total system or macro point of view (Burke, 1994; Kilmann, Saxton, Serpa, & Associates, 1985). However, some authors are consultants with experience of

corporations undergoing change and they therefore have suggestions for helping individuals to cope with changing work environments. Examples of this type of literature are reviewed to illustrate the typical type of information and advice available.

Ten steps toward survival of a corporate restructuring are described by Pritchett (1987) to help employees of companies involved in mergers and acquisitions. The survival tactics outlined are aimed at minimizing personal problems and retaining a job as the changing company moves through what Pritchett describes as the three psychological shock waves of widespread uncertainty, weak trust levels, and growing self-interest which influence employee behavior. His tactics include: (a) controlling your attitude, (b) tolerance of management mistakes, (c) expecting change, being a change agent, (d) not blaming everything you do not like on the merger, (e) preparing for psychological soreness, (f) getting to know the other company, (f) using the merger as an opportunity for growth, (g) keeping your sense of humor, (h) practicing good stress management techniques, and (i) keep doing your job.

It would appear that, for Pritchett (1987), a person has sufficiently adapted if they have been able to retain their employment during the upheaval of a merger or acquisition. These tactics are delineated in a commandment form without any hint of how to attain the right attitude or behavior if they do not come easily. His survival tactics prescribe behavior and attitudes that could lead up to incidents that would help or hinder adaptation. His list of tactics is similar in content to what is found in stress and coping literature. For example, if one has self-control (Ashford, 1988) or high levels of self-esteem (Shaw, et al., 1993) one might be able to control one's attitude, and in another

incident one could prepare for psychological soreness or know the other company through information seeking (Shaw, et al., 1993).

Ciabattari (1988) personally experienced corporate restructuring on two different occasions and from her experiences proposes 118 strategies for handling corporate change successfully. This long list includes what to do before the change, what to do and watch out for during the first year, crisis tactics, negotiating for either a new position or early retirement, and ideas on how to motivate others. Her strategies are aimed at job retention and diminishing any personal negative effects. Therefore, adaptation incidents for Ciabattari (1988) would include any type of incident that gave these results. Some examples of this might be, a time when shaping a new work-role took place or when negotiating with others about diminishing the negative personal effects of work changes.

Burns (1993) has integrated information from diverse disciplines providing ideas for managers who have to manage people in times of corporate change. Part of his focus is on personal strategies to help managers cope with change in their own adjustment. He describes six basic survival strategies for individuals in changing work environments: (a) get as much information as you can and be involved in the change, (b) practice stress management and relaxation techniques, (c) express and acknowledge your feelings, (d) set new goals, make decisions, look for alternatives, (e) develop and use a support group, and (f) think positively about oneself and the future. Burns (1993) indicates that incidents including any of these six actions can help a person to adapt to corporate change. He provides several questionnaires that help to assess personal stress levels, reactions to stressful situations, self-beliefs, locus of control, personality type, and personal goals. The choices of personal assessment are clearly influenced by stress and coping research.

These inventories are intended to help a person assess their reaction to the situation so that they can plan personal strategies to decrease stress levels and increase coping behaviors. Therefore, any incident that results in knowledge about personal stress and coping can help adaptation because it can set the stage for incidents where a person altered personal views or developed coping strategies that related to the corporate change situation.

Noer (1995; 1998) has focused his research on people who remain in organizations after involuntary employee cutbacks whom he calls "layoff survivors". His concluded that these layoff survivors are similar to survivors of other forms of tragedy and that their symptoms do not go away without help. Layoff survivors are said to report common attitudes, feelings, and perceptions. The common feeling clusters include: (a) fear, insecurity, and uncertainty; (b) frustration, resentment, and anger; (c) sadness, depression, and guilt; (d) unfairness, betrayal, and distrust. Noer (1995) observed that survivor victims often cope with their feelings in non-healthy non-productive ways, including: (a) reduced risk-taking, (b) lowered productivity, (c) unquenchable thirst for information, (d) survivor blaming, (e) justification and explanation, and (f) denial.

Survivor sickness, according to Noer (1995) is deep, serious, and complex. He concludes that the core element "contains conflicts of values centered on organizational codependency and self-empowerment" (Noer, 1995, p. 92). Four levels of interventions are proposed to help employees deal with survivor symptoms: (a) process interventions that deal with the way layoffs take place, (b) grieving interventions that help unblock repressed emotions, (c) interventions that break organizational dependency by increasing

survivors' sense of control and self-esteem, and (d) systemic interventions that can possibly immunize employees against survivor sickness.

Suggestions for individual and corporate action are included in Noer's (1995) model. It appears that, for Noer (1995), adaptation is accomplished when the individual has worked through the negative feelings and coping methods resulting from survivor sickness, and has replaced codependency on the organization for identity and security with self-dependency and inner meaning. Therefore, any event that leads to these ends would help adaptation. Organizational interventions set the stage for adaptation events to take place. This includes any event that could reduce negative emotional reactions, empower employees, and facilitate emotional release.

Cusack (1991) conducted research with a public health care system to discover common factors that influenced the ability to adapt in a changing work environment. A critical analysis of job and life histories of eight employees yielded nine factors that were held in common as influencing the ability to invest in change in the workplace: (a) corporate culture, (b) self-awareness, (c) significant other, (d) life/job issues, (e) money, (f) home environment, (g) boredom, (h) nonconformity, and (i) relationship to authority. Cusack (1991) has defined general categories influencing adaptation. Her aim was to identify what facilitates the ability to adapt, not the incidents that facilitate adaptation itself. If the corporate culture is invested in creating an atmosphere of open communication and trust, an employee may be able to obtain the information they need to perform new tasks well. Encouraging versus discouraging home life and a significant personal relationship could provide an opportunity to share frustrations caused by the

work situation. This research provides insight into the factors that might influence the possibility of an adaptive incident.

Jugde, Thorensen, Pucik, and Welbourne (1999), similarly to Callan (1993), examined how personality characteristics influenced managerial coping with organizational change. Data were collected from 514 individuals in six organizations. The seven dispositional traits initially investigated were reduced to two influential factors in coping with organizational change: positive self-concept and risk tolerance. Although, these traits do not suggest specific adapting incidents, they do suggest traits that would help precipitate an adaptive event.

Organizational development literature has drawn information from many sources to develop strategies to enable many diverse companies and their workers to survive the changes they had to initiate to remain competitive in the world market. Further research is needed to test the effectiveness of these strategies, to identify the full range of variables that help and hinder adaptation to corporate change.

Specific Professional Arenas Exploring Change

Gabel and Oster (1998) explored the different characteristics and reactions of mental health care professionals facing the major transformation of their programs, agencies and departments. As these professionals face organizational change and restructuring, they experience great stress and professional devaluation. Gabel and Oster (1998) identified the typical stages that individuals undergo in anticipation and implementation of change. The stage sequence suggested is: denial, resistance and anger, feelings of helplessness, attempts at escape, identification, acceptance and adaptation. Through case studies, Gabel and Oster (1998) illustrate that an individual must attend to their psychological reactions

and processes but not to the detriment of the crucial behavioral alterations the changes require. They suggest three components for adaptation to change: (1) recognize and deal with what has been lost, (2) adjust to new expectations and accept new practice realities, and (3) effect actual behavioral changes in the way services are provided.

Adaptive events suggested by this research include any event that results in dealing with what was lost and acceptance of new work practices. Any behavior that matches the new requirements would facilitate change.

Dowd and Bolus (1998) analyzed workers involved in a changing health-care system and found that they experienced increased stress because they were clinging to the status quo as they attempted to adapt. While many stress reduction methods offer solutions, these are, however, incomplete. In the study, individuals called a number of fallacies into play, mainly with its focus on the client and profitability. They were convinced that there was only one way of doing things. Dowd and Bolus (1998) prescribe dialectical thinking to facilitate the personal changes needed to adapt to the new complexities of the health-care environment. Therefore, any event that includes or helps to develop dialectical thinking would help facilitate adaptation.

Psychosocial Structure of Work

Karasek and Theorell (1990) evaluate control and psychological demands in the work environment by synthesizing research from diverse disciplines. They conclude with suggestions for a more psychologically humane reconstruction of work organizations. A demand/control model was developed to help in the prediction of a broad range of health, psychological, and behavioral consequences of work. Although this model does not deal directly with the concept of positive adaptation, it is clear from their research that people

will make adjustments to various work conditions. When conditions are inhumane, positive adaptation is not possible and physical and psychological health is compromised. Therefore, this research can be applied to illuminate factors that have hindered positive adaptation in work environments.

The model evaluates jobs from three dimensions; amount of psychological demands, amount of decision (control) latitude, and amount of social support. High psychological demands with low control and low social support have produced the most negative effects. High psychological demands include measurements of task requirements which include the way the tasks are accomplished (skills, procedures, and environment) and workload which includes the pace and amount of work demands (demands which may lead to exhaustion). The measurement of control latitude is a combination of the breath of skills used on the job and the amount of social authority to make decisions about skill usage (more control will reduce stress and increase learning, and can produce a feeling of mastery). The measurement of social support includes two aspects; the amount of cooperation possible with management (low level cooperation can lead to conflict) and the amount of possible cooperation with co-workers (little contact or lack of positive contact with co-workers can lead to isolation).

Karasek and Theorell's (1990) research gives a very rich picture of work conditions and outcomes of adaptation to various work environments. The work environment not only dictates what leads to the possibility of events that facilitate or hinder adaptation, it also provides the specific situations to which employees must adapt. Events that help or hinder adaptation as indicated by this research include times when there was an increase or decrease in: work responsibilities, amount of workload, amount of personal decision

power, time required to work alone, quality of work conditions, and required amounts of physical exertion.

Psychodynamic

LaBier (1986) conducted a social-psychoanalytic study over a seven year period. The focus was to interpret the meanings of symptoms and conflicts experienced by people who appeared well adapted in their work environment. He analyzed material from interviews with 250 subjects and found that they were troubled by career success. Despite success at work, the subjects experienced nagging feelings of dissatisfaction, emptiness, and detachment; they also lacked a sense of meaning. These negative emotions were connected to emotional and value conflicts, conscious and unconscious, many of which were hidden or disguised in the decisions they had made concerning work. LaBier (1986) concluded that the way people adjusted to work and to the characteristics of the work culture determined whether they would become troubled or not.

Three types of work adaptation resulted in people becoming troubled or disturbed: (a) values conflict (when an individual puts deep personal values aside and adapts to acquire the values needed for success and position as dictated by their profession involving self-betrayal, money-lust, and skewed values), (b) overadaption (those who adapt by clinging to work because they derive their sense of self-worth and adequacy from the job, repressing their deeper feelings of dissatisfaction when they accept rewards for their negative qualities), and (c) negative coping (involves three types of situations: a person who has become so rigidly immersed in the work role as a source of identity and meaning that any change in the work environment leaves the person disoriented and disturbed; a person who attempts to thoroughly adapt to work conditions where management, values,

or environment are unhealthy and/or destructive and the person becomes emotionally disturbed as they adapt to the negative environment; and a person who turns to drugs and/or alcohol to cope with working conditions that are demoralizing, unsafe, or destructive).

These three categories of negative adaptation describe the results of a variety of adaptation incidents. This research indicates that any event will hinder adaptation in which values are compromised, negative personal qualities are strengthened, repression is used to deal with emotions, and drugs or alcohol are used to deal with work pressures.

LaBier (1986) provided research demonstrating that one must assess adjustment events cautiously because what might appear to be adaptation may lead to dissatisfaction at best and madness at worst. He concludes that helping a person understand their motivations is the key to helping with the adaptation process because this will reveal why there are adaptation difficulties and identify what keeps feeding maladapation. This research would appear to identify any event that resulted in identifying one's motivations as helping adaptation.

Family Systems

Ulrich and Dune (1986) developed a theory explaining how family voices from each person's past direct, goad, or restrain that person in the work environment. Messages received from the family are designations that direct how the person should function at work. These designations directly affect the person's way of adapting to the work environment. The authors conclude that conflicts in work adaptation arise because of two major events: (a) when the "designated self" (as defined by the family) has to adapt to an environment where the characteristics of the "designated self" no longer work

successfully and (b) when the "designated self" does not feel like an accurate representation of the actual self.

However, while the workplace is different from the family, it has been demonstrated that the social environment of work is a partial extension of the family dramatic structure of childhood (MacGregor & Cochran, 1988; Ulrich & Dunne, 1986). Therefore, family dynamics can be considered to provide insight into what leads to an event or possibly indicate how one perceives the outcome of an event. Events indicated by this research would include any time a specific clarification or conflict took place between the designated self as given from the family and the actual self.

Summary of Helping/Hindering Categories

The theories reviewed are complicated and investigate a broad range of factors that address adaptation to changes at work. This review attempted to summarize the clearest major types of helping and hindering incidents as suggested by the research. A variety of possible event categories that may help or hinder adaptation to corporate restructuring has been delineated within the body of the literature review (Appendix A). These categories of events touch many aspects of the person; psychological, social, mental, and spiritual. Their diversity and breadth give a possible indication why adaptation to major corporate change continues to be a matter of concern and why research has not isolated a comprehensive map of variables that help and hinder adaptation. Researchers and practitioners have attempted to deal with this issue from many different points of reference. Some integration has been attempted. However, it appears that more research is needed to synthesize the knowledge and variables put forth by the great variety of research that is related to this topic.

Summary of the State of Research

Current theories of work adjustment and work transitions do not take into account the contemporary context of rapid and extensive change. Even though much work has been done to isolate variables that influence and moderate adaptation to the work environment in many settings and under diverse circumstances, little research has concentrated on adaptation events involved in corporate restructuring. Researchers have employed pre-selected factors for study rather than attempting to discover the full range of factors involved in adaptation to the changing work environment. There is a danger in generalizing about the adaptational value of specific variables without considering the context in which they occur (Lazarus, 1993). Personal incidents that help and hinder adaptation to corporate change have not been specifically identified.

There have been a great many varied attempts to explain the dynamics involved in coping with stress in the work environment. Despite being related to adaptation, little research has focused on the dynamics involved in coping with the new work environment and how this applies to the person adapting to this situation. Because most research now recognizes the interacting role of both personal internal processes and situation specific responses, there have been some attempts to integrate findings from a variety of fields to illuminate the topic of adaptation to corporate restructuring. There appears to be, however, an emphasis on the cognitive and behavioral research and little integration of the ideas found in the literature that investigates the intrapsychic variables of coping (i.e. (Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; LaBier, 1986; Ulrich & Dunne, 1986) and how this relates to adaptation in the work environment (Parks, 1994). Generally, research on stress and coping offers a piecemeal approach to the formation of a comprehensive description.

The large variety of theoretical views and methodologies employed make variables difficult to integrate and confirm through further research.

Organizational development has traditionally looked at the big picture of organizational change with focus on what conditions are necessary to bring about change in the corporate environment. Specific research on personal adaptation to corporate change has been sparse. Much of the literature on this topic in the field of business is of a commentary nature that includes generalities, comments on the author's personal experiences, experiences of consultants, and non-validated information. Parks (1994) has observed that real-world situations that have lent themselves to different types of quasi-experimental methods are more readily found than those who use a genuinely experimental approach. Although this information may be helpful and is generated by experts in the field, few authors have experimentally validated their comments. The literature appears to lack deep and rich explanations of adaptation variables that could aid counselors with clients experiencing this situation.

Some studies have demonstrated a downside to adaptation in the work environment when that environment is physically or emotionally unhealthy. Emotional and physical illness can ensue when people adapt to an unhealthy situation. This demonstrates that caution is needed when evaluating adaptation because people who have adapted to an unhealthy environment appear normal in respect of that environment. Adaptation in such circumstances can, however, be destructive. Although extremely valuable in aiding client and therapist to evaluate the consequences of adaptation, these studies do not help to specifically identify the variables that help and those that hinder a person to adjust to corporate restructuring.

Evaluations of the shortcomings of previous research on this topic are necessary in order to choose a design that will help fill the gaps. The key elements for the selection of a research method are the following.

Instead of concentrating on a small set of factors, it would be useful to develop a comprehensive map of critical factors.

Given the large number of possible factors described by various arenas of related research, it would be helpful to employ a method designed to discover a range of factors that are involved in adaptation for those involved in corporate restructuring.

It is desirable to focus on individuals since the factors that facilitate or hinder adaptation to corporate change will inevitably vary from person to person. The influence of the work relational environment on adaptation can be evaluated from one person's point of view. What is most salient for a person at any given point might change over time. A uniform effect of factors cannot be assumed and therefore a research method that considers individual experience over time appears advantageous.

The present study was designed to incorporate these considerations so that specific incidents that help and hinder adaptation to corporate change are acquired through documenting personal experiences.

Methodologies

This study attempts not only to include relevant conclusions from other disciplines to illuminate the topic, it also attempts to bridge the gap between theory and actual experience. Documentation of the personal experiences of those who have adapted to changes in their work environment appears to be lacking. Therefore, personal experiences need to be documented to test conclusions from previous research and to develop a

comprehensive map of what facilitates or hinders adaptation to change in the work environment.

There is a family of qualitative methods that focuses on documenting the personal experience of a particular population (i.e. Grounded Theory and Case Study). However, the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) is a qualitative research method which gives a more direct method to fulfill the needs of this study which are: (a) identifying facilitating and hindering factors of adaptation to change in the corporate environment through data collected from knowledgeable subjects in order to isolate specific adaptation factors generated by this specific population; (b) collecting as many personal experiences as necessary to fully document the experience, as this has not been done before, and no comprehensive model exists; and (c) discovering a categorical map of factors that would help to integrate the vast amount of theory and research related to this topic. Whereas some methodologies focus narrowly on single isolated events, the critical incident technique can help provide a broader picture of activities, along with the participants' perceptions of these events because of the interview method employed (Dachelet, et al., 1981). The Critical Incident Technique provided the method to address the purpose of this study which was to explore and discover, by interviewing people with personal experience of major corporate restructuring, the events that facilitated and/or hindered their adaptation to the changes that occurred.

Critical Incident Methodology

The Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) incorporates a set of procedures for collecting descriptive accounts of experiences through personal interviews that attempt to isolate specific events that significantly facilitated or hindered a particular outcome. To

be critical, the incident must take place within a context where the purpose or effect of the incident seems fairly clear to the participant. Therefore, the participants to be selected for study should have personally experienced the particular aim, and are capable of recalling and articulating their experiences. Once interviews are completed, the critical events are then extracted from the accounts and grouped by similarity of content to form separate categories that encompass all the events. These categories provide a detailed, comprehensive, and valid map of what facilitates or hinders the particular aim. The categorical map can be used for the development of theory (Weiner, Russell, & Lerman, 1979), for design of practical programs of training and development (Dachelet, Wemett, Garling, Craig-Kuhn, Kent, & Kitzman, 1979), for identifying specific competencies needed for specific jobs (Daniel, 1992), and for designing further research or to extend, refine, or revise the categories (Borgen & Amundson, 1984).

The Critical Incident Technique was developed by Flanagan (1954) as an outgrowth of multiple studies in the Aviation Psychology Program of the United States Air Force in World War II. The development of this method helped to advance procedures for the selection and classification of aircrew. Flanagan (1954) later applied this technique extensively to industry. The specific critical lists provided by his research proved more helpful than the imprecise descriptions previously used for selection and training in a variety of professions.

Since Flanagan's initial development and use of this research method, it has been utilized successfully in a multitude of studies encompassing a variety of fields. Cohen and Smith (1976) conducted a study on group process. Flanagan (1978) studied the critical features of quality of life for people living in the USA. Weiner, Russell, and

Lerman (1979) used this technique to explore the cognitive-emotion process in achievement-related contexts. Dachelet, Wemett, Garling, Craig-Kuhn, Jent, and Kutzman (1981) utilized this technique to evaluate a clinical practicum setting. Borgen and Amundson (1984) explored the experience of unemployment. Cochran (1985) explored facilitation and hindrance of scholarly activity among university professors. McCormick (1994) analyzed the facilitation of healing for First Nations People of British Columbia.

The Critical Incident Technique has been demonstrated to be both reliable and valid in generating a detailed and comprehensive description of a content Cluster (Anderson & Nilsson, 1964). A further inherent strength of this technique is that it is essentially a procedure, not a rigid set of rules that govern data collection. Flanagan (1954) developed a flexible set of principles that he assumed would and could be modified to fit the specific situation of the study at hand.

In conclusion, the Critical Incident Technique was selected as the best research method for this study because: (a) it suggests the procedures for generating categories, (b) it incorporates a flexible set of procedures that have been demonstrated in a variety of fields including psychology and commerce, (c) it has been shown to be a reliable and valid means for the collection of incidents pertinent to a practical description of an activity, and (d) the results of this procedure have been utilized for identifying specific competencies for specific outcomes which can enable therapists to help their clients deal with the changes they have to face.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

In selecting a research design, the major considerations were twofold: to acquire a reasonably comprehensive list of factors that have helped facilitate or hinder adjustment to major corporate change, through documentation of the multiple events involved in the adjustment process, and to develop a map of facilitating and hindering categories of adjustment factors that could be used to develop an interdisciplinary theory of personal adaptation to change in the corporate arena for use by counselling psychologists who help clients affected by these changes.

The research design used in this study is presented in the present chapter. A Critical Incident method was utilized to collect and categorize descriptive accounts of events that significantly facilitated or hindered personal adjustment to corporate change by individuals. The participants are explicated. The procedures used to collect the data, including the Critical Incident Technique and the interview procedures, are delineated. Categorization of events, together with the extraction of incidents, is outlined, and this is followed by a discussion on questions of reliability and validity.

Critical Incident Technique

The Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) incorporates a set of procedures for collecting descriptive accounts of incidents, through interviews, that significantly facilitated or hindered a particular goal. To be critical, the incident must have taken place within a context where the purpose or effect of the incident seemed fairly clear to the participant. Therefore, participants were selected for the study on the basis of having been

in a position to personally experience the particular goal, and who were capable of recalling and articulating their experiences. Once interviews were completed, the critical events were extracted from the accounts and grouped by similarity of content to form separate categories that encompassed all the events. This system of categories provided a detailed, comprehensive, and valid map of what facilitated or hindered the particular goal.

Flanagan (1954) describes five steps necessary for a critical incident study: (a) describing the aim of the activity to be studied, (b) setting plans and criteria for activity to be observed, (c) collecting data, (d) analyzing the themes or categorization of the data, and (e) reporting and interpretation of the findings. Chapters 1 and 2 describe the nature of the activity that was under study in this project. This third chapter describes the collection and categorization of the data. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 report and discuss the findings of this study.

Participants

Selection criteria. Participation in this study was limited to men and women who were personally involved in a corporate restructuring that was initiated a minimum of one year before the time of the interview. Types of corporate restructuring included mergers, takeovers, downsizing, rightsizing, and internal management restructuring. All of these changes necessitated an internal cultural change in the existing company and the company's employees therefore had to adjust accordingly (Schein, 1985). A one-year minimum time-frame was selected because it allows for the widespread implementation of change in the organization, and because within one to two years of a transformation the quality of work should go up in a successful change effort (Kotter, 1995). It was assumed that within one year the participant had sufficient distance from change events to make self-evaluations and that salient events were still reasonably fresh in the participant's memory (Woolsey, 1986).

Recruitment of participants took place through several avenues via my network of contacts within the international business community. A list of potential participants was

compiled from the names I was given by contacts. The individuals concerned were sent a letter describing the study in detail (Appendix B) and encouraging them to telephone the researcher for more information or to schedule an interview if they wished to participate.

The researcher telephoned all those who responded positively to the information letter to schedule an interview. During the call, the participants were given a final screening to confirm that they fitted the three criteria for participation in the study: (a) personal involvement in a corporate restructuring, (b) a minimum lapse of one year since the changes were first implemented in the company, and (c) the ability to articulate their story. Once the interview time was set, the researcher sent the participant a consent form (Appendix C) and a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) with a request that the two forms should be completed for collection during the interview.

Demographic questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D) was designed to obtain descriptive personal data to add to the richness of understanding the person in context. Generally, the characteristics of the participants determine to whom the study results can be generalized. Woosley (1986) found it helpful to gather relevant descriptive data about the participants so that the data could be used for interpretations of generalization.

Critical Incident Interview

The Critical Incident Technique includes interview procedures for collecting information and observations from people about their own actions. Therefore, the following assumptions regarding the recollection of incidents by retrospection were made: (a) participants will have clear and detailed recall of the salient incidents (Woolsey, 1986), (b) participants will demonstrate accuracy in reporting incidents when details are full and precise (Flanagan, 1954), and (c) participants will be able to distinguish between incidents that facilitated adaptation to corporate change and those that hindered it.

Generally, after a brief introduction to the purpose of the study, a critical incident interview begins with a request for events. Once an incident is named, it is explored and elaborated upon to establish clarity, importance, and relevance to the aim. This assures that the incident had significant impact to be called critical. In the study, an incident was defined as any event (internal or external) that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and possibly predictions about the person carrying out the act (Flanagan, 1954).

The researcher conducted a critical incident interview with each participant consisting of two parts: an orientation and an elicitation of incidents. The interview was approximately one hour and a half in length and took place at the office of the participant, or at the office of the researcher. Three interviews took place in the United States and 25 interviews took place in Switzerland. All interviews were tape recorded with an audio recorder.

Orientation to the interview. The interview began with an orientation that reminded the participants of confidentiality, their option to withdraw at any time from the study, and collecting the consent form and demographic questionnaire. The following statement was used to remind the participants of the purpose of the study:

> Hello, X. Thank you very much for meeting with me today. As I mentioned to you over the phone, the purpose of this study is to find out what helps people adjust as they are going through major corporate changes. My intention is to meet with experienced people like yourself so that you can tell me what has helped or hindered the adjustment process. My goal is to assemble a comprehensive map of what helped you and people like yourself so that other people can learn from your experience. In order to be able to do this, I need your help, and I very much appreciate your willingness to meet with me and take part in this study. I am looking forward to working with you.

In addition, the researcher and the participant discussed any further questions posed about the study and established rapport. The researcher then clarified the nature of the events to be reported with the following statement:

> An incident can include any event or happening. This includes anything that happened to you that helped you or hindered you in adjusting to the changes at work. The events might have taken place at work or outside of work. Think as broadly as you can about what happened, what led up to the event, what actually happened that helped or hindered, and how did it turn out. Do you have any questions?

This statement was followed by a time of clarification if needed.

Elicit background. After the introduction and the clarification of events, the interview continued with the following remarks to elicit the background concerning the beginning of the adjustment to the corporate changes:

> I would invite you to think back to the first time you heard about the changes that were going to take place at your work. Can you describe what it was like for you at the office, what you thought, felt and/or did, before you heard about the changes? And then, what happened just after you heard about the changes to take place?

The researcher then allowed the participant to tell their story. This reflection by the participant was useful to help orient him or her to reflect and focus upon their own experience which is the purpose of this study.

Prudence was exercised to not put leading questions after the main question was asked. However, if a participant had difficulty identifying an incident, a prompting statement was used to help elicit an incident. For a helping incident the statement was: "Think back to a time when things were going particularly well. Trace back to anything that was particularly helpful". For a hindering incident the statement was: "Think back to

a time that was particularly bad. Trace back to anything that might have influenced that time".

Description of events. Once the participant had exhausted their immediate memory of incidents, the researcher began to systematically ask him/her to describe each incident in detail. The questions had to be sufficiently precise to focus on the purpose of the study, but vague enough to allow the participant to get into their own experience so that a full and rich description could be obtained. General active listening skills were employed. The following questions were used to elicit detailed, vivid accounts of each incident:

(a) What was the general situation surrounding this event before, during and after?

(b) What exactly was it about this that facilitated/hindered your adjustment?

(c) Can you be more precise?

(d) Can you remember any other details about the event?

(e) Does this bring to mind any other incidents?

Through these means the participant was guided toward the full illumination of all incidents.

Categorization of Events

Analysis of the incidents involved three steps. First, the events were extracted from the audio recordings and placed onto cards, one incident per card. Second, incident cards were grouped according to similarity of content to form separate categories. This procedure requires insight and judgment on the part of the researcher (Flanagan, 1954). Third, the categories were subjected to several tests of reliability and accountability.

Extraction of incidents. Participants were added until redundancy of categories appeared. A running account of the incidents was kept and when only three new categories were added per 100 incidents, data collection was discontinued (Flanagan, 1954).

Whole event. Each fully elaborated incident was carefully listened to and studied so that the full meaning was understood before the incident was extracted. One advantage of

having audiotapes was that the vocal nuances added additional nonverbal cues that brought more meaning and understanding to the incident (Woolsey, 1986). As the tapes were listened to, each incident was transcribed verbatim on to an index card. Initially, the researcher transcribed everything that resembled an incident. Then, each incident was subjected to a rigorous examination by the researcher, with the aid of the research supervisor. The following questions were applied: (a) is there a discernible pattern to the incident?, (b) can the story about the incident be stated with reasonable completeness?, and (c) is there a discernible effect that has direct impact on the goal, which in this case is adjustment to changes in the work environment (Cochran, 1985)? By following these criteria, vague events were eliminated, and rambling narratives of events were fine-tuned. Incidents varied in detail and narrative form. However, the above criteria gave concrete assistance in the decision-making process on which incidents were retained.

Events summarized. A further refinement was necessary to facilitate the placement of incidents into categories. Long narratives needed to be summarized into one paragraph. Incidents needed to be divided into component parts: what led up to the event, the event itself, and outcome. No simple rules are available for this part of the analysis (Flanagan, 1954). However, researchers have reported that this type of refinement of the incidents facilitates the sorting out of the incidents into categories (Woolsey, 1986). These decisions were made according to the judgment of the researcher and were reviewed by the research supervisor to insure that the meaning of each incident was not compromised. Whenever possible, the actual words of the participant were left unchanged. After evaluation and choice of events, the chosen events were summarized. These summaries were then placed onto an index card. The summarized transcriptions included: (a) the source of the event (who or what), (b) the event (the essence of the occurrence), and (c) and the outcomes.

Process of forming categories. This step analyzed the thematic content of each incident through inductive reasoning (Flanagan, 1954). After the researcher had placed

each incident onto cards, the next step was to sort the incidents into groups that appeared similar. Grouping incidents that seemed similar formed tentative categories. Prototypes were identified which appeared to group incidents. The tentative categories were formed to order the prototypes and were given brief definitions and headings. These titles conveyed the patterns in the category without needing detailed definitions or explanations so that they could be easily applied in practice. Additional incidents were then added to these categories. During this process, the need for new categories and redefinition of existing categories was noted. Tentative categories were then modified and new categories defined. The process continued until all incidents were classified. Both facilitating and hindering incidents were classified in this manner. Definitions for all categories were re-examined by the researcher and the research advisor in terms of the actual incidents assigned to each, to insure that the definitions of the categories accurately represented the contents of the assigned incidents.

Validation Procedures

In their study, Anderson and Nilsson (1964) concluded that the critical incident method was both valid and reliable. The researcher took the view that validity checks for this type of qualitative research refer primarily to accounts and conclusions, not to data or methods (Maxwell, 1992). Categories developed in this study were subjected to five types of evaluations regarding the soundness and trustworthiness of the classification system.

Reliability. In a check for the reliability of the categories, the researcher assessed if different people could classify the incidents into the categories in a consistent way. One doctoral student and one consultant were asked to act as judges. Each judge, on separate occasions, was provided with a brief description of the categories and then asked to place a random sample of incidents under appropriate categories. Anderson and Nilsson (1964) suggest that sufficient reliability is reached if the independent judges can classify 75-85 percent of the incidents into the same categories, as did the researcher. The percentage of

agreement of category assignment between researcher and judges was calculated. The higher the level of agreement, the higher the indication that other people will be able to use the categories to classify incidents consistently and reliably.

Participation rate. The purpose of the categories was to summarize and describe the data in an efficient manner so they could be used in a practical manner. The aim of the analysis was to increase the usefulness of the data while sacrificing as little of the comprehensiveness and specificity as possible (Flanagan, 1954). Therefore, the researcher insured that the categories are sound and well founded. In forming a category, the researcher must identify, through inductive reasoning, the similarity among a cluster of incidents reported by different participants. Similar types of incidents were reported independently by different people. If only one or a few participants reported a category of event it was tentatively held, because it is possible to fabricate or distort an incident. However, all incidents were retained and participation rate varied in the different categories. The soundness was assessed by the clarity and plausibility of the incident (Woolsey, 1986). Agreement among participants is one criterion for the objectivity of an incident because interpersonal agreement remains the basic test of soundness (McCormick, 1994). Agreement was measured by the participation rate for each category. The number of participants reporting a specific category was divided by the total number of participants. The higher the participation rate the more valid the category (Anderson & Nilsson, 1964).

Comprehensiveness. To assess if the category system was reasonably complete and comprehensive, approximately 10 percent of the incidents were withdrawn and not examined until the categories were formed (Anderson & Nilsson, 1964). Once category formation was complete, these incidents were classified. If they could be easily and reasonably placed in the established categories, it was then assumed that the category system was comprehensive. If not, new categories were formed to insure sufficient comprehension.

Expert validation. The researcher sought validation of the categories through experts in the field. One psychologist in Geneva, Switzerland, who works with business people, a business consultant working internationally, one director of human resources from a large Swiss company, and one participant in this study were invited to comment. They were each given a copy of the categories and asked to comment according to their expertise and experience in the field. The researcher asked for observations and remarks regarding the relevance of the categories to their understanding of the critical events that help and hinder adaptation to corporate change.

Agreement with research. The soundness of a category can be assessed through agreement with other research. When a category was formed that agreed and integrated with previous research, it was considered reasonably sound. Categories of incidents that were novel, or that stood out because a significant number of participants reported an incident in the specific category, were retained and are subject to confirmation or disconfirmation by future research. Therefore to assess agreement, the categories which arose from data were compared to previous research and informed opinion.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Through interviews with 28 working adults (16 men, 12 women), 543 critical incidents were elicited as to what had facilitated and what had hindered their adaptation to corporate change. The participants represent eight multinational companies, two Swiss companies, two US companies, and five non-governmental organizations based in Switzerland. Ages ranged from 24 to 61. Participants originated from the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, New Zealand, Canada, and United States. Participants in this study have different levels of education (two have equivalence of High School diplomas, four have professional certifications, 11 have equivalence of bachelors degrees, three have masters degrees, and eight have a Ph.D.) and all participants have a relatively high socioeconomic status.

The 543 critical incidents were organized into 34 categories. Seventeen categories contain only facilitating incidents. Five categories contain only hindering incidents. Twelve categories contain both facilitating and hindering incidents. During categorization it became clear that the categories could be grouped into five larger clusters.

Table 1 delineates the categories in cluster groupings. The frequency (total number of incidents reported in the category) and participation rate (percentage of participants reporting incidents in the category) are included for each category and cluster.

Table 1

Categories in Clusters

Clusters Categories	Frequency	Participation Rate
Context of Restructuring Cluster	152	100%
Encountering a demoralizing situation/		
Encountering an encouraging situation	35	64%
Receiving a position/Removed from a position	23	60%
Receiving increased workload	19	53%
Termination of colleagues	15	42%
Enduring a negative state	18	39%
Experiencing negative attitudes of colleagues	16	32%
Participation in decision-making/		
exclusion from decision- making	10	25%
Destabilizing moves/Stabilizing moves	9	21%
Experiencing devaluation of the company	7	21%
Shaping Work Environment Cluster	150	100%
Discovering and adhering to a firm guideline	39	64%
Making a beneficial change in the work setting	30	60%
Making a decision concerning work	21	46%
Refusing exploitative requests	14	42%

(table continues)

Clusters Categories	Frequency	Participation Rate
Experiencing a challenging task	18	39%
Accomplishing a task/Blocked		
from accomplishing a task	8	28%
Creating a work position	10	28%
Creating space to work	6	14%
Dissociation from a bad person	4	14%
Types of Support Cluster	119	100%
Receiving personal support/		
Not receiving support	35	71%
Receiving vital information/		
Vital information withheld	35	50%
Receiving affirmation of job competence/		
Receiving disaffirmation of job competence	13	35%
Experiencing camaraderie/		
Experiencing estrangement	5	39%
Receiving assurance about a job/		
Receiving a threat about a job	11	32%
Receiving advice	10	32%

(table continues)

Clusters Categories	Frequency	Participation Rate
Shaping Personal Environment Cluster	86	89%
Realization of a positive perspective	52	64%
Initiating a change outside of work	16	39%
Preparation for change	9	25%
Engaging in an activity outside of work	9	25%
Reaching out to others Cluster	36	60%
Giving empathy	9	25%
Using humor	7	25%
Forming a relationship	8	25%
Looking out for others	5	7%
Providing practical help	4	7%
Securing employment for others	3	7%

Frequency is the total number of events reported in each category.

Participation Rate is the percentage of participants reporting an event.

n = 28

Description of the Categories

Each category in the five clusters is clarified by brief explanation, by providing examples that portray the range of reported events, and by reporting the frequency of facilitating and hindering incidents. The clusters are presented in the following order: (a) context of restructuring, (b) shaping work environment, (c) types of support, (d) reaching out to others, and (e) shaping personal environment.

Context of Restructuring Cluster

The context of restructuring Cluster refers to the circumstances and situations taking place in the work environment that are a direct result of restructuring. The restructuring itself involved a variety of general precipitating events which include; new directors, new CEOs, downsizing, rapid growth of the company, new information systems, new management, new service structure, and mergers. These general precipitating events caused changes in the work environment that personally affected the participants. The incidents reported by participants in this cluster generally include different varieties of implementation of change by management, reactions of workers in the work arena that was experiencing extensive alteration, and effects of new job requirements and tasks. The incidents demonstrate how minor and substantial changes influenced adaptation. The timing and manner in which the changes were implemented appear to have great effects on adaptation. Nine categories are grouped in this Cluster, composed of events that generally hindered adaptation. Accumulation of these events generally caused employees to lose confidence in the company and to despair.

<u>Encountering a demoralizing situation/encountering an encouraging situation.</u> (23 hindering/ 12 facilitating) Demoralizing situations occurred when participants witnessed or participated in events where people experienced distress, incompetence was evident, others engaged in unethical behavior, and people had to engage in disparaging tasks. These situations resulted in pain, misery, frustration, discouragement, panic, despair, feeling betrayed, and depression. The range of experiences is broad for both hindering and facilitation events and includes: (a) colleagues choosing to leave, (b) actions of individual managers, (c) actions of management, (d) actions of colleagues, and (e) engaging in particular tasks.

<u>Examples</u>

After the reorganization there were unclear and confused job descriptions. It made it hard to get our work done. My boss quit because she could not get our job done. This made it difficult for me. It affected me a lot because I thought if she could not cope, how could I? I was so frustrated.

I received the lists of anyone leaving the company because of my responsibilities with corporate accounts. About nine months into the merger, before any layoffs began, two days in a row I received four full pages of people leaving. I could not help thinking what did they know that I didn't? This put me into panic mode.

After many months, we still did not know how the merger would affect us. My boss was unhappy that I was not motivated to do my work. I asked him to try and

understand. He answered, "No, no, no I can't. I can't understand how 200 people here are de-motivated. I am the only one who is not". I went crazy. This was unjust and incomprehensible. It was actually bizarre and made it more difficult to cope.

We had put in lots of overtime and tremendous effort to get the new system up and going. Then I had to deal with a new team of five people who had nothing to do with our long-term work. They came in and said, "Well we have to move in a new direction now". I thought, these people who did not know much may have a good idea, but was it the right one? It was unnerving especially since we had just done a huge change.

They were reorganizing our department through a consultant. They downgraded my boss and he was really hit hard by this and became quite depressed. I was miserable watching my poor boss and friend struggle with his new fate.

After all the changes we were trying to orchestrate, I was involved in a negotiation with two factions. The two sides were quite lunatic and could not decide on anything. I got a sense of hatred. When I got on the plane to return to my office, I experienced a bout of psychogenic vomiting. I knew I had had enough.

There are 12 facilitating events in this category. Thus in contrast to the observation of a demoralizing situation, these events reflect the observation of an encouraging situation. Outcomes are new confidence in company, optimism, a feeling of continuity, and feeling comforted.

Examples

The merger teams were made up of people from both companies. A woman that was really sharp led one meeting. She led the meeting quickly and efficiently and we got through the agenda. I felt from that meeting that the key people really knew what they were doing and that they would make the right decisions. I got a lot of comfort from this and it made the change it easier to live with.

It has been almost two years and all the changes made by the new director they brought in have not produced good results. His contract was not renewed and he is out of here in a few months. It is a big relief, it's just too bad it took so long to see his mistakes. I am hopeful again in the company and that the next change will be for the better.

The organization was acting without integrity by canceling contracts, giving no warning to those with short-term assignments about termination. These people banded together and sued the company. They won a large settlement. I was glad about this. The irrational behavior created so much uneasiness for a couple of

years it was destructive. The suit showed them they could not get away with such despicable behavior. I felt something inside me relax.

Receiving a position/removed from a position. (16 facilitating, 9 hindering) Participants gained a new job description as a direct result of the restructuring. Versus, participants lost a particular job description as a direct result of the restructuring. The range of new jobs involved becoming part of a short-term group that dealt only with the issues of change, gaining a promotion, or expansion of responsibility. Facilitating outcomes were feeling protected, encouraged, excited, relieved, and hopeful. Hindering outcomes were feeling drained energy, shocked, hurt, and insecure.

Examples

The merger was underway and I was asked to be a member of a merger planning team. Our job was to develop the structure of the new company. This was a great position to have. It did not guarantee me a job in the end, but at least I knew what was happening and it was exciting.

As the company kept re and restructuring, communication became a very key item. I was assigned to the communications department. Here my talents were used and I did not feel exposed or affected by the next wave of change.

In the reorganization they tried to keep working groups together. For instance, I kept the same boss, but my job description changed. My responsibilities expanded

to be global. This was a boost to my ego and I appreciated the way they made the changes.

Changes were happening everywhere in the organization. Ten minutes before a department meeting, my supervisor told my job had been eliminated. Two minutes later, my supervisor introduced me to a new director. The new director and I spoke for about two minutes and he asked me to be his administrative assistant. I agreed. We shook hands and entered the meeting where I was introduced as the new director's assistant. This was a promotion. I hardly had time to think or feel in the whirlwind, but I was grateful and excited at the new position.

I had been working on an exciting project for four years. During a business trip I received a call, they told me that upper management was restructuring and that my project was cut. When I returned to the office I was out of that job. I was stunned, all our work meant nothing to the short-sighted management. A year and a half later they had to re-open the business, but at the time I became disillusioned with the company and I became dejected.

I was called into a conference meeting with the change manager. I was told my responsibilities were now completely different. They downgraded title, which in our organization is a big thing. However, my salary and benefits remained the

same. The whole thing took all my energy away. It was distressing to be treated like this after 20 years.

Receiving increased workload. (19 hindering) Participants were overloaded with work. The restructuring added more work to those who already had full work schedules. The increase in work was due to new information systems, downsizing without decrease in overall company production, assignment to merger teams without decrease in normal workload, and company growth. Outcomes were feeling overwhelmed, isolated, exhausted, discouraged, confused, demotivated, and unable to adapt.

Examples

I was excited to be asked to be part of a merger team. Then I was told that I had to work this into my schedule and somehow have time to travel. This was very hard. My boss was not happy because the team took me away from my regular work. I worked hard to do my regular job. I had pressure from both sides and it was exhausting.

All the work to coordinate the merging companies increased over time. It became an impersonal atmosphere because I began to receive my work projects on a piece of paper, like a work order, and I had to respond with e-mail. They wanted more and more work, more and more data. No one had time to discuss these projects and I missed this. I was isolated, overworked and I did not like it.

After they installed the new information system I was totally overwhelmed with information. In two days I received 150 e-mails. There was no way I could adequately deal with that. Sometimes I don't even look at my e-mail because it's too overwhelming.

In the new structure I was the first person to have this particular position. Because of this there were too many ideas and too many pursuits. I was always invited to go various places. I could not protect myself with all the changes. I tried to do a good job, but it was too much. I gradually got run into the dust.

Termination of colleagues. (14 hindering) This category encompasses events that denote the way in which people were let go and how this affected adjustment. Restructuring, as experienced by the participants, often included various types of downsizing and replacement of those in management positions. The key element uniting these events was the manner in which the termination process was handled. The outcomes were feeling unsettled, appalled, unsafe, pain, chaos, distrust, and loss of motivation,

Examples

During the restructuring my boss was asked to leave in one morning, just to clear out. She was not even asked to pass on all that she had been doing to the new person and me. That was a whole lot of knowledge and history wasted. I thought

the organization was losing out tremendously. This was difficult and painful, very difficult.

As the new director was restructuring the company, we knew many would be let go. I felt safe because I had a long-term contract. Suddenly they let a colleague go with a long-term contract like mine. They were acting illegally. It was chaos and I no longer felt safe.

The reorganization included a few cutbacks. I fought intensely to retain a post in our section occupied by a single mother. The day I received the word she was finally let go, I knew she was let go for political reasons that had nothing to do with her worth to our organization. I was horrified and disgusted with the new management.

Enduring a negative state. (18 hindering) Participants were caught up in complex and difficult situations in the work environment that continued for an extended period of time without a clear end-point. The situations were extensive and influenced all aspects of life at work. Difficult work situations were sometimes aggravated by painful events occurring in life outside work. Time-spans and apparent lack of personal influence to end the situation are the prominent themes of events in this category. Enduring a negative state led to discouragement, bewilderment, anguish, misery, frustration, and panic.

Examples

There were a lot of changes going on all at one time. People's contracts were not being renewed because of budget problems and then they started a management re-organization. On top of all that, they introduced a new computer system that was inadequate. This made the whole working situation a nightmare for a long long time.

Our company was in the process of downsizing since January. My father passed away in July. The downsizing continued for over a year. This made everything more difficult and more different than before. Inside and out things were dying.

The merger dragged on for a long time. It was postponed once. Then closure was postponed a second time. So, instead of 14 months it dragged on for over two years. It was like a roller coaster, work, and then it gets postponed. It was hard work for too long and I was disheartened.

In the ongoing process of re-organization they assigned our section a new boss to coordinate European operations. The problem was he would not move and was in another country. This made learning to work with him very tedious and added a lot of travel to my already busy schedule. This prolonged all projects for a very long time; to get anything done took twice as much time. I felt very discouraged. I always felt like I was swimming upstream.

<u>Experiencing negative attitudes of colleagues.</u> (15 hindering) This category

encompasses events when participants witnessed unconstructive, disapproving, and bitter

attitudes of fellow workers. These negative attitudes were exposed in actions and patterns

of interaction at the office. New bosses, colleagues who had lost their jobs, and

colleagues who had lost fellow workers through downsizing were the common people

groups expressing the negative attitudes. Participants reported that working in an

atmosphere of negative attitudes resulted in feeling dread, on edge, fed up, oppressed, and

miserable.

<u>Examples</u>

Once they announced which jobs were finished, I had to live for four months with

people who were bitter, angry, and jealous. I could see their lack of motivation in

servicing the customers. Like, I saw that they would put a person on hold and

never answer their questions. This was detrimental to my job in the future. We

could have lost a lot of clients because of their attitude. I just wanted them to go.

During the restructuring I was assigned to a new division. At the first staff

meeting I realized I was the only new staff person in an office where 60 people

had been let go. You can imagine how they felt when they saw me. It was very

difficult, they would not accept me. It took about six months before they were

open. For me it was a very cold and anxious time.

The atmosphere was tense in our office because of the reorganization. My boss was going to be moved to a different area and I was slotted to take her position. She went to our boss and told him she did not think I could do her job, I was too young. I could no longer trust her. The three-month transition was dreadful because I felt engulfed by her negative waves. The whole time was dreadful for me because of her attitude.

During the changes, through political maneuvering we got a new boss in our section who knew little about our department. At the first staff meeting she started yelling at a colleague who disagreed with her. Her attitude was so off-putting. This was the beginning of a miserable time. It was extremely hard working for someone who was arrogant. I did not respect her and I was miserable.

Participation in decision-making/exclusion from decision-making. (7 facilitating, 3 hindering) Participants were assigned to a team that dealt with change management, were asked directly for their opinion, or put forth ideas that were well received. The contrast is when participants were not consulted and the changes were imposed from the outside, improvements were documented by evaluation committees and tabled by management, or ideas were rejected for political reasons. The relatively few events in this category could be due to the fact that participation in decision-making is included in other events as when many received new positions on merger teams. Exclusion in decision-making was often part of what was described as leading up to an event. Outcome was encouragement and sense of control versus disappointment and giving up.

Examples

After the merger all personnel had to be reassigned to jobs. I received two calls
asking me if I did have the choice between this and that, which would I choose? I
knew I would only receive one offer and it was a relief to have input in the
process.

In the restructuring process my boss was very flexible. I could initiate changes
myself. I walked into his office and asked to implement a specific procedure to
facilitate our work responsibilities. He was all for it. This gave me a sense of
control and participation. I really enjoyed this time.

Some of the changes the consultant proposed and tried to implement, we had
already tried. At first we tried to go and tell them. I did a presentation to the
committee on our previous efforts. They did not care and did not listen and of
course halfway into implementing their ideas they had to chuck it. I don't try any
more. They do not want help, they think they know it all.

Destabilizing moves/stabilizing moves. (8 hindering, 1 facilitating) Participants were
required to change offices, move to other buildings or move to another country because
of restructuring. These moves had a destabilizing effect because they were frequent,
sometimes poorly planned, or very sudden. Outcomes of these moves were feeling
unnerved, loss of confidence in management, resistance to change, fatigue, and
disappointment. The outcome of the facilitating move was a feeling of continuity.

<u>Examples</u>

My company moves very fast. Changes are constant. I had to move offices and I was resisting it. I realized it was the fifth move I had made in five months. I never felt settled and this was very uncomfortable.

I arrived at what was to be my new office, boxes in hand ready to move in only to find that the previous person had not yet moved out. I had to work out of the hallway for a couple of weeks. I finally got in, but two months later I had to move again and the same thing happened. I lost most of my confidence in management's ability to pull off the new structure.

There was a decision to centralize operations. This meant that our department had to move to the central building. When our department was moved, they put us all on the same floor, which was very unusual. This helped me in the transition tremendously because we were able to retain the unity of our department. We had all been very afraid to lose that.

<u>Experiencing devaluation of company.</u> (7 hindering) This category involves experiences in which the participant's respect for the company is diminished. Participants were once proud to work for a company and felt congruent with the company's image and values. However, through a series of restructuring events this attitude changes. The range of incidents involves becoming aware of public opinion, a change in corporate

values, and the manner in which change was orchestrated. Devaluation resulted in de-motivation and thoughts about leaving the company.

Examples

One thing that has always kept me going was knowing I worked for a great organization. Many thought it was the best run. Unfortunately the last two re-organizations have changed public opinion. I overheard a conversation about our sorry state of affairs and weakness of our staff. Since then I have been de-motivated to adjust to all the changes because I no longer feel proud of our organization.

I was working at a site that was threatened with closure. Although my job was secure I knew many were struggling. I read in the local newspaper about all the political agitation caused by the closures. I felt very dissatisfied with my company and began to think about leaving.

Shaping Work Environment Cluster

This Cluster includes various events that were initiated or carried out by the participant in response to difficult or unacceptable circumstances. These events generally facilitated adaptation and had an influence on the work situation. The nine categories in this Cluster denote incidents that include various inner processes and various external influences set in motion by events that happened in the work Cluster as a result of the restructuring.

<u>Discovering and adhering to a firm guideline.</u> (38 facilitating, 1 hindering) This

category involves incidents in which the participant discovered a personal directive to

guide how they responded in the work environment. During a particular incident in the

work environment, the participant found it necessary to rely on a personal guideline that

helped him/her cope with the new situation. Sometimes the personal guideline was a

conviction that had been established in the past and sometimes it was a guideline that was

discovered at the moment when the person needed to cope. The guideline was the result

of an internal reflection followed by a conscious conviction. It involved a type of self-

understanding, sometimes taking the form of a boundary, for the purpose of directing the

participant's interaction at the office. The incident denotes a type of caring for self in the

changed environment. In a changing atmosphere with growing demands, establishing

directives was a personal attempt to be congruent and balanced. The guideline was

consciously established during the corporate change as a response to new working

conditions and demands.

The guideline was established to help cope with new bosses, colleagues, new job

offers, layoff situations, and excessive work. Critical incident themes in this category are:

(a) time management, (b) choice of focus, and (c) treatment of others. Establishing a

guideline resulted in a sense of relief, feeling prepared to face the situation, feeling

protected, relief from stress, feeling confident, feeling directed, and keeping sane.

<u>Examples</u>

In the restructuring I was assigned to a new boss. He had assumed a powerful

place in the new structure and he was cruel. I saw grown men, executives, cry

after meeting with him. I remember once when he spoke to me, or rather yelled at me, I just stared at him. I told myself I would survive. I would not let a man like this ruin my career. The atmosphere was so depressing and I felt like I was in a war. I had to use this to encourage myself and it worked well.

Our company was merging with another company in another area of the world. I made it a point to think about what I would and would not do for the company. I concluded that I would not move for any new job. I needed this boundary. It gave me security when I was asked questions about my future.

Over a period of two years my company had two major downsizings. After the first one I remember thinking, never keep your eyes closed. Look out for your own interests and stay informed of other employment possibilities because you never know. Making this guideline helped me a lot. I feel prepared and protected in an environment where nothing is sure.

All the extra e-mail and stacks of paperwork came my way after they moved my boss. This meant much longer hours of work for me. I tried to be reasonable and not go crazy. I then decided to never leave work later than 7 pm. This standard was a great help. I limited myself, otherwise I would have suffered more in the long run if I would had gotten eaten up completely.

Three big changes happened in one year, a new system, a new boss and new internal procedures. I was sliding down into depression and could not stop myself. My colleague had a nervous breakdown and he had less responsibility than I. I then promised myself I would not let myself go that far. I would get help. This idea saved me and I felt a huge relief from the stress just to know I would get help when needed.

I had set firm boundaries on my time because the merger can be a logistical nightmare with two e-mail systems and two computer systems. For instance, when I set a meeting I set a firm date. When a committee member tried to change a meeting date, I said "No, send someone in your place". I was firm, otherwise I would have gone crazy trying to go back and forth between two worlds. I kept sane this way.

Early on in my career I realized I needed to take coffee breaks. So, when the new structuring involved enormous quantities of work I never let it interfere with taking a break, no matter how urgent. The breaks helped me tremendously because it was like a breath of fresh air in a claustrophobic atmosphere of confusion.

I'm still here after we have been put into bubbles, clusters, work groups, or whatever the hell they call the new plan because before I joined this organization I developed a clear and purposeful vision of how my specialty can further the

mandate of this organization. I have put up with almost everything. This directive helped me ride the changing waves of management.

During the first decentralization I realized the necessity of keeping abreast of all the research as well as the structural changes. This time I blocked time each day just to read and integrate the most recent research and info. This way I was never caught off guard. I felt a great security in this and so did my staff.

It seems funny to say but my clothes have always helped me cope. During all the upheavals at work I always wore something I felt looked great. I remember one morning, I had hardly slept the night before because I had a big meeting. So, I put on a beautiful suit, I looked great. I knew I could face the day, and I did.

The changes made all things uncertain. One afternoon I watched people in the office shout at each other, slam doors, and slam down phones, I reminded myself of my desire to always respect others. So, I spoke calmly and respectively to others even when they were rude. This helped me to know I was a sane adult in a somewhat crazy environment.

The one hindering incident in this category is cited here.

I never thought anger should be shown at the office. So I did not show my anger during the merger where I should have. I dealt with it in the private context by

going home and eating a lot. This was not helpful because I was still very angry and feeling very bad because I put on so much weight.

Making a beneficial change in the work setting. (30 facilitating) This category denotes a specific change set in motion by the participant that was constructive and advantageous at work. The range of incidents include: (a) shortening or reorganizing work time, (b) designing or implementing a new work procedure, (c) increasing staff, and (d) allying with colleagues. Increased workload, information overload, or chaos in work environment are the environmental factors that led to these incidences. Outcomes of making the change were relief, freedom to do work, and stimulation.

Examples

The merger took over a year to finalize and the office was always very busy. I decided to go into work on the weekend. I could work without someone knocking on my door telling me I'm not working enough. Creating the flexible schedule was a big boost.

The reorganization caused a lot of confusion and I had to work 10-12 hour days. I knew I had to work less and part-time did not exist. I pushed my boss and I finally got 80% time. I then thought, they do not own my soul. It was a new life for me.

Because of the reorganization I had inherited several jobs and received money from different budgets. Everyone wanted his or her money's worth. So, to cover

my ass I began to keep a daily chart that kept track of every hour I worked on each project. I have something concrete to show. This took a huge load off me, as I could never remember the specifics and I then had all I needed.

When the internal system was finally installed we began to receive incredible amounts of information. I tried to keep up, but it was impossible. One day I deleted 150 e-mails. I still delete most today. It felt like a big weight had been lifted. If the info was really important, it came around again.

The reorganization included cutbacks in staff. After about six months I was so overworked that I put in a formal request for an assistant. It took over a year to get approval. When she came, it was a huge relief. Only then did I feel I really could accomplish my tasks.

With all the changes that were thrown at us, I decided to focus on the client. Our team decided the same thing. About one and a half years ago we decided to not accept all the changes they threw at us. We as a group would throw out the bad ideas. Our boss supported this. We changed the way we did our work. This has made a big difference because we had focus and this was a huge relief and helped me manage all the change.

Making a decision concerning work. (22 facilitating) Participants benefited from formulating and taking a decision on how and why they would continue on in the work

environment. This decision was self-directive and pertained only to self. The category "participation in decision-making" is dissimilar because participants in that category were involved in decisions concerning overall change strategy and implementation. In this category the decisions have to do with the internal personal reactions to the imposed changes. These decisions were made in response to particular negative circumstances, to create clarity and purpose. Making the decision itself resulted in relief, comfort and provided clarity in undefined circumstances.

Examples

Working in a drastically changing environment affected my sense of security and existence. One day I made a decision – do your best and prepare for your near future. I chose a clear line of work and decided to return to school part-time. This decision gave me a thread that connected all the various things I had to do. This was a great comfort, to have a clear vision.

The reorganization lasted a couple of years and the whole organization was a mess. I had decided to quit, but I sat down and thought. The project had to get done in any case, someone had to do it and it would be a tough job. I decided to stick it out because it was going to be a great project. From then on, the more the blocks came, the more I was determined to find a solution to get through the problems.

I had been working 12-hour days for almost a year to help orchestrate the changes. But it became too much with no end in sight. I asked my boss if I could be put on 50% time. She said 'no', we all work as a team, all or nothing. I felt trapped but then decided to not stay for long, maybe six months. I would look for another job in the company. I felt quite relieved and happy the end was in sight.

Refusing exploitative requests. (14 facilitating) Participants said 'no' to abusive demands or manipulative situations encountered in the work environment. The demands and situations included extraordinary quantities of work, extended working hours, extensive travel and extended responsibilities. Participants felt pushed to set a limit because the work demands were ever increasing. The outcomes of these events were relief, gaining a sense of control, feeling congruent with self, and clarity of task.

Examples

After the reorganization there was so much work coming from three different directions I had to learn my limitations. One night when I was in the office until nine, tired and unable to focus any more, I finally said to myself, "Tomorrow I'm saying 'no' to any more work, I can't do it. I've reached my limit". No one liked this when I told them, but it gave me more sense of control and the relief I needed.

In all the scuffling of staff, some ended up in higher positions. They were incompetent. I received several reports on my desk from a colleague. They were incomplete because she did not know what to do and she hinted that I should fix them. She had just gotten a higher grade than I. However, she was not my boss. I

put the reports back on her desk. I focused on my work. This really helped me to
set limits on others using me. I did not want to become resentful.

The new director changed the plans for a big project already in motion. The
biggest problem is that our new IS would not handle the demands he made. I
spoke out strongly at the first meeting. I told him we would not be able to do it.
No one else would speak up to the director even though they agreed with me. I
had to speak my mind, this made it all much lighter for me.

Experiencing a challenging task. (14 facilitating, 5 hindering) In this category the
participant obtained a new task or assignment that required him/her to do something
brand-new or increase the quantity of a regular task. Although the incidents required
more work, the outcomes were enthusiasm, a feeling of growth, and motivation. In
contrast, hindering incidents produced an outcome of anxiety and feeling overwhelmed.

Examples

There was a new task force that began to implement changes. I was given a new
mandate to develop a new system to track how money was being spent in each
division. I was very enthusiastic because my dormant computer skills were used
and I love requiring more efficiency so we can do our jobs better.

We were completely reorganized. Our section in essence became its own
business. The complete responsibility was heavy at first and challenging, but we

learned that we can make better decisions for our own responsibilities. This freedom and challenge I like a lot and it helped to make the transition.

They changed the way they measured our progress. My new sales goal was set for 3.4 million every three months. This was almost double what I had been previously assigned. It seemed an impossible task. I was so anxious and it made me feel like a bad salesperson when I only made one million the first month.

The small number of hindering incidents in this category may be due to the fact that many new challenges took a long time to assimilate and master. Therefore, the challenge becomes more and more difficult and the emphasis of the incident is better categorized as enduring a negative state.

Accomplishing a task/blocked from accomplishing a task. (4 facilitating, 4 hindering) Participants either completed or were hindered from completing a work responsibility. Precipitating events for hindering incidents included disgruntled co-workers and inadequate support systems. Outcomes were either hope, pleasure and enthusiasm or frustration and discouragement.

Examples

Our re-structuring groups worked very hard to come up with accurate evaluations and suggestions for improvements. I did the finishing touches and printing of the document which compiled all their work, and finished the task. I was hopeful that

we had produced something that was for the good of all. I was very enthusiastic to see our finished product.

My colleagues became less and less enthusiastic about the new work coordination system. I sent a mass e-mail out to them to get some necessary information for a report. They took a minimum of three weeks to reply. I could not get my work finished. This made me look bad and it was very discouraging.

Creating a work position. (10 facilitating) Participants were proactive in designing or obtaining a work position. In the reorganization process, projects and departments were often eliminated. Clarity of task was left undefined until the new structure was more fully implemented. Instead of waiting to see what fell their way, participants were proactive and sought specific work positions. The range included writing one's own job descriptions and requesting specific job factors. Outcomes were security, focus, and self-satisfaction.

Examples

The organization made quick changes without a finished idea of group tasks. I had had good projects going before the big change in staff. So, I made out my own job description. I was very pleased that it was accepted. This was the only way I kept reasonably focused and motivated.

My project was cut. They were reducing staff and I was told there were no jobs available. But I did hear about an opening. I asked for it and received it under much duress. I wanted this position because it was a chance to stay with the company. I was very pleased that my efforts paid off.

Creating space to work. (10 facilitating) Participants initiated an intervention so that they could gain liberty to do their work. Restructuring inhibited work from being accomplished because of inadequate office space and oppressive threats regarding staff reduction. Space in this category refers to physical space as well as emotional and intellectual space. Incidents included gaining actual space and gaining freedom from threats. Outcomes were freedom to do work and feelings of relief.

Examples

With the reorganization they were trying to get rid of some of my staff. Our department is very important because it generates substantial funds. At one point I delineated this to the new director and this got him off my back about letting people go for about three months. I could finally focus on our projects.

We were too crowded in our office after expansions. I negotiated to rent new office space. I got it. Finally, I had a quiet space to think and do my job.

Dissociation from a bad person. (4 facilitating) Participants cut off relations with an associate who was abusive or unethical. In the changing work environment with the threat of job loss, participants took the risk to dissociate from negative people for their

own ethical reasons despite the possible consequences. Outcomes were self-satisfaction, freedom and feeling safe.

Examples

There were many changes in our company and no other jobs available for a while. But I decided to confront my boss. I would not put up with his abusive behavior any longer. In our staff meeting he typically began to systematically annihilate each of us around the table. When he came to me I spoke first. I told him his behavior was unacceptable and that I was leaving. He was stunned. I left the meeting feeling victorious and free for the first time in months.

I was on a committee that produced a newsletter. The whole committee, except one member, was moved into other roles. I received a newsletter supposedly produced by this committee. The info was accurate, but the committee did not exist. The last member did this to retain his budget through false advertising. I was disgusted and I totally pulled back from this guy. I cannot be associated with this lack of ethics.

Types of Support Cluster

This Cluster encompasses six categories that denote various types of assistance, collaboration, or backing experienced by the participants. These different types of support helped participants to deal with the confusion about the necessities of restructuring, job

uncertainty, and increased workload. Support came from both within and outside the work environment. Receiving support generally facilitated adaptation.

Receiving personal support/not receiving support. (31 facilitating, 4 hindering)
Participants were given individual and specific help from a particular person or group.
The range of experiences includes: (a) encouragement from boss, (b) protected by boss,
(c) assistance from colleagues, (d) concrete help, (e) nominated for new position by boss,
and (f) wife/friend listened. Outcomes of facilitating incidents were reassurance,
motivation, liberation, courage, and relief.

Examples

We had received another new directive from upper management. I was quite fed up, because all the changes they proposed made more work for us. After a staff meeting my boss came in to my office and told me not to take it all so seriously, she said, "You must enjoy life". This relieved me and I could laugh at the situation.

The focus became decentralization and this threatened our section. My boss called me into his office and told me not to worry about this, he would protect us and take the fire. He was very bright and he did protect us. This was freeing and we survived the first wave of change in tact.

A new project was initiated by the director to improve our work and consolidate communications. I wanted to be part of the steering committee, but I wanted the

backing of the workers' support group. They gave me their full support. This gave me the courage I needed as the only non-management member, and I needed it.

I had almost quit because of frustrations with the new computer system. I could never get my work done. I needed help with this system and Computer Services would give nothing because they had wanted another system. One computer-savvy colleague heard about my problem and came to help. He actually helped me for two days. He was a lifesaver. I gained hope again and stopped beating my head against the wall.

The changes at work were intense and I needed to talk through my struggles with someone outside the office. My friends were a great help. One evening I spoke with a friend on the phone for 45 minutes. Once I was able to get all my frustrations out, I felt much better.

My wife is an important factor. A couple of years ago everything was changing and unpredictable at work. I would go home from the office and she was an even line. At home she kept things predictable. She provided a calm each day in the midst of a big storm. This helped a lot. She gave me a place where I could relax.

When the merger happened and insecurity set in. I shared my concerns with a group of men with whom I meet weekly. They listened and prayed for me. This

was enormously helpful. I'd say that it was the best help. The freedom to share, and prayer, lightened my load.

Hindering incidents in this category reflect a time when those who usually provide support did not or could not provide support. This includes betrayal, loss of support group, and poor management. Outcomes were disappointment and de-motivation.

The section in which I worked was being cut. I met a friend for lunch, who was an ex-colleague, and he told me "Well, I knew this would happen, so I'm glad I'm already out". This was unfair. I had helped him get his new job because he was not getting along with our boss. This was a very difficult time and some friends I thought I could count on made it worse.

We got a new director that was not familiar with our department. He did not agree with the mandate I had been given by the big boss. He did everything to make my task difficult. I was happy about the changes, but he did not like the changes. It was very difficult to keep motivated and it was a long fight.

Receiving vital information/vital information withheld. (16 facilitating, 18 hindering) This category refers to incidents when crucial information about upcoming change was openly communicated versus incidents when crucial information was not forthcoming or incomplete. Outcomes for facilitating incidents were feeling comforted, happy to get the truth, feeling helped or appreciated, and relief.

Examples

The way the company handled communication was pretty good because they have a tendency to be secretive. When they announced the merger they said they expected headquarters to stay in the same place and they expected 1000 people to be let go between both companies. They gave a real sense of change in a positive way. These were not massive layoffs for the company and we were expanding our territory. This was all good news. This calmed me and got rid of my worry to know specifics.

Our company had spent the previous two years completely re-doing the corporate culture. In all we were a smooth running company. I will never forget when I heard about the buyout. I was at my fiancée's house for Christmas and I received a call from my boss. She said "I did not want you to hear it first on the news, I wanted you to hear it from me first, we were bought by another company". It was strange, I did not know what to think, but it really helped me that my boss called me personally. This took the edge off, I felt like I would get the truth.

We were all called to a general meeting. It turned out to be an announcement of a general restructuring. I realized that in the info session they were informing us at the very beginning of the process. I really liked this. Even though the info was a bit vague, I felt they showed they cared for us and this was comforting.

A video was shown explaining the beginnings of a new company structure. At the same meeting we were told the exact structure would be given through e-mail in three months. The communication was well done. I felt they were honest. I was hopeful but had some lingering questions of redundancy or would this mean just another change.

The new director kept his ideas contained. However, my boss informed me on internal affairs. He actually told me about a post that would be eliminated in my section. This information received in advance helped me to block this decision. It was very helpful.

The outcomes for hindering events were resentment, nerve-racking, anger, loss of trust, distrust, and confusion.

The new director appointed a new transition team. They worked for six months at her beck and call. A few people were called in to speak to her team, so little bits of info leaked out. But it was a time of immense rumor and never made clear to us. It was a foggy wall that was very controlling. It was horrible never knowing. It was like living in limbo and very nerve-racking.

After they announced the merger I was not sure what to do. We received a corporate newsletter each day but after a few days I saw they were pretty much

saying nothing. Although I did not fear for my job, I felt like I was on shaky ground because I really did not know anything.

While we were waiting to know how our division was to be reorganized, I was required to write a report every three days on my activities and goals for my projects. I was never given a reason why and it took the better part of the day. I cannot work long without purpose and this went on for months. I became very angry and resentful. I was disgusted at all the waste of time.

About one year after the changes were issued, an organigram was sent to everyone. I was told by a person in senior management to not take the chart literally because they were just throwing out ideas. Why were we not informed it was a draft, it was issued on the corporate internet as the chart. I was very irritated. It was very hard to know what to trust and this made it very hard to work.

Two weeks after we had done a big protest to management because they did not inform us of changes, another article came out in a magazine about the restructuring of the company before the employees were informed about the changes. I was so angry and so were the others. In fact one whole division stopped production for the day and our section stopped working as well.

<u>Experiencing camaraderie/experiencing estrangement.</u> (12 facilitating, 3 hindering)

Facilitating events in this category refer to incidents when the person felt a sense of comradeship with fellow-workers through sharing mutual problems or taking joint action. Hindering events included experiencing distance or detachment from fellow-workers. Taking time to speak with colleagues in or outside the work environment was a frequent condition or precursor to these events. Outcomes were feeling helped and uplifted versus feeling tension and depression.

<u>Examples</u>

In the midst of all the changes were many practical problems. One thing that really helped was that our small working-group met together any time anyone of us had a problem. We helped each other, a kind of camaraderie, no heated competition. This was a big boost for me. It helped me cope with the problems.

The merger process added many hours of work. It was very stressful. What really helped was that I spoke with friends at work. One night our section all went out for a beer. This was great. We had camaraderie and we complained and bitched and got it all out of our system. This was a big help.

Over time, we became afraid of what would happen to our jobs with the merger. We all made a strike. We took action together, very public to get local authorities to lobby for our rights. It was very calm. We did it to say we want help and this created camaraderie. It had no effect on upper management, but this was a good

way to live together through the tough time. It was important to be together and not be passive.

Those working on change committees had to sign a secrecy statement. They could say nothing internal or external. One day I remember meeting with a friend and colleague who had signed this paper. We just pretended friendship. It was tense and difficult. In this atmosphere even friends were split. It was everyone for himself and this was lonely.

Receiving affirmation for job competence/receiving disaffirmation for job competence. (10 facilitating, 3 hindering) A direct comment about capability or know-how was given to the participant. Know-how included relational skills as well as technical skills. Outcome for facilitating incidents was encouraged and given a boost versus the hindering outcome of feeling inept.

Examples

After three different bosses and many other changes, more and more people came to me for help. One day the new co-director came to ask me a question. He told me he knew I had all the threads of what needed to happen because I had been there from the onset. This was a great help for me to have continuity and encouraging that someone noticed. It was an encouragement that helped with all the work I had to do.

Our company had closed one office and soon another would close as well. Through all this I had done many things. My boss told me that it was good that I had come up from the bottom. He said he had noticed that I could speak with anyone at any level of the company and this was appreciated. This was a great encouragement. I then felt my diverse background was an asset, not a hindrance.

I was assigned to a merger team early on in the merger. My boss called me into his office and told me that he trusted me and that he knew I was an asset to the company and that's why he had recommended me for the merger team. I was reassured and his support motivated me to work hard and do the best I could.

An example of a hindering event is:

After they let a couple of people go, I had the work of three people. Very little could actually get completed and people only noticed what I did not get completed. This was a very difficult time because I felt so incompetent when I knew I really wasn't.

Receiving advice. (10 facilitating) Participants benefited from obtaining counsel or suggestions from other people that pertained directly to their own work situation. Outcomes were relief, reassurance, and feeling cared for.

<u>Examples</u>

Our company was changing a lot and I needed some help. I called a friend who

had been in a similar situation. He told me to let go. The facts were clear. Things

had to change. His advice was really helpful. I relaxed, did the right move and had

a clear conscience.

When I saw my friends who work in organizations that are also changing I got

great input and feedback. One evening, a friend said something that was most

helpful. She said, "Take one day at a time and don't ask too many questions, there

are no answers". This advice really helped me a lot. I stopped myself from being

plagued by unanswerable questions. It gave me relief.

<u>Receiving assurance about job/receiving a threat about job.</u> (6 facilitating, 5 hindering)

This category denotes incidents when the participant was given some guarantee of

continuing to have work. Versus, gaining a warning that work may not be available.

Assurance and threats came directly from a specific individual, indirectly from general

change conditions, or from openly published information like an organigram. Facilitating

outcomes were relief, comfort, and sense of security versus hindering outcomes of worry,

fear, anger and depression.

<u>Examples</u>

My company began to reorganize and I felt vulnerable. I finally went and spoke to

my new boss about this. I found out he was thinking about giving me a higher

position when the changes were made. This greatly reduced my fears and I was reassured. It would have saved me a lot of grief if I had known sooner.

After four months of uncertainty about how the changes would affect me, our boss showed us a video of the CEO who explained the whole strategy. I realized that my job would continue more or less unchanged and we would move in parallel to the overall changes in the organization. I felt quite good and reassured after the video.

My job had been made redundant by the restructuring. When I went to consult with Personnel about where I would next be assigned, the man told me "You know, you are an old bird now, don't expect too much". At 37, the height of my career, I was an "old bird". I was furious and became a bit scared about finding a position.

The organization was doing well and adjusting to increased work. I remember the first time I heard the word 'downsizing'. I overheard my boss say this as he spoke on the phone. I felt like I had been kicked in the stomach. Nothing happened for a year, but I became afraid for my job that day.

Shaping Personal Environment Cluster

This Cluster consists of four categories that denote participants' efforts to establish a beneficial posture in response to the adaptation demands of the work environment.

Incidents take place within the person or in environments other than the office. Categories include processing personal beliefs and taking external action. All events in this Cluster facilitated adaptation.

Realization of a positive perspective. (52 facilitating) These events involved a moment or short process of reflection that resulted in the person drawing a conclusion that had positive content. Subject matter included positive thoughts about abilities, self, financial position, quality of life, future, and ability to deal with the work situation. The range of incidents includes: (a) affirming a spiritual or philosophical perspective, (b) a moment of reflection, (c) self-talk, and (d) recognizing a perspective learned from life. These positive conclusions helped to reorientate and center the individual in the changing and unstable environment. Outcomes were liberation, relaxation, comfort, took the edge off, focused, inspired, clear-minded, self-confidence, encouragement, happiness, and feeling of being able to face whatever comes.

Examples

My faith in God was a source of strength last year when everything was in turmoil in the office. In the morning I would look up and remember that God is beyond time and space. This helped to keep each day in perspective. I would be reminded that this difficult time would end and life would continue. This was reassuring.

The changes at the office were so constant and abusive that I experienced a breakdown. During my convalescence I read a book. It spoke to my soul and

somehow I felt kinship with the author. I realized I was not crazy, the work

system was crazy. This helped me to have courage to face the worst again.

I knew that with all the changes that I may be doing something different than I

had been. This was unsettling. I sat in my office and reflected on my worth to the

organization. This reminded me that I knew my stuff. I relaxed and somehow

knew I would land on my feet.

I was speaking with some people in my office who were complaining about the

changes, saying they were too drastic and difficult. It seemed exaggerated. I

suddenly realized that they did not know that suffering was a part of life. I thought

knowing this must help me because, even though it was not easy, I realized I did

not consider it bad. I was not as frightened as they were. I knew I'd live through

it. I felt confident and prepared.

There were several months of insecurity before I knew if my contract would be

honored. I was driving home one day and I said to myself "You have invested

well, have no debts and would receive substantial unemployment, if it came to

that". Felt relaxed after that and began to focus on other things. The anxiety had

subsided.

The changes seemed to bring out ruthless juvenile craziness all around. Even my

boss was acting like a 10-year-old bully. One day I left the office and dashed

home to play with my real children who love me. I suddenly realized my life was

very full and happy outside work. This kept the craziness of work contained and in perspective. I was glad to be fulfilled in some way.

In the midst of all the uncertainty at the office, all the changes, the new staff and the termination of a lot of posts I had to look at my options. I reflected on all my fallback positions. I knew several places I could get a position immediately. This made me feel happy. This was my safety net. I could remind myself when I felt overwhelmed.

People were always speaking about their woes and fears about the reorganization. I remember there was a moment when I realized that most of the people were afraid of hard work. They had had it relatively easy the last few years and they were resentful and afraid. I am from a working class background and I'm not afraid of hard work, I even expect it. I realized it was an attitude that helped me when the going got tough, I could get on with it.

There was constant change and constant threat of job loss for over a year. I decided to not let my self-esteem get affected by this. Each morning I reminded myself about my experience and talents. I told myself not to think of job loss or failure. This helped me plod on. It helped me to keep a positive focus.

I was moved half-way into an office and was working in the hallway on my computer. There was lots of noise and distraction. I stopped myself from complaining and said to myself "Just do your very best, it will pay off". I

encouraged myself and it worked. I got a lot of work done and when we reorganized again several months later I got a new position.

My own personal history influences me each day. I was attacked and almost killed in my early 20s. It took me months to survive. Each day in all the confusion and change in the office I know I will survive, I have before. I tell myself "you will survive". This is a comfort and a type of motivation I went by.

Preparation for change. (9 facilitating) This category involves taking a course or attending a conference to train oneself to better manage the changes imposed at the office. Participants were forward-thinking and proactive. Outcomes are confidence and feeling prepared.

Examples

The changes in the office were drastic and I was really struggling. I went to a conference where I learned how to face my enemies. The conference changed my life. I returned to work and was no longer afraid. I had new skills to deal with all the nastiness.

Our company closed my section and I had to bide my time until another post was opened. I took a computer class. I developed skills I knew I would need. This also took my mind off all the chaos at the office.

<u>Initiating a change outside of work.</u> (16 facilitating) This category denotes a specific change set in motion by the participant in their life outside of the work environment. These changes were constructive and advantageous and helped the individual to deal with the changes at work in a specific manner. Although these changes took place outside the work environment, they were initiated in response to the changes happening at work or regardless of the uncertain work environment. The range includes new activities, new choice of living conditions, or a change in intimate relationships. Outcomes are freedom, refreshment, and distance from problems at work.

<u>Examples</u>

Our company was downsizing. My job was not threatened but it was a tense time. I began to go to church. This made a new life for me. It gave me a new perspective. This was very refreshing.

When the merger was announced we were looking to buy a house. We decided to wait for obvious financial reasons. After nine months and new delays in finalization, I told my husband, we have to get on with our lives. So we said screw it and we signed a contract to buy a house, but we made sure we had an 'out' if I got laid off. It felt good to get on with life, I was no longer on hold.

At the time of the massive restructuring at the office I made a big change in my life. I split with my boyfriend of five years and I took a flat on my own. It was

good and a lot of energy was concentrated on my private life. My work took second priority. I did not live the changes at work so strongly as other people.

During the merger we were asked to work a lot, but for what? We did not know what was going to happen. It was too much at times. I needed to clean myself out, so I decided to begin sailing. This was the freedom and freshness I needed.

Engaging in an activity outside of work. (9 facilitating) Participants benefited from engaging in fun or productive activities outside the work environment. These events occurring outside the scope of work had a positive effect on facilitating adjustment to the changes in the work environment. Outcomes were relief from stress, pleasant distractions, and refreshment.

Examples

Our company was bought out. During the really intense time I went to my daughter's house to help with remodeling on the weekends. I would suggest this to anyone. All the labor and wallpapering were therapeutic for me. We also achieved a beautiful finished product. A great stress-reliever. I went often.

The restructuring process added many hours of work. I needed breaks. I went out to dinner with some friends and another couple. It was a total break and gave my mind a rest. This was a refreshing and important part of my life.

<u>Reaching Out to Others Cluster</u>

Participants were proactive towards others in the restructuring environment. They made personal efforts to assist their colleagues and develop good working relationships. The six categories in this Cluster have a wide range of content. Reaching out in one form or another facilitated the participant's adaptation. Each specific category contains a relatively small number of incidents; however, they are varied enough to warrant separate classification.

<u>Giving empathy.</u> (9 facilitating) Participants listened to others and offered advice to colleagues in distress. Participants took an open posture to be available to their colleagues and used this as a tool to assess personal needs in the work environment. Outcome was a feeling of having helped themselves and satisfaction about helping.

<u>Examples</u>

For the first six months after the new director came, there was tension all around and people were terribly upset. A colleague came into my office to speak all about the changes and he began to cry. I tried to comfort him. I liked to offer a listening ear. It did me good to listen and people always seemed to find their way to my office.

I spent a lot of time listening, to try and help people change. When you have to be part of the change you have to listen to what your workers have to say. I was sent to an area that was not able to make a transition. I listened to people for two days

and then made the recommendations. You must pick up on the small things. If I jump to conclusions, it is another way to make a big mistake. It felt good to be able to help.

The changes were drastic and it helped a lot that we respected each other. My colleague came into my office to try and explain a problem. He looked so tired. I just looked at him and told him to forget it and go home and play with your kids. He does the same for me. When it is all too much, it helps that we both really listen to each other. I am really happy to be a help.

During the continuing period of change, I became part of a staff representative group. I could hear others' problems and try to help. This really helped me. It felt good to participate in this real and concrete way.

Using humor. (7 facilitating) Participants used humor in a specific incident. Humor was used in an ongoing way to help fellow-workers and in specific situations to help facilitate a task. Humor produced outcomes that included relief of tension, enjoyment, fun, and keeping things in perspective.

Examples

During the difficult time of uncertainty I would send out a joke or three once a week on our internal net to my colleagues. It helped, the humor. It helped us look after each other, break the tension, and keep it lively and fun.

The merger teams took a lot of time. When you are in eight-hour meetings in a closed room, humor helps. One time our team leader brought in these oversized sunglasses and made everyone put them on so we could get a broader expanded vision. We had a very hard task and this made it fun. It relieved the tensions.

Forming a relationship. (8 facilitating) This category includes incidents in which the participant actively began to develop a relationship in the work environment. During the restructuring these relationships provided an anchor in the changing work environment and provided a vision for good working relationships in the future. The outcomes were pleasant surprise, good feelings, respect, and feeling encouraged.

Examples

Our department was moved to corporate headquarters after having had an independent location. During the first week at headquarters I went to a meeting with corporate staff. I met one colleague that was full of ideas about coordinating our work. This relationship was enriching and improved the quality of working-life. I was surprised how great it was to have a new working relationship. I was excited.

The changes came from top management. But I still have to work with factories to get our product out. Just after some big changes I had to place a new order. I could have ordered the factory to just do it, we are a big customer, they would not argue, but instead I explained the whole new thing, the man felt respected and I

was building a relationship that would insure I got what I needed for my customers. I felt I did the job in a respectable way and this way I can feel good about myself.

Looking out for others. (4 facilitating) Participants acted on behalf of a colleague to try and preserve their position from elimination. Such action generally took the form of writing a letter to management, explaining the need to retain the post and the person. Outcome was feeling relieved they could help.

Example

With all the changes happening I heard they were going to eliminate a post in my department. I knew the person and wanted to help. I wrote a letter to the director to encourage retention of the post. I felt good about this because I felt I had some power to change the situation and this was a relief.

Providing practical help. (4 facilitating) Participants gladly gave advice and concrete practical assistance to colleagues. The outcome was feeling satisfied.

Examples

I have experienced a lot of changes in our company. I meet weekly with a young director to mentor her. Once she came asking if her idea was worth presenting to them. I told her to go for it. It was a great idea and she just needed some encouragement. It does me well to help her, it encourages me. This makes all my adaptation experiences worthwhile.

A consultant had re-designed our service system It was not providing adequate service and nor were the new technicians. One fellow called me for help. For three days he had been asking for help because he had to finish a project. I went immediately to help him and got him up and running in an hour. I could help in spite of the system. I felt good after that. It was good to feel helpful.

Securing work for others. (3 facilitating) Participants found new employment for workers who were let go. Extra effort was made through contacts or placement networks to secure a new job for workers. Outcome was contentment.

Example

Our company was going through drastic changes. We had to let 12 people go. I found jobs for 10 of them fairly quickly. I kept one other person on for two extra months until he found a job. This really helped me because I felt like I was doing the best I could to help people.

Chapter 5

VALIDATION OF CATEGORIES

Once a category scheme is developed, it is important to determine if the Cluster groups and category scheme are sound and trustworthy so that they can be used with confidence. Although it is impossible to attain absolute certainty as to the soundness and trustworthiness of any category scheme, it is necessary to ensure that the scheme is reasonably certain and reliable if it is to be utilized in practice. Several tests have been employed by the researcher to ensure an acceptable level of soundness and trustworthiness.

Independent Rater

One way to determine reliability, according to Anderson and Nilsson (1964), is by the percentage of agreement attained by independent judges using the category scheme. Can independent people sort events in the categories provided? Anderson and Nilsson (1964) have indicated that the necessary level of agreement is between 75% and 85% for the categories. If there is an agreement of 80%, the categories may be considered valid and reliable.

Two independent judges participated in this study. The first judge was a doctoral student in Human and Organizational Development with The Fielding Institute. The second was an independent consultant who is involved in corporate change and executive coaching.

For the first judge, a sample of 48 incidents was drawn from the pool of 543. This sample size was used because it contained two incidents from each of the larger categories and one from categories containing 10 or fewer incidents. Sample incidents were printed on cards. The judge was provided with brief descriptions of the 33 categories. The rater was asked to read the descriptions and ask for clarification when needed. Six random examples were given to enhance the rater's understanding of the categories. The independent rater was then asked to place the 48 critical incidents under the appropriate category.

The first independent judge reached an 83.6 % consensus in incident placement. Although the level of agreement was high enough for validation, the researcher interviewed the judge to determine if the reasons for misplacement warranted need for changes in the category scheme. Through discussion it became clear that slight modifications in the definitions of the categories would have prevented the misplacement. All misplaced cards were placed in categories within the same clusters. After examining why the incidents were misplaced, it became clear that several category titles needed to be sharpened, the definitions of four categories were refined, four similar categories were combined, and one large general category was broken down into more specific categories. These changes were made to increase clarity and distinction.

The second rater was given a sample of 49 incidents from the pool of 543. The same general procedures were followed as with the first judge. The exception was that this rater received the list of refined categories after the counsel of the first judge. The second rater obtained a 91.8 % consensus in incident placement. During this second rating, there were four misplaced incidents. Two were between the categories experiencing a demoralizing

situation and experiencing estrangement. The other two incidents were confused between the categories preparing for change and engaging in an activity outside of work. The second rater was consulted about the misplaced cards. After the researcher explained the proper category placement for the cards, the rater remarked that the cards readily fit the categories. The judge also realized that the intention of the activity outside work (which was for positive distraction) and, the content of the disheartening situation (which was experiencing a distressing situation) were not fully taken into account when the cards were placed into categories. Fatigue was also identified as a possible factor because of the great number of categories to keep in mind while placing the cards. The reasons for misplacement did not warrant need for changes in the category scheme.

The high percentage of agreement obtained by two independent judges, 83.6% and after refinements to categories 91.8%, demonstrates that others can use the category scheme to identify incidents in a consistent and reliable way.

Comprehensiveness of Categories

A means of determining the soundness of a category scheme is to address the issues of saturation and comprehensiveness (Anderson and Nilsson, 1964). Following McCormick (1994), 61 incidents (approximately 10%) were left unexamined until all the categories were formed. When the category formation was complete, these incidents were examined and classified. All withheld incidents were easily placed in categories. Had this not been the case, new categories would have been formed until all incidents could be placed. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the categories are provisionally comprehensive. A provisional claim is made because it is always possible that a new category will be found.

Participation Rate for Categories

To determine the soundness and reliability of a category, the level of agreement between participants in the study reporting the same type of event was examined. The formation of a category takes place when the researcher recognizes a significant similarity in a cluster of incidents reported by different people. Independently, participants report the same event and this provides objectivity. If one or a few people reported a category of event, it might be dismissed or held tentatively because of the possibilities of distortion or fabrication. However, when many people report the same type of event, possibilities of distortion and fabrication diminish. Agreement among independent participants is an important test for validity and is measured by the participation rate for each category (the number of participants reporting in a category of events divided by the total number of participants).

The participation rates (see table 1 on page 55) ranged from a low of 7% (Looking Out for Others, Providing Practical Help, and Securing Work for Others) to a high of 71% (Receiving Personal Support/Not Receiving Personal Support). Of the 34 categories, the 8 categories with a participation rate of 50% or more are: Receiving Increased Workload, Encountering a Demoralizing Situation/Encountering an Encouraging Situation, Receiving a Position/Removed from a Position, Discovering and Adhering to a Firm Guideline, Making a Beneficial Change in the Work Setting, Receiving Personal Support /Not Receiving Personal Support, Receiving Vital Information/Vital Information Withheld, and Realization of a Positive Perspective. The 19 categories that have a participation rate of 25% - 50% are: Enduring a Negative State, Experiencing Negative Attitudes of Colleagues, Termination of Colleagues, Participation in Decision-

Making/Excluded from Decision- Making, Refusing Exploitative Requests, Making a Decision Concerning Work, Accomplishing a Task/Blocked from Accomplishing a Task, Experiencing a Challenging Task, Creating a Work Position, Receiving Advice, Receiving Assurance about a Job/Receiving a Threat about a Job, Experiencing Camaraderie/Experiencing Estrangement, Receiving Affirmation for Job Competence/Receiving Disaffirmation of Job Competence, Giving Empathy, Using Humor, Forming a Relationship, Preparing for Change, Initiation a Change Outside of Work, and Engaging in an Activity Outside of Work. Four categories received a participation rate of 10% - 24%, namely: Destabilizing Moves/Stabilizing Moves, Experiencing Devaluation of the Company, Creating Space to Work, and Disassociation from a Bad Person. Categories having 7% participation rate are: Looking Out for Others, Providing Practical Help, and Securing Employment for Others. Although few participants reported incidents in the categories with 25% or less participation rate, the categories are not necessarily ill-founded. All events in these categories were re-examined to see if the incidents could fit elsewhere. It was concluded that that the categories should be retained due to the clarity and vividness of the events. The events and categories were sufficiently clear and distinct to be maintained.

Expert Validation

Another test to evaluate the soundness of the categories used in this study was expert validation. This type of analysis places research into context by asking experts in the field to judge the relevance and usefulness of these categories in facilitating and hindering adaptation to corporate change. Experts are asked to apply their relevant experience to analyze whether or not the findings of a particular study are consistent with what they

have found in their own experience (Cronbach, 1971). These experts provide an important assessment of validation and soundness because they have witnessed events that the average person may not have observed. Experts can provide collaborative evidence and content validity to the results of the investigation. In this study, the researcher asked three experts (one counselling psychologist working with business clientele in Geneva Switzerland, an independent consultant in organizational development and executive coaching working with Swiss and Multinational companies, a director of human development of a large Swiss company, and one participant working for a multinational company in Switzerland) for commentary on whether or not these clusters and categories are useful to them. Their brief responses follow.

Counselling psychologist

The categories demonstrate what I have experienced with clients and that is the complexity and variety of people's experiences in adapting to change. In my experience clients find it helpful to begin to try many options in their adaptation efforts. This category scheme documents the multiple options open to people and is a helpful tool.

Consultant and executive coach

The researcher reframed the quotes/results in appropriate categories and the findings are consistent with what I found in my own experience as a consultant to a restructuring company. The findings are also very relevant to me as a person that

lived a restructuring experience. The quality and depth of the quotes demonstrate the profound experiences of those going through restructuring.

Human resource director

This is a key topic and is increasingly important for business therefore a tool like this that helps companies and individuals understand the issues that facilitate and hinder change is valuable. The categories generally make sense and reflect issues I am familiar with in the work environment. These ideas are a practical guidance for business.

Participant

Overall, I think your categories make sense and do identify the key issues employees can face during a corporate change. Quoting life examples on how to cope and/or survive to such changes can definitively help anyone who needs to adapt to them.

The comments given by the experts confirm that the categories in the category scheme were useful, reflected the adaptation experience, and valid for their work. These responses from experts add further strength to the soundness and validity of the category scheme.

Support of Related Literature

The reliability and validity of the categories were also evaluated through consistency with previous research. If a category of incidents was inconsistent with previous research, its validity was reviewed. When a category of events agrees with previous research, there

is good reason to consider it sound. To assess consistency, the categories were compared with informed opinion and previous research.

Context of restructuring cluster. Researchers agree that the work environment helps or hinders adaptation. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) in their Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) maintain that the individual and the work environment are mutually responsive to each other. The person and the environment are involved in a process of correspondence. When the environment changes drastically and is unable to modify demands to meet the needs of the person, adaptation is hindered. The Theory of Work Role Transitions (TWRT)(Nicholson, 1984; Nicholson & West, 1988) maintains that environmental factors affect adjustment outcomes. Hershenson (1996), in his model for work adjustment, states that, within the work cultural system, there are work-setting demands to which each person must adjust. Adjustment is described as the constant balancing movement that an individual makes between work demands and his or her personality, competencies and goals. This Cluster contains categories that involve the many ways personal encounters in the work environment affect the person who is trying to adapt.

Encountering a demoralizing situation/encountering an encouraging situation. Noer (1995, 1997) focused his research on the common negative feelings layoff survivors experience during and after downsizing. When unattended, these negative feelings lead to negative coping methods and hinder adaptation. The events represented in this category often involved distressing and unethical actions by management and colleagues. The work of Karasek and Thorell (1990) demonstrated that when work conditions are inhumane and collaboration with management and co-workers poor, positive adaptation is hindered. Ishiyama's Cultural Conflict Model (1995) specifies that the common

personal needs of security, comfort, and support are disrupted in various ways during cultural adaptation. The person does not feel at home unless the work environment provides an avenue of validation of these needs or they find a personal means to fulfill these needs. When the tasks a person is required to perform in the work environment do not correspond to their needs and values, dissatisfaction results (Dawis & Lofquist, 1993). Situational adjustment is necessary counteract the instability and imposed changes, especially when those changes are out of sync with a person's skills and desires (Nicholson, 1984; Nicholson & West, 1988). The satisfaction of personal needs and values has a great impact on the effectiveness of the individual's performance in the work arena.

Receiving a position/removed from a position. In the TWA (Dawis, Dohm, & Jackson, 1993; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), those in the work environment should be actively involved in finding a person who has the skills and abilities to match the requirements of a position. The right match satisfies the worker and facilitates adaptation. Work redesign that matches the worker's desires can enhance their sense of being able to cope with the downsizing and thus facilitate positive, active responses to the change (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). Shaw, Fields, Hacker and Fisher (1993) demonstrated that situations which hindered vicarious control, such as removal from a position, increased stress and strain.

Receiving increased workload. The research of Karasek and Thorell (1990) demonstrated that any increase in workload and responsibilities coupled with a decrease in personal decision power hindered adaptation and had negative effects. Typically, workers had to accept an increased workload as part of the restructuring process, with

little control over the situation. Shaw et al. (1993) describe role overload as one of the three principal stressors during restructuring.

Termination of colleagues. The manner in which the company chose to terminate contracts or inform people that they no longer had a job was disturbing. Noer (1995, 1998) identified betrayal, unfairness, and distrust as common reactions to layoffs. Events in which personal values of fairness and truth are disturbed will affect a person's ability to adapt (LaBier, 1986; Nicholson, 1984). Mishra and Spreitzer (1998) found that a lack of justice in the implementation process of change increased perceptions of job threat and hindered constructive responses to the changes.

Enduring a negative state. All incidents in this category were reported to hinder adaptation. According to Karasek and Thorell (1990), it is clear that people will try to adapt to work conditions, but when those conditions are inhumane or when negative conditions last for extended periods of time, positive adaptation is impossible. Nicholson (1984) concludes that the greater the difference required by the new work role, the greater the adaptation that is required. The developmental changes that the person may make to adjust over time can be reactionary and destructive. Events in this category often include the necessity to deal with many changes all at once. Shaw, Fields, Hacker, and Fisher (1993) found three major job stressors present in restructuring: (a) role ambiguity, (b) role conflict, and (c) role overload. This complicated mix of factors increased the stress and strain levels of workers. Nicholson (1984) has also noted that a disruptive personal event, such as a death in the family, will add distress and hinder adaptation to changes in the work environment.

Experiencing negative attitudes of colleagues. When downsizing takes place in a company, an atmosphere of general uncertainty is common. Workers often become emotionally distraught and cope with their feelings in unhealthy and unproductive ways (Noer, 1995, 1998). A general negative work atmosphere exacerbated by the negative attitudes of colleagues can hinder the worker who is trying to adapt in a healthy way.

Participation in decision-making/exclusion from decision-making. When a worker has little or no say in the decision-making process concerning their work, dissatisfaction occurs (Dawis et al., 1993; Nicholson, 1984). Shaw, Fields, Hacker and Fisher (1993) found that workplace situations that provided vicarious control, such as participation in planning the change, reduced stress and strain levels.

Destabilizing moves/stabilizing moves. Frequent moves and the manner in which they were orchestrated helped or hindered adaptation to the changes. Personal needs and values were affected by the moves. The greater the discorrespondence between needs and having them met by the work environment, the harder it is to adjust (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Experiencing devaluation of the company. When the values of a company change or are handled by management in a way that conflicts with the worker's own values, a value conflict arises. LaBier (1986) demonstrated that when a value conflict arises, it causes an internal conflict that, if left unattended, may cause a person to become emotionally disturbed.

Shaping work environment cluster. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) maintain that individuals have a responsibility to initiate in the work environment to actively change something about themselves in their ongoing attempts to seek some measure of

adjustment. According to the TWRT ((Nicholson, 1984)), personal adjustment includes redesigning the situational demands at work to meet personal and special requirements. Pritchett (1987) and Ciabattari (1988) both report that a person must personally act upon the corporate environment in time of change and become a change agent to minimize negative effects. The Cluster includes categories of events that demonstrate personal ways of shaping the work environment.

Discovering and adhering to a firm guideline. The formation of these guidelines involved a type of self-understanding that took the form of a self-directive with the purpose of guiding how the participant interacted at the office. Cusack (1991) noted that self-awareness is one of the factors that facilitate the ability to adapt in a changing work environment. This changing environment includes changes in the corporate culture (Schein, 1985). Cultural adaptation involves challenges to one's identity and identity-bound behaviors. Each person has to find ways of gaining a sense of self-congruence and validation in the new environment (Adler, 1975; Antokoletz, 1993; Bennett, 1977; Oberg, 1960; Zaharna, 1989). Making and adhering to a firm guideline is one means of self-validation, because the person acknowledges a way of relating or of taking care of him/herself that is congruent with personal values. According to Ishiyama (1995), when a person is able to validate self-worth, identity and meaning in life, the negative psychological effects of cultural adaptation will diminish. Establishing and adhering to a firm guideline are two methods that demonstrate self-efficacy and personal control. Ashford (1988) identifies them as personal characteristics that facilitate adaptation to work-related stress.

Making a beneficial change in the work setting. This category denotes a specific

change, set in motion by the participant, which is constructive and advantageous. Dawis

and Lofquist (1984) maintain that the person must be active in and on the work

environment to facilitate their own adjustment. Being a change agent is one tactic

identified by Pritchett (1987) in surviving corporate change.

Making a decision concerning work. Role confusion in a changing work environment

is common. This flux causes discontinuity and individuals must find a new

synchronization between their skills and personal desires and the work-role transitions

(Nicholson, 1984; Nicholson & West, 1988). Such synchronization calls for certain

decisions. Burns (1993) claims that a combination of making decisions, setting goals and

looking for alternatives is part of the basic survival strategy in corporate change. LaBier

(1986) found that the decisions people made, consciously and unconsciously, in response

to a changed work environment determined their adjustment outcome.

Refusing exploitative requests. The more a person has control, e.g., the ability to

refuse exploitative requests and to make the work environment more humane, the greater

the probability of his positive adaptation (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Callan (1993)

found that having a strong commitment to one's self, and a vigorous attitude toward

circumstances, could provide strategic support in dealing with corporate change. This

type of personal approach could help to precipitate events that provide self-protection

from exploitation.

Experiencing a challenging task. In this category the participant obtained a new task or

assignment that required the accomplishment of something completely new or an increase

in the productivity of a routine task. Pritchett (1987), in his corporate change survival

tactics, stresses the necessity of viewing the changes imposed as an opportunity for growth. According to work adjustment theory, changes in the work environment provide opportunities and expectations that affect role behavior and personal goals. When these opportunities match a person's skills and desire for growth, adaptation is facilitated (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Hershenson, 1996; Nicholson & West, 1988). Adaptation is hindered when the new demands are either too great or uninteresting to the worker. Adaptation is discouraged when changes are grossly incongruent with a person's desires or values, which can result in emotionally destructive consequences (LaBier, 1986; Nicholson & West, 1988).

Accomplishing a task/blocked from accomplishing a task. The importance of task accomplishment is suggested in the self-validation literature. According to Ishiyama (1995), competence and autonomy both facilitate adaptation. Competence is necessary to be able to accomplish tasks at work. One type of self-validation took place when participants reported outcomes of pleasure and enthusiasm because they were able to complete a specific task. In Ishiyama's model, helplessness hinders adaptation. Therefore when participants are blocked and impeded from accomplishing the task and helpless to change the circumstances, they reported outcomes of frustration and discouragement.

Creating a work position. Participants were proactive in designing or obtaining a work position. Ciabattari (1988) denotes actively negotiating for a new work role as a necessary strategy for successfully handling corporate change. The changing work environment filled with uncertainty and insecurity. Therefore, designing a work position for oneself would achieve job focus, validate self, enhance control, and therefore

facilitate adaptation (Ashford, 1988; Ishiyama, 1995; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Shaw et al., 1993).

Creating space to work. Participants initiated an intervention intended to improve work conditions by gaining freedom to do their work, which included an increase in actual working space and getting their boss off their back. The quality of work conditions affects a person's ability to adapt to the situation (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). When a worker is pro-active in creating changes in a work environment to enable accomplishment of work tasks, it facilitates adaptation (Burns, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pritchett, 1987).

Dissociation from a bad person. Constructive social support in the work environment is a key element in positive adaptation (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). A person will become disturbed if they adapt to a negative work environment that includes unhealthy and/destructive people (LaBier, 1986).

Types of support cluster. This Cluster encompasses six categories that denote various types of assistance, collaboration, or backing experienced by the participants. Ishiyama (1995) has identified the psychological themes of comfort and support as needing fulfillment in any cultural adjustment. Any event in which the person, attributes, or competencies are affirmed would be self-validating and therefore facilitate adaptation (Ishiyama, 1996). Perceived social support that is emotional, tangible, or informational can reduce stress and aid in coping with changes (Lazarus, 1976; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Receiving personal support/not receiving support. Shaw et al. (1988) identified social support (emotional and tangible) as a resource for coping because it has a direct influence

on the stress and strain levels of workers undergoing corporate change. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify "perceived social support" (emotional, tangible, or informational) as a helpful mediating process when deciding how to cope. In Callan's (1993) strategy for dealing with corporate change, "external resources for coping" (e.g., social support from family, friends, co-workers, and managers) also facilitate adjustment. Significant others are also part of the support system identified by the participants. Cusack (1991) identified "significant others" as a factor that influenced the ability of workers to adapt to corporate change.

Receiving vital information/Vital information withheld. As mentioned above, uncertainty has been described as the principal stressor in corporate change (Ashford, 1988). Accurate communication of vital information can decrease uncertainty and help adaptation. When information is withheld, the work environment is not responsive to the worker's needs and adaptation is hindered (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Burns (1993) includes obtaining information as one of his six survival strategies for people involved in corporate change.

Experiencing camaraderie/experiencing estrangement. Social support from co-workers is identified as an important coping factor for those living with corporate change (Callan, 1993). Karasek and Theorell (1990) have demonstrated that the amount of collaboration and cooperation given by co-workers helps or hinders adaptation. Ishiyama's Cultural Conflict Model (1995) maintains that a sense of belonging is a necessary aspect of adjustment. Social support, collaboration, and belonging can all be aspects of camaraderie.

Receiving affirmation of job competence/Receiving disaffirmation of job competence.
According to Dawis and Lofquist (1984) the work environment is actively involved in the
adjustment process. When someone in the work environment provides affirmation or
disaffirmation of job competence, they refer to the ability of the person to match the
requirements of the position. The quality of the match between the job's requirements
and the worker's personal competence will affect adaptation.

Receiving advice. Shaw et al. (1993) found that social support had a direct effect upon
job stress levels. Receiving advice is one type of social support. Advice generally
dispelled uncertainty in specific situations for most participants. Ashford (1988) found
that uncertainty is one major stressor in restructuring and any intervention to relieve
uncertainty will facilitate adaptation.

Receiving assurance about a job/receiving a threat about a job. Ashford (1988)
identifies uncertainty as one principal stressor in corporate restructuring. Receiving
assurance about a job effects stress levels because it tends to decrease general
uncertainty. Receiving a threat of job loss increased uncertainty and hindered adaptation
for the participants.

Shaping personal environment cluster. In adapting to change, one must be active in the
environment and reactive in changing something about oneself (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984;
Nicholson, 1984). Cusack (1991) found that the person's home environment influenced
their ability to adapt to changes at work.

Realization of a positive perspective. Ashford (1988) identified cognitive redefinition
as one of the coping responses used in restructuring. Burns (1993) found that thinking
positively about self and the future was an aid to managers in their own adjustment to

corporate change. Complex and expanded ways of thinking are needed for positive adaptation in the changing work environment (Dowd & Bolus, 1998a). A person's beliefs and construction of reality influence appraisal of events, and appraisal of events will determine how they will cope with a new situation (Pargament et al., 1990; Pargament et al., 1992). Events in this category indicate that family voices from a person's past in the form of positive messages and attitudes can influence and direct how that person adapts at work (MacGregor & Cochran, 1988; Ulrich & Dunne, 1986). Events in this category also included applying one's religious faith to one's attitude toward the work situation. Religious coping efforts, including religious appraisals, related positively to the emotional adjustment of people with high life-stressors (Pargament et al., 1990; Pargament et al., 1992).

Preparation for change. Individuals must actively change something about themselves to help facilitate their adjustment to the changing work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Taking a course or acquiring a new skill are ways of preparing for change through enhancement of competencies. The TWRT (Nicholson, 1984; Nicholson & West, 1988) states that a person has adjusted when their own personal development enables them to meet new demands at work.

Initiating a change outside of work. Changes were initiated in private life that helped to deal with negative aspects at work. New activities or projects that reduce the negative effects of the changing work environment have been shown to facilitate adjustment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Noer, 1998). Such initiatives provided a new means of self-validation (Ishiyama, 1995) that was not available at work, for example, religious activities (Paragament et al., 1992).

Engaging in an activity outside of work. Events that take place outside work have been found to affect people's ability to adapt to a changing work environment (Cusack, 1991). Events in this category often resulted in stress relief and distraction from difficulties caused by the changes.

Reaching out to others cluster. The categories in this Cluster delineate proactive actions on the part of workers. Adjustment is facilitated when a worker is active in and on the work environment (Dawis et al., 1993b; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). All the categories in this Cluster demonstrate that the worker felt enough self-control and self-value to help others and was not dependent on the company for intervention. Any action that breaks unhealthy dependence on the company and enhances a person's sense of internal control facilitates their adaptation to the changing arena (Noer, 1995, 1998).

Giving empathy. Participants providing an opportunity for a colleague to express their emotional reactions pertaining to the changes will facilitate that colleague's adaptation (Gabel & Oster, 1998a; Noer, 1995). Participants who extended empathy to colleagues reported that it facilitated their own adaptation.

Using humor. Pritchett (1987) delineated that keeping a sense of humor during corporate restructuring was one of several survival tactics.

Forming a relationship. Callan's (1993) coping strategy for dealing with corporate change includes "external resources for coping", which incorporates social support from fellow workers. Developing positive relationships in the office can enhance a feeling of belonging and therefore help in the adjustment to change (Ishiyama, 1995).

Looking out for others. Events in this category gave the worker a sense of control and were motivated by the person's value system. The ability to express one's values and

meaning in life is self-validating and helps to facilitate adjustment in a changing culture (Ishiyama, 1995).

Providing practical help. An employee feels satisfied and self-validated when they are able to use their competency in a concrete manner, and this can facilitate adjustment (Dawis, Dohm, & Jackson, 1993; Ishiyama, 1995).

Securing employment for others. People who valued care for others who had lost their jobs initiated events in this category. The ability to express and act on personal values in the work place can facilitate adaptation to the changing work environment (Ishiyama, 1995; LaBier, 1986).

In assessing the support from related literature, all the categories shared consistency with previous research. However, some categories are tacitly assumed but not explicitly identified in previous research. These categories are: (a) encountering a demoralizing situation, (b) enduring a negative state, (c) experiencing devaluation of the company, (d) discovering and adhering to a guideline, (e) refusing exploitative requests, (f) dissociation from a bad person, and (g) all categories in the reaching out to others cluster.

Summary

Participants responded with 543 critical incidents to the question: What helped or hindered you in adapting to the changes in your work environment? The 543 incidents were categorized into 34 categories described in Chapter 4. Several validation tests were employed in the study to determine the trustworthiness and soundness of the category system.

Chapter 6

NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS

Chapter four introduced 34 categories of incidents that hinder and/or facilitate adaptation to corporate change. This chapter presents five narrative accounts to demonstrate the meaning and action of the categories as told by the participants. These narratives place the categories within the descrided experience of the participants. The following narratives are presented as close as possible in the words of the participants. Some editing was necessary for the sake of clarity. A running commentary is included to highlight key concepts.

Narrative Account # 1

Over a period of two years there were many ongoing changes. The whole company went through a broad re-organization because we got a new general director. Then our department went through re-organization because we received a new director. This was a much more stressful time because it had a much more personal effect. The re-organization was preceded by the death of my mother and two months later the death of my father. However I tried to frame it was a very shocking experience. So, I was very much in retreat, vulnerable, not depressed, but operating at a much lower level. I've been a senior executive and don't generally feel intimidated by

superiors. But, I was intimidated by the new director and it took about one year to come through.

The difficulties brought about by the new work situation were exacerbated by difficult events in his personal life. The person endured a negative state for about a year.

I remember a very difficult interview. I was called up to the new director's office like everybody else. Each person had had a different experience so I did not know what to expect. I sat down and the first thing he said was, "I've heard bad reports about you. And I'm thinking of sacking you." It was a total slap in the face. It took all my powers of concentration to keep composure and respond in a dignified way. I remember those moments. I can see where I sat in the office. I had been in the company 10 years and I was not expecting it. Of course it was a power play going on. I found out later because he put his friend in my position. But, at the time it was too fresh for me to analyze it. All I could say was something banal and left with my tail between my legs.

The new director's maneuvering was cruel and as he re-designed the department it was a shocking and demoralizing situation for this participant.

I was re-assigned to another team. It was difficult. I made the decision to put my head down and worked very hard and nicely. At my performance review, there was

nothing he could complain about. I had made certain and was pleased. I felt this was my strongest weapon in the hostile re-organization environment.

It was difficult for this participant to be removed from his position. The new director excluded him from any decision concerning his job. To facilitate adapting to this situation, the participant made the decision to work very hard in his new situation. This resulted in a good performance review that was very gratifying for the participant. He felt he had used a good means to protect himself in a hostile environment.

Six months later we got another new director. He did not like me and was as hostile as the other. I went to him and said, "Look you have made it clear that you do not like my work. Are you expecting someone else to attend the conference and do this presentation in my place?" He said, "No, no you do it." This put enormous pressure on me because I was in the spotlight and I felt my job was at stake. So, psychologically it was a tough time.

Again the participant had to endure a negative state in this harsh arena because he experienced much pressure to perform under the thereat of losing his job.

The projects I did went right. To my surprise, a very choice job came up in my unit as the re-organization continued to take form. In my absence at a senior staff meeting my director said he wanted me to do it. That was finally a signal that gave me enormous comfort.

The participant had a new possibility to receive a prized position after having endured a difficult situation over six months. The personal endorsement by the director was a new affirmation for his job competence and very comforting after having received unjust disaffirmation for a long period of time.

> All this time, about a year, work was extremely hostile and unpredictable. I have a very supportive wife. I used to bitch at her and have a sherry. She would just listen. What I needed was a receptive audience. I knew she couldn't solve anything. This was my decompression valve and my anchor. I knew I was loved. My two sons were not involved at all with what was going on at work. So, I was able to just enjoy them without having to think of work all the time. This was a safe haven and an enjoyable time.

Emotional release was possible for the participant owing to open support given by his wife. His home provided a place of rest and positive support. At his home he felt loved and could enjoy the company of his sons. This all contributed a positive distraction from the difficulties at work.

> At the end of the year of change and threats to my job, my boss signed off a new two-year contract renewal. This gave me some concrete security from which to negotiate, even though they did not always honor contracts. I was entitled to a five-year contract. I went to my boss and said I didn't want this two-year contract, and I

want the five year one I was entitled to. I felt bold, but I wanted to defend my professional rights. He actually gave it to me. So, I went from total job threat to a five-year contract.

The participant refused an exploitative request when he contested a two-year contract offered by his boss. He demanded the five-year contract due to him. His decision to request the proper contract resulted in receiving the contract. This was a beneficial change from which he was able to enjoy some semblance of job security.

During that first year of the crazy restructuring I led a double life. What I did was try to compartmentalize my life and put up with going to work and being stuck with one set of circumstances. Then I left work at five and returned home to another set of circumstances and felt much better. I never took work home. I not only felt better, I kept sane.

Compartmentalization of his life was a decision made by the participant that allowed him to contain the negative emotions and difficulties at work within office hours. He also set a guideline to never take work home. This guideline helped him facilitate his work adjustment by giving him a break from negative work circumstances.

A lot of good things were happening in my spiritual life. I attended a good Bible study and fellowship. I could focus on them and this also helped me put up with all the crap at the office.

The activities pursued outside of work affirmed his spiritual self. His ability to focus on spiritual pursuits facilitated his ability to cope with an ongoing negative work situation.

> I also have incredibly supportive friends. They sit and listen. They would pray for me. It is so good to have friends that build you up when the world tries to pull you down. My friends built me up and that was wonderful.

His friends gave him the social and spiritual support needed to help him feel self-validated and encouraged..

> We got another new general director. A transition team was appointed. They worked for six months at the director's beck and call. A few were called in to speak to the team so little bits and pieces of information got out. But it was a time of immense rumor and change, but not clear to anyone. It was a foggy wall that was controlling. It was horrible never knowing, like limbo. It was very nerve racking.

Vital information was withheld from most people in the organization. People did not know what was happening. This made for a very tense atmosphere. It kept the participant out of synch with the tasks.

> Quite quickly I realized there was not much change I could effect. I was not at the level of director where I had to politic and maneuver. I kept my head below the wall

and this was extremely helpful during this second wave of change. Although the atmosphere was tense, I was free from worry.

Once the participant realized he was not in a position to effect much change, he made and adhered to a guideline and quietly went about his work. This position gave the participant shelter from a tense and uncertain atmosphere.

People all around me were very upset. Tension was all around. A colleague of mine came into my office to speak about the changes and they began to cry. I tried to give comfort. I liked to offer a listening ear. This did me good, so I decided to have an open door. Many people found their way to my office to receive comfort.

He gave empathy to colleagues experiencing difficulties with the changes and this actually helped the participant with his own adaptation. Because of his positive experiences helping others, he decided to let it be known that he would offer a listening ear to those in need. Many responded to his open offer of help.

It took six months before the transition team began to announce the specific changes. I told myself, "You know what to expect, you had your training in boot camp a year and a half ago with the last big change." I felt rather calm after that.

He encouraged himself by taking a positive attitude towards his own adaptation to the difficult changes that lasted for a year. The attitude, affected by the way he looked at the

situation, facilitated a more peaceful response to the new wave of change he experienced
again.

> With that first wave of change I had been moved to another committee and I had
>
> brought another new program on board. I had wrestled a huge grant to finish the
>
> project and had hired a less senior person to help me. The day that person began I
>
> was told by my boss that that person was now in charge of the program and he was
>
> moving me. Just like that. It continued to be a very hostile environment. They just
>
> lifted that program I had worked to establish. This was another great blow. I could
>
> never trust the management after that.

Although the participant had adapted to a lot of change imposed on him in abusive ways,
the next imposed removal of his special project was the coup de grace that destroyed his
morale. This change and the manner it was implemented eradicated his trust in
management.

> I was angry. I consulted the general director and said that it was inappropriate how
>
> the program was lifted. I was told to mind my own business because the director
>
> had appointed my boss and stood by all decisions made. I went to the legal
>
> department. They told me even if I won the complaint I would loose because it
>
> would be impossible to work with the director after that. I was appalled. I did,
>
> however, feel good because I spoke my mind honestly and went to all the powerful
>
> resources.

The participant refused to accept the removal of his project by his boss without taking a stand. He sought out vital information regarding his options and realized that there would be no recourse for changing the abusive removal. Because he resisted his removal through all the means available to him, he felt self-affirmed by his own attempts to protect himself, even though he did not win his case.

> I decided to check around for other jobs. I spent the next two months writing to organizations and companies that I thought would be rather exciting to work for. I was well received, but felt nothing really fit me. Because there were still many projects that would keep my interest at work, I decided to stay. This was a comforting decision, I would stay and fight. Once I made this decision, I could put up with a lot, I reminded myself that I decided to stay and it was a tremendous help.

The ongoing manner in which the changes were implemented were horrific and because of this the participant sought other work options. When he did not find any other more interesting position, he took the concrete decision to remain with his present company, accomplish the interesting projects he could, and resist the abusive atmosphere. This decision provided him with a foundation on which he could feel settled and secure, yet ready to resist the injustices he encountered. He was no longer a victim of a changing work culture.

People were moved in and out of positions. No one lasted very long if they did not

have a reasonable amount of self-confidence. I remember I used to tell myself, I am

who I am, I've done what I've done. I am at a point where I am not going to prove

myself, I have done a good job. This attitude was necessary. It gave me balance in

all the turmoil during all the change. I realized I had a limit to what I would take.

A concrete decision concerning work was made. The participant was unwilling to get

caught up in always proving himself. He took a more objective perspective on his

accomplishments, which spoke positively about the quality of his work. This more

accurate perspective kept him balanced and anchored during the confusion and upheaval

caused by the restructuring process.

The director was making so many changes I did not agree with. I came home

feeling particularly frustrated and said to my wife, "Some people are so arrogant

they think they make all the decisions and pull all the strings. I know who is in

charge, as a Christian I have an assessment of just how much we mortals are

actually pulling the strings. Much less than the big guys think." I also knew that if

God wanted me to stay it would work out. If I lost my job, He had another place for

me. This was extremely helpful for me. It kept things in perspective, I was not

"controlled" by the new director. God was in control.

He vented emotions and talked through struggles with his wife. This interaction

continued to give him a needed avenue of support. He applied his faith in gaining a

positive perspective about the issue of control. Having experienced almost no involvement in the actual decisions concerning the change process, he felt the director was controlling all changes made. His spiritual perspective diminished the uncomfortable feelings of being controlled by a malevolent director.

In the midst of all the uncertainty, all the changes, and the termination of a lot of colleagues I always kept sight of my options. I kept fallback positions that I could move to if it became too much. This made me feel happy. This was my safety net.

Even though the participant had made the decision to stay with the company, he made sure he had other options. He had found various ways to adjust to the restructuring environment. However, if the changes at work were more than he was willing adjust to, he had decided he would leave. His decisions and the options found were comforting and gave him security for his future.

Narrative Account #2

I remember when I first heard the word "downsizing". I overheard my boss say it as he spoke on the phone. I felt like I had been kicked in the stomach. Our company had been doing very well. Nothing really happened for a year, but I became afraid that day.

Even though the company was not in an obvious phase of restructuring in the form of cutbacks, the participant experienced fear for the future because she discovered that management was speaking about downsizing.

> We had grown, almost doubled in staff over a couple of years and needed a new
> building. A committee consisting of all management was formed to manage the
> project. This excluded 60% of all workers, which were support staff. I could not
> keep quiet. I requested to be a part of the planning committee. At least I asked. This
> made me feel congruent with myself.

The participant knew a committee composed of all management would not take the concerns of 60% of the working staff into consideration. She wanted to initiate a change in this situation by requesting participation in the decision making process for the plans for the new building. Making the request was a form of self-validation so she could act in a manner congruent with her values.

> Much to my surprise I was appointed to the committee. I was excited about being
> helpful in the process and representing the interests of the support staff.

Her bold request was well received and through it she had initiated a new position for herself. She was excited about being part of the change process through her involvement on the committee.

I will never forget, at one meeting of the new building committee, I saw the figures
for the amount of desks the new building would hold. It was not enough to house all
the employees. How could they plan so badly. The building committee had
sacrificed good and necessary working space for a modern glitzy design. I thought
we would again have to be in several buildings like we already were. This defeated
the whole purpose of a huge move and expense. I was horrified.

Through her work on the committee, the participant received vital information that was
very disheartening. She was shocked and appalled at the ramifications of the irrevocable
decisions that had been made. Although she could help with the moving process, she felt
her participation could not effect the good changes she had expected because the building
design was flawed.

Concurrently with all the move madness, I heard that management was forming
grassroots working groups. These groups were to evaluate all projects and give
recommendations for improvements. I was excited because it looked like they
finally wanted input from the people who did most of the work and interface with
all the projects. I was assigned a part of the coordination committee. I was very
excited about this and hopeful, like many others, I thought it would benefit the
whole company.

Although she felt her efforts in one committee were thwarted because of the limited changes possible, she did not give up hope and enthusiasm about the possibilities of taking part in the change she hoped would improve her company.

The groups worked very hard, extra hours, to come up with accurate evaluations and suggestions for improvement. I did the finishing touches on the huge document in which we compiled all the grassroots committees' work. I was hopeful and waited with great enthusiasm for the implementation phase.

She was very satisfied and hopeful, as she was able to complete the large task. Being able to be part of the decision making process in the reorganization provided hope and enthusiasm for the future improvement of the company.

Six months later I realized the director still had not taken any of the suggestions into consideration. We got no word about all our work. This was very disheartening. I had a constant knot in my stomach. It seemed that all our work was worth nothing.

The initial enthusiasm about the proposed changes was defeated when she realized all the suggestions put forth were not going to be implemented. In reality, the working committees were not allowed to be part of the decision making process, they were deceived. Positive anticipation turned in to dread, feelings of worthlessness, and resulted in a demoralizing situation.

Not only did management not implement the suggestions proposed for the needed improvements, something worse began to happen. A colleague of mine was let go and the document was used as the excuse. They had to get rid of people to make up for their mistake in the design of the new building. I felt betrayed, we never thought our work would be used against us. One and a half years later they are still using that document against us. No one trusted anyone anymore.

The work atmosphere went from excited anticipation to a demoralized state. The manner in which colleagues were let go was a betrayal of the employee's goodwill. Trust was broken from the change implemented by management. The participant endured a negative state of disappointment, loss of colleagues, and lost hope.

During all the upheavals at work, it sounds funny to say, but my clothes always helped me a lot. I always wore something I felt looked great. I remember one morning, I had hardly slept the night before. I had a big meeting. So, I put on the most expensive suit I own. I looked great. I knew I could face the day, and I did.

The participant found ways to encourage herself through the demoralizing times. She made a guideline to help herself feel good about the way she presented herself through her clothes.

The changes at the office became massive and brutal with layoffs, etc. I could have never made it without my friends. Four of us met every month for lunch. We all talk

and in the really bad times, we all had them, they just listened to me the whole

lunch. I knew they cared. They were my anchor.

Much needed personal support came from friends. They gave her time and an avenue to

vent her feelings and thoughts. This provided a self-validating anchor for her.

During that first hellish year, my husband lost his job. I was then the only one

bringing in an income. I had to hold onto the job in spite of the fact it was killing

me. I had been ready to quit. I was trapped, but knowing I could provide for the

family kept me going.

Because of the way reorganization had been managed, the participant had decided to quit

the company. Personal life events prevented her from having the freedom to leave. She

had to find new means to endure the long-term negative atmosphere at the office.

The constant changes at the office were distressing and the betrayal was too much.

My nice clothes had always helped me face the hellish days. One morning I could

not bring myself to put anything on. I sat in my pajamas all day. I had a breakdown.

I did not want to cope anymore. I was off work two months.

After having struggled with the ongoing disappointments and negative atmosphere at her

office, the participant experienced a total breakdown. She could no longer cope in a place

where the management's actions, values expressed, and overall environment were unhealthy and destructive.

> During my convalescence I read a book that spoke to my soul. Somehow, I felt kinship with the author. This helped me to have the courage to face the worst again. The mandate of our company is wonderful, how they were trying to achieve it is pure hell. I realized I was not crazy, the system at work was.

A new personal understanding was gained through information and the kinship she found in reading a book. This helped the participant find new strength to face the changing work environment. She reconfirmed her commitment to the mandate of her company. A new positive perspective was formed. She was able to separate her feelings about herself from her feelings about the crazy manner in which management change efforts were implemented.

> When I returned to work I took that book with me. A colleague asked me why I carried it around. I remember gripping it when she asked. Somehow it gave me courage just to hold on to something that inspired me.

Personal support was received by the participant through feeling kinship with the ideas presented in an inspiring book. The ideas presented in the book gave confirmation and validation to her ideas and values. It served as a type of transition object for her as she re-entered the hostile restructuring environment.

While I was away, they had replaced the boss in our section. She was the worst person I had ever worked for. She screamed and yelled like a banshee at everyone. Part of the change program was to move directors from department to department so they could get a larger hands-on view of the company. She had never worked in our area of expertise and she pretended to know everything, which made it worse. It was easier to cope with someone who was so obviously off the wall than the sneaky betrayal that had been happening. Everyone thought she was crazy so we had a lot of camaraderie bashing her behind her back. It kept the atmosphere a little lighter and all in perspective.

The participant returned to another demoralizing situation. The camaraderie she enjoyed in her department, which included sharing of negative feelings about the boss, helped her to cope with the negative atmosphere.

Again, yet another new project was launched to consolidate communications. I really wanted to be part of this steering committee after all I had experienced. But, this time I wanted the backing of all the worker support group. I needed it. They gave their full support and this gave me the courage I needed as the only non-management member of the team.

This participant had regained her hope and courage to try participation in yet another restructuring committee. To insure social and professional support, she gained the

endorsement of the official workers support group of her company. This ongoing support helped her to cope with the task of trying to effect a more positive and humane change.

The committee work was very intense and time consuming. Everyone, including my boss agreed how important this work was. I asked to be relieved of 10% of my regular work, to get some relief. The banshee boss said no. So, in essence I had two full time jobs. I was tired and knew I was not doing anything well.

Although she had a lot of support, the long hours of work wore her down and she struggled again to cope with enduring a negative state.

My best friend knew how bad it was at the office. She called me one day and told me I had to go to this weeklong conference that dealt with facing difficulties in life. Just the fact that someone cared enough to call and advise me was a big help. I knew I was not alone in trying to figure it all out.

Advice and personal support came from one of her close friends. She felt care and support and this was in itself an encouragement for her during that difficult time.

I went to the weeklong conference. I learned how to face my enemies. I practiced speaking to my boss. It changed my whole attitude about her. It was still hard, but I knew I could face her in a new way and get what I needed. I actually began to feel

sorry for her instead of myself. The conference changed my life. I went back to work and was no longer afraid.

The participant took the initiative to engage in an activity outside of work that gave her internal courage, a means to confront problems, and self-validation. This facilitated her own adaptation in the negative work arena. It was a profound experience that gave her new positive perspectives about herself and her boss.

I returned to work and was working 14 hours a day. I knew I had to work less, but part-time did not exist. I began to push my boss and I finally got 80% time. I was elated. I thought, now they do not own my soul. It was a new life for me.

The participant insisted on and gained a new part-time position. This not only gave the relief she needed it also demonstrated her new ability to confront her boss and effect a positive change in her work environment. This new positive set of circumstances gave her personal freedom after having made many adaptation efforts over a period of about two years. She had finally found a way to thrive in the difficult work environment.

Narrative Account #3

The company was in flux, as everyone knew there would be new management. When they announced the new director, I was and still am excited. She brought great new direction to us. Even though it continues to be hard work, I can work hard with all the change and new direction because we need it to accomplish our goals.

The new director and re-structuring were welcome to the participant because he believed the company needed new ideas to continue improving.

> The last director wanted to hire a person with my specialty. I was the first person ever hired. No one knew what to do with me. Everything was in chaos for several months after the new director came. I knew what I wanted to do, so I wrote my own job description and followed it. I was one of the few who had a calm place in the storm.

The participant created his own stability and direction because of the lack of concrete leadership in the first stages of the reorganization. He did not wait for direction from upper management. His own goals and objectives were created through writing his own job description and this provided focus and peace. This facilitated his own adaptation during the upheaval of the company during reorganization.

> With the reorganization by the new director came lots of new committees. I was asked to be on one of the main planning committees. I was very surprised and pleased. Because of this committee, I have known what is happening at the core of the changes. I have been able to give input that was actually accepted. I was on the inside of the changes and it felt good.

A new position was gained on a reorganization planning committee. This was helpful for the participant. He felt validated because he was given the position, received vital information about the ongoing changes, and his ideas were well received.

> At first I was very excited about my involvement on the committee. It was great until I was informed that my committee requirements were added on top of my already impossible workload. I remember I would get a headache when I thought of it. At the time it was all too much.

Initial excitement about the new committee work soon turned into disappointment. This was due to the great increase in workload and the necessity to endure long hours of work without extra pay.

> It was difficult during the committee meetings because part of the old leadership was on the new management and planning committee. We definitely needed changes and so I would put forth my ideas. I knew they were sound and some were even great. The old guard voted them all down. This was very discouraging. They were trying to hold on to their old power structure and they were holding back the whole organization.

The committee work became demoralizing, as others were not open to the necessary changes. His ideas were rejected and he was blocked from participating in a positive manner.

The committee tabled many of my ideas. I wanted good change so, I took my ideas directly to the new director. She received them and considered them. This was very encouraging, because at the time it gave me hope that real change would happen and not just cosmetic change.

The participant was determined to not be thwarted by those who resisted change. He decided to take his ideas directly to the top. His efforts were rewarded because the director received his ideas for consideration.

Severe changes began to happen. They involved budget cuts. A person in another department was let go. His work had been essential for two of my projects. I could not get them completed. I felt like I was spinning many plates on sticks and getting nowhere.

Cutbacks began to affect the participant. Some of his work came to a standstill because key people working on his projects were let go. He was blocked from accomplishing his tasks.

During this time I inherited several projects because people were let go. I then received my salary from several different budgets. All those who were in charge of those budgets wanted their money's worth. I had so much to do, I knew I had to cover my ass. I began to keep a daily chart to keep track of every hour that I worked

on each project. I knew I had to have something concrete to show. This took a great load off of me because anytime anyone asked what I was doing, I could show them.

The participant's workload increased because of layoffs. He was pulled in several directions because he had to assume work from different departments. Protecting himself was essential because he had many people who would require an accounting. To deal with this, he initiated a new system to keep track of his working hours. In the midst of an overwhelming situation the participant found a way to adapt that protected him and gave him emotional freedom to do his work.

I had been on a committee that produced a public newsletter informing the public about our work, everyone on the committee, except one guy, were moved to other roles. I remember I received a bogus newsletter in the mail supposedly produced by this committee of experts. In all the confusion of change, few knew who was where and doing what. The info was accurate, but the committee no longer existed. The last member produced this to retain his budget on false publicity. I was disgusted. I totally pulled back from this guy. I could not be associated with that type of ethic.

The participant preserved his own work ethic and maintained his integrity by dissociating with a person who was deceptive.

The work at the office became more and more crazy during the first six months. We were trying to implement a new mandate and we were all over worked. One day I

just left work early. I went home and played with my kids. I focused on them for almost two hours. Then I returned to work. I was refreshed and ready to work again. I began to do this to keep centered and motivated at the office.

Increased workload and fatigue and over work lasted for many months. The participant broke the monotony by leaving work in mid-day to play with his children. This new activity and change in routine was a pick-me-up for the participant. He began to use this activity often because it helped him get through the difficult working schedule.

Just as things were settling down with all the management changes, they installed a new information system. I was totally overwhelmed with information. In the first two days I remember I received 150 e-mails. There was no way I could adequately deal with all that on top of everything else. There were days I did not even look at my e-mail because it was too overwhelming.

Change followed by more change was challenging and disheartening. He had to endure this new influx of work. It was too much to handle and so at times he would just ignore the work sent to him through the new information system.

Over the year there was the slow decrease in staff. Because of this I received more and more e-mails. One day I went in and deleted all the e-mails that did not pertain directly to my pet projects. This was a great help. I still do that. It helps me to cope and focus.

He decided to focus and facilitate work by ignoring all information except that which pertained to a small number of projects he enjoyed. All information was deleted that did not directly apply to his central interests. This change in work procedures relieved him of work dumped on him from others and gave him freedom so that something concrete was accomplished.

> Because of staff cuts, I ended up with the jobs of three people. I knew there was no way I could do it. I put in a formal request for an assistant. I knew it would not be accepted, but it felt good to let them know how overworked I really was.

He attempted to make a positive change at work by a request for help to accomplish his tasks. This informed management that his new workload was out of bounds and he that he refused being blamed or for being unable to get the job done.

> During this time I remember everyone was so demanding. Even though I know I got a lot of work done, people only took notice of what I didn't get completed. This was a very difficult time. I felt incompetent when I knew I really was competent.

The participant received complaints and disaffirmation about his capability for accomplishing work. He did not get accurate feedback on the amount of work completed. This eroded his sense of competence and hindered his adaptation to the new work environment.

One big help was my wife. We share the same vision for my work. When I would get very discouraged she helped. One time she sat me down and reminded me of our goals and how what I was doing was accomplishing our vision. This gave me new strength to continue. I needed a boost every now and then and it really worked to be reminded of my over all goals.

Personal support received from his wife was re-energizing and kept him focused on his overall goals.

One year after I had put in the formal request for an assistant I actually received approval. When she actually came, it was a huge relief. Only then did I feel I could really accomplish my projects.

His effort to make a positive change in the work environment was actualized when he received an assistant. This new person provided freedom to complete the tasks for which he was responsible.

I'm still here after we have been put into bubbles, clusters, work groups or whatever the hell the called the next new plan because, before I joined this company, I developed a clear purposeful vision of how my area of specialty can further the mandate of this place. This was what really helped me ride the changing waves of management this last year and a half. I decided to put up with almost anything to get my vision accomplished.

The participant found specific and concrete ways to facilitate his own adaptation to the ongoing changes at his office. These adaptive events were supported and encouraged by the desire to fulfill his own personal mandate and vision he formed before the restructuring began.

Narrative Account # 4

I worked many years in this company before there were any major changes. One day we were told that management had decided to move our whole department to another city. I will never forget that time. I said to myself, "I cannot live and work in that city. I would die. I need to stay close to the countryside and in a multicultural environment. I will not go." I had to say this to myself, but this was very distressing for me.

When the change was announced, the participant listened to her own personal needs. A personal guideline was formed that reflected her personal living and environmental needs. This decision was upsetting because of the possible consequences, but necessary due to personal needs.

In my company no one rocked the boat. If you were told to move, you would move. I took a big risk. I told them I would not move and that I wanted to work for them here. I knew the risk, but I knew I had my limit. You must know your

limits. I could not betray myself. And, I got to stay in place and continue my work. I was very happy I had stuck to my need.

The participant did not compromise her needs even though she risked losing her job. The company responded positively to her request and she was content.

I had been working on an exciting project for four years. I was on a business trip and I received a call in my hotel room. They told me that upper management was restructuring and that my project was cut. I was stunned. When I returned to the office, I was out of a job. All of our work meant nothing to the shortsighted managers. A year and a half later they had to re-open the project, but at the time they cut it I became disillusioned with the company. I became very dejected.

The manner in which the project was cut was very disturbing and shocking. She was disappointed with the decision and lost confidence in the company's ability to make decisions.

Because my job had been made redundant, I had to consult with personnel about where I would be reassigned. The man told me, "You know you are an old bird now. Don't expect too much." I was furious. At 37, the height of my career I was an old bird. I knew then that I would fight for a job.

When an insulting threat was made concerning her further employment, the participant decided to fight for a position if needed.

I was told there were no jobs available. I heard about an opening, it was not filled because no one wanted it. Several had quit because the boss was a beast. He was never reprimanded because his division was profitable. I took the position because it was my chance to stay in the company and I knew it would not last long.

She found out about a position herself without the help of personnel. Because of her desire to remain with that company and the knowledge that the changes occurring would eventually provide a better position, she decided to take a job that was less than ideal.

I had very good friends who have nothing to do with work. They just like me for who I am. On the weekends I would spend lots of time with them. We would discuss books, philosophy, politics, all the things I love to discuss, never work. It provided the real break I needed. My friends gave me a peaceful place to just be. It was not difficult, it was easy and an oasis to just be myself. This was a great refreshment.

Her weekends and time with her friends were sacred and gave her restful moments. She was able to validate many parts of herself during time spent with friends.

This was a very tough time for me. I had to leave a great project and join this new division that had a tyrant for a boss. I remember one day I thought of my mother. I had seen her survive many difficult times, divorce, war, and caring for the ill. She

was my inspiration. When the going got tough, she rose to the occasion. I knew I would too. She showed me it was possible. I had hope that I could do it.

It was difficult to deal with the great contrasts between her previous position and the new one. Her mother's ability to thrive in difficult times was an inspiration for her. This gave her courage and hope in her ability to adapt to the present disheartening situation.

I was absolutely miserable in the new section and with the new boss. I felt myself slipping into a depression because of the abusive boss. It was not uncommon to see a man or woman crying after they had left his office. One morning I woke up and said to myself, "I will confront him today. And, over breakfast I made my plan to confront him in public. I was so relieved. Somehow I felt stronger when I had set my limit.

Even though she had been inspired to deal with the difficult work situation, after a year of working in the oppressive environment she was worn down. She decided to make a change and confront the situation head on. Her conviction that her decision was correct gave her strength.

There were no other jobs available in the company, but I had to confront the boss, I would put up with his abuse no longer. I sat in the staff meeting at his right. He systematically annihilated each person around the table. When it came to me I spoke first. I told him his behavior was unacceptable and that I was leaving his team. I felt victorious and regained a sense of strength. He was so stunned it took

him several minutes to respond. I left the meeting feeling free for the first time in
a year.

The participant took a bold step and confronted the abusive boss. This initiated a
profound situational and emotional change that was a welcome relief. She left her
position and a new position would have to be found.

After confronting the abusive boss, I went directly to the legal department and
filed a legal complaint listing a lot of details for evidence. I knew I was right and
so did the big bosses. They told me they would find me another position. I felt
great.

She not only took a stand for her rights by dissociating from the abusive boss, she also
protected herself by lodging a legal complaint. She was elated that she had taken care of
herself and that the company supported her position.

I just kept quiet and out of sight until something turned up. The director of a
division told me he would help me. I trusted him. It took six months for him to get
me a position. He had to find one person to do the work of three because he had to
let 60 people go in his division. He knew I could do this.

It was a great encouragement to receive personal support from someone dependable.
Trust and patience were necessary while the massive corporate changes were taking

place. Her willingness to take a position that required a lot of work insured a position in a new division.

I remember the first staff meeting so clearly. You can imagine how every one felt when they saw me. All their colleagues were gone and there I was. It was very difficult and it took about six months before I was accepted. It was a very cold and anxious time. The work made for very long hours and I was very isolated.

The new colleagues had encountered a difficult and demoralizing situation because so many of their co-workers had been let go. It was difficult to enter the situation as a new member of the team. She had to endure a long time of isolation from any trusting relationships was anxiety producing.

I had to assume the work of three people that I had never met and had little explanation or help. There was a lot of confusion and chaos and I had work stacked up on my desk. I remember looking at it and wondering how I would get through it all. I decided then to only concentrate on what I did each moment. To focus on one task only, because if I tried to think about it all, I would have gone crazy. I stuck to this way of working. It was an enormous help and it got me through.

The demoralizing situation included increased work and lack of guidance. She needed to discover some way to adapt to the new situation. She made a guideline that helped her focus on one task at a time which facilitated dealing with the situation.

I could see that everyone was stunned at what had happened. I remember I sat at my desk and asked myself if I could really work here. I told myself, "They will come around. Just be quiet and do perfect work and be polite no matter how they treat you." I reminded myself of this each day. It helped me to have this personal plan because it took so long before I felt accepted.

The participant took a broad look at the new situation and this helped put her colleagues' behavior in perspective. She took a positive perspective that was based on the hope that her colleagues would somehow deal with and adapt to the changes imposed on the department. A decision was made concerning how she would react to her cold withdrawn co-workers. The decision was to be polite and not react in the same manner in which she was being treated.

All of the changes taking place were far reaching and almost everyone was affected. I remember speaking with some people in the office who were complaining about how difficult and drastic the changes were. It was drastic, but it seemed like they were exaggerating. I suddenly realized that they did not know that suffering was a part of life. I thought knowing this must help me because even though it was not easy, I did not feel it was the worst. I was not frightened as they were. I'd live through it. I felt confident and prepared.

The belief that suffering was part of life enabled her to limit discouragement and fear that affected her colleagues. She felt relatively confidant that she would live through the changes in this restructuring environment.

I focused on my work and did well. I did my work so well that at my six-month review I had zero complaints. This was a great boost for me to have my good work noticed. This gave me confidence that, in all the shuffling, my work did not go unnoticed.

Affirmation and recognition for the good quality of her work was received and this gave her encouragement and confidence. She felt that she was no longer invisible in the work environment.

Over all I know my own personal history helped me to adapt to all the changes. I was attacked and almost killed in my early 20's. It took me almost a year to recover. Each day I chose to survive. Each day at the office when there was so mush confusion and change I knew I would survive it all. It was tough, but each day I told myself, "You will survive this." It was a comfort and a motivation for me to guide me.

Life experience had taught her that she could survive the most devastating circumstances. When the daily situation at work was difficult, she reminded herself that she would live

through the changes and be all right. Knowing she could cope with the situation gave her motivation to continue to discover ways to adapt to the restructuring environment.

I came through those couple of years of drastic restructuring. I have experienced a lot. The company just began another re-structuring plan. It is ongoing. I now meet weekly with a young director. I mentor her. Once she came asking if her idea was worth presenting to her team. I told her to go for it. It was a great idea, but she had to have some reassurance. It does me well to help her. I am very encouraged when I can help. It has made all my own adaptation experiences much more meaningful.

It encouraged her to provide help to fellow workers who were struggling with how to adapt to the changing work environment. This active participation in helping others provided new purpose and meaning to her personal adaptive experiences during the restructuring of the company.

Narrative Account #5

Our company had just spent the previous two years completely redoing the corporate culture. In all we were in a smooth operating company. I will never forget when I heard about the buyout. I was visiting the parents of my fiancée for Christmas. I received a call from my boss. He said, "I did not want you to hear it first on the news, I wanted you to hear it first from me." He told me about the

buyout. I felt really strange. I did not know what to think. But, it really helped that my boss called me personally. It took the edge off and I felt I would get the truth.

The participant's boss made a personal effort to give first hand news about the new merger. This encouraged confidence in his boss and belief that he would get further news about the changes.

When I heard about the buyout/merger, I was in a particular mindset to build my career and learn as much as I could and as fast as I could. I had just finished a big project and needed a new challenge. So, I remember thinking that the merger was just what I needed to get a new challenge. So I welcomed something I might have fought.

Although the news of the merger was a surprise, the participant was not dejected because he was looking for a new challenge. He had a positive belief that the changes would provide new stimulation.

Just after the merger announcement I was never sure about what to do. We received corporate communication each day, but it really said nothing concrete. Although I did not fear losing my job, I felt like I was on shaky ground because I really did not know what was happening.

The lack of concrete information concerning the upcoming changes was disconcerting and left the participant feeling uneasy and in the dark.

The company put a positive spin on all the news they communicated to us. They would use words like synergy. Or like when they announced the changed date for the merger they said here is the improved schedule for merger action, it is now April. But I remember saying to myself, "Wait a minute, it was supposed to take place in Feb." But their attitude kept me up and encouraged even though I knew they were trying to make everything seem positive.

Even though the merger was delayed and the uncertainty continued, the company's efforts to encourage a hopeful attitude had a good effect on the participant. This facilitated adaptation to the delays and uncertain situation.

There were many rumors about how different the cultures were in the two companies. I came in on a conversation between my boss and a colleague. My boss, who was never negative, said that he had been at a lunch with the other directors from the other company. The experience was bad because he said they all had a very command and control attitude. I left that conversation worried. For the first time I thought that I would leave the day the merger was final.

As the two companies began to interact, the differences in the two corporate cultures became disturbing. The other company's culture was repulsive to the participant, which precipitated thoughts about leaving the company.

> About four months after the announcement our company began offering a course on how to organize a resume and personal career management. I took this course. I thought I better face reality because not everyone will come out of this well. But, I also I knew it would be a new company with new opportunities and I wanted to be ready. I felt prepared.

In the midst of the uncertainty, the participant took advantage of learning opportunities provided by the company to prepare for the future. He was proactive in preparing for whatever changes the merger offered and imposed.

> The finalization of the merger went on for months. Everyone was confused about what to do. Our CEO made an announcement and said to conduct business as usual. Just do it, don't sit and think about it, just do it. We all tried to have this attitude. It helped me focus and I think it was what kept me sane.

Delays in the finalization of the merger produced confusion. Management was very encouraging and gave concrete guidance, which gave some clarification about tasks. The CEO also gave a guideline to his employees. This guideline, to get on with work, facilitated a positive attitude in the participant and helped him to focus.

The other company was very different. It was troubling because they seemed to say

that we were not different. Our company had had a command and control culture

just about two years ago, but we had gone through a big transformation and now

had an empowering management environment. Then the CEO of the other company

hired the same consulting firm that helped us through our transformation. They

were going to have the same culture audit we had experienced. This was extremely

encouraging. I knew they would give a fair picture.

The other company posed a threat to the new corporate culture enjoyed by the participant.

The action of the other company, to gain information and guidance through consultants,

facilitated hope.

I was sent to an upper management meeting where the results of the culture audit

were disclosed. The results were very encouraging because they indicated that the

other company had to change. We also saw a video made by the other CEO

explaining that the company needed to change. I remember thinking, oh thank you

God because all the info was a relief. Then we were told that this info was for our

eyes only and that the video had not been shown to the other company. I found this

extremely disconcerting. I was very confused and lost trust in the company because

they withheld information from their own workers.

The participant gained vital information about the ongoing process of the reorganization.

On the one hand he was very encouraged about the other company's self-evaluation. On

the other hand he was very discouraged because of the company's response to the information was to withhold vital information from the employees.

The merger was being organized by teams made up of people from both companies. Three of our HR people, who are so insanely positive it is sickening, returned from a merger team meeting very upset. They were told by the other members, "Well, you know what's going to happen to your jobs because we are bigger than you." I almost ran away from him. It was depressing news especially from him. I became very discouraged.

Vital information gained from trusted colleagues was frightening and discouraging because it confirmed the participant's fears about the negative attitude of the other company.

The merger dragged on 6 months and then 8 months and it began to drag me down. I remember sitting at my desk and saying to myself, "What are you going to do, get out your résumé, you don't want to work for a command and control company. Its everyman for himself. Maybe I will leave and start my own business. But, wait a minute, you still want to work." It was helpful just to go through my options. I didn't feel so stuck and helpless.

The disheartening and uncertain situation continued because of delays in finalization of the merger. He reminded himself that he could leave and affirmed he still wanted to work with this company. These thoughts provided the identification of specific options in an

uncertain environment. Awareness of these options provided a feeling of freedom for the participant.

> When the merger was announced we were looking to buy a home. We decided to wait for obvious financial reasons. After 10 months and another delay I said to my partner we have to get on with our lives. I could get laid off anytime in our lives. So, we said screw it and we bought a house. We made sure we had an out if we needed. But, it felt good to get on with life. I was no longer on hold.

After a long and uncertain period in the job situation, he decided to buy a home in spite of continuing delays. His personal life was no longer inhibited and the participant felt free and satisfied with the change in his personal life.

> The merger drug on. I got completely absorbed in the house. Wallpapering and painting helped me to shove all the work stuff back in my head. It helped then to have a "who cares" attitude.

The participant's engagement in activity outside the work environment was a positive distraction. He received a break from thinking about concerns at work as he invested himself n his home.

> After a year, I began to receive all the lists of the people who began to leave because of my responsibilities with corporate accounts. I remember two days in a

row I received 4 full pages of people leaving. What did they know I did not? This sent me into panic mode for quite a while.

When he heard about the large numbers of people leaving the company, it disheartened and distressed the participant.

It drug on for three more months. It was the never-ending story. Thank God it was spring. I went home and worked in the yard. Planting trees and all. This kept all the delays out of my mind and I could actually see progress in my garden.

The participant had to continue enduring the negative state of uncertainty caused by delays in the merger. Working his garden provided a pleasant and encouraging distraction from the delays at the office.

All through the merger process the information we received was mixed, good and bad. It was like riding a roller coaster. It felt insane. One day in my department, we all brought in our resumes. We reviewed them together and helped each other to fix them up. This was a breath of fresh air. I was ready to leave if it came to that. We had all supported each other and it lifted the heaviness.

The mixed information received on the merger was destabilizing because it caused emotional ups and downs. Camaraderie experienced in the office was refreshing and gave relief from a tense environment.

Many valuable people quit during this time. So we all had to work like mad to make up for so many that had gone. I received a laptop so I could work at home. I remember that day. I went home, ate dinner and logged onto the mainframe and worked most of the evening. I was glad to work from home and not have to stay in the office. But, I knew I could not do this for long.

Workload greatly increased as people left the company. Short-term relief from having to spend long hours at the office was provided through receiving a laptop. He could hook up to the mainframe and work from home.

After a year and a half it was still dragging on. I told my boss I needed a new challenge or I would quit. I was assigned to a merger team. I felt honored and could make contributions toward building the new company. It was like my life had begun again.

The long wait for the finalization of the new company became boring. The participant asked for a new job description. He was placed on a merger team that provided new stimulation and a reason to remain with the company.

The merger team had people from both companies. After our first meeting most of us went out for drinks. This was a real plus because I made two good friends from the other company. This was a great encouragement and I looked forward to working with them.

New insights about the possibilities of working with a company very different from his own were gained through building a relationship with a member of the other company. This was a great encouragement.

> The team began well but in one meeting an older guy kept trying to argue his point to death. The team leader ordered him to go to a conflict resolution seminar offered by the company. I was pleasantly surprised. I then had confidence that the domineering control culture of the other company would not take over.

Direct actions made by co-workers to refine the other company's culture were a great encouragement to the participant and provided assurance that a positive transformation was taking place.

> I began to get a lot of insider information through the work on the team. It became evident many would have to move to keep a job. I made a point to think about what I would do for the company. I decided that I would not move. I needed this boundary because my family and friends are too important for me to give up for a job. This decision gave me security and a plan for the future.

Factors about job continuation were becoming clear as the participant received vital information. Upon reflection, he decided that he would not change locations for the

company. This provided a sure decision for his future in response to possibilities that came his way.

> The slow changes I experienced as we dealt with the other company were encouraging. But the merger drug on over two years. At that point I remember thinking I don't give a shit if I have a job at the end of this merger if the company does not change. I will work toward that, but I am young. I told myself, "You found this job you will find another." I was liberated at that point. I would be me no matter the outcome. I had set my limits and I would see how the company worked things out.

The participant had to continue to endure the consequences of the unsettled merger. Although he was encouraged by small changes and enjoyed helping the change process, he made the firm decision to leave the company if the culture did not transform to his liking. He took the positive attitude that he could find a new job, given his age and experience. Firm guidelines were established that provided self-validation and gave him the freedom to stay until there was a breach of the limits he had set.

Summary

The personal narratives add insight and detail to what is known concerning what helps and hinders individuals in adapting to change in the work environment. The 34 categories are concretely represented in the narratives as a means of facilitating or hindering adaptation through the flow of action as presented by the individual stories.

Incident research method was described in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 the categories are

delineated and in Chapter 5 the tests for validation of the categories are explicated. In

Chapter 6, individual narratives of the adaptation experience are given. The following

chapter offers implications for theory, practice and research in the arena of adaptation to

corporate restructuring.

Chapter 7

IMPLICATIONS

Interviews with 28 participants produced 543 critical incidents that were reported to facilitate or hinder adaptation to the changes brought on by corporate restructuring. These critical incidents were reduced to 34 categories that appear to be reasonably reliable and valid. The categories were organized into five clusters: (a) Context of Restructuring Cluster, (b) Shaping Work Environment Cluster, (c) Types of Support Cluster, (d) Reaching Out to Others Cluster, and (e) Shaping Personal Environment Cluster.

Limitations

This investigation is limited by two main factors. One limitation is due to the low number of participants in this study. While providing a general list of categories of adaptation incidents, the results are not generalizable to the general population. All participants came from a realitively high socioeconomic level. However, the participants were diverse in their ages, work situations, education backgrounds, and nationalities. Further research is needed from various countries, education levels, and socioeconomic groups to increase the breadth of generalizability of the categories for further development of theory and practice.

The second limitation of this study stems from reliance on incidents that are self-reported. Events obtained from self-report are limited to those events the participants remember and are able to articulate during the interview. It is possible that some events

were not mentioned because they had been forgotten, were consciously or unconsciously self-censored, or were difficult to express.

Implications for Theory

Overall the results of this study support a significant amount of the previous research. The anxiety related health problems reported by the participants mirror other research documenting health difficulties with this population such as that of LaBier (1986) and Koco (1996). In general the categories highlight concepts from The Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), the Theory of Work Role Transitions (Nicholson, 1984), Hershenson's (1996) interaction model for work adjustment, and Ishiyama's (1995) cultural conflict model. The categories demonstrate incidents regarding psychological change, behavioral change, and social support that reflect factors identified in previous research. Specific studies that are supported by the three categories having the highest participation rates are discussed here. Studies that generally pertain to the remaining 31 categories are reviewed at the end of chapter five. Receiving support/not receiving support is a category that supports the work of Folkman (1984) who identified "perceived social support" as a mediating process used when a person decides how to cope. The study of Shaw et al. (1988) is also supported. Their study demonstrated that social support (emotional or tangible) was a resource for individuals coping with stress and strain during corporate change. Two other studies that are supported by this category are, Cusack (1991) who identified "significant others" as a factor that influenced the ability of workers to adapt and Callan (1993) who includes social support from family, friends, co-workers, and managers as necessary to facilitate adaptation. The category encountering a demoralizing situation/encountering an encouraging situation supports

Noer's studies that have identified a large range of negative feelings experienced in corporate change. This category also supports Ishiyama's (1995) Cultural Conflict Model that demonstrates that psychological soreness is experienced when one is not validated in one or more of five personal arenas during a culture change. The category discovering and adhering to a guideline supports the work of Ashford (1988) that found the personal characteristics of self-efficacy and personal control facilitate adaptation to work-related stress. The results of several cross cultural adaptation studies are supported that emphasize the need for establishing a sense of self-congruence and validation in cross-cultural adaptation (Adler, 1975; Antokoletz, 1993; Bennett, 1977; Oberg, 1960; Zaharna, 1989).

A second important implication for theory is that the category system provides a means for integrating the extensive amount of information and research covering this topic. Generally researchers have attempted to isolate specific factors to examine their influence on adaptation to corporate restructuring. Therefore, many small groups of adaptation factors have been identified. The present research attempted to take a bird's eye view of the multitude of factors and provide a reasonable category system. The categories provide a form of integration that demonstrates how the multiple factors have a place in a larger scheme of factors that can be organized into the five clusters.

A third implication for theory is that the category system appears to extend research and theory beyond the previous studies reviewed in Chapter 4 by recognizing factors tacitly assumed but not explicitly identified and investigated in previous research. Enduring a Negative state, encountering a demoralizing situation, and experiencing devaluation of the company are three categories denoting hindrances to adaptation that

further describe the context of restructuring. These three categories emphasize a continuing need for individuals experiencing change to address the extensive reoccurring variety of negative emotions that result from some restructuring experiences. Three categories facilitating adaptation that further illustrate the Shaping the Work Environment Cluster are refusing exploitative requests, discovering and adhering to a guideline, and dissociation from a bad person. The significance of these three categories is that they portray an individual's personal responsibility to protect and situate himself/herself in the restructuring environment. Acting on the work environment is identified in the literature as necessary for adaptation, and the Reaching Out to Others Cluster is one type of action on the work environment. However, this Cluster contains six specific categories of events (giving empathy, using humor, forming a relationship, looking out for others, providing practical help, and securing work for others) that appear to isolate facilitative factors of adaptation in a new specific form. It has been suggested that individuals become increasingly self-preoccupied during corporate change. However, this Cluster offers examples of altruistic actions that have actually facilitated adaptation not concretely mentioned in previous literature.

A fourth implication for theory concerns two issues worth noting that are implicated by previous research. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) maintain that the individual and the work environment are mutually responsive to each other and that each seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence. The perspective of the individuals reporting events in this study is that the corporation often seemed resistant to changes or adjustments other than those orchestrated by the corporation. Within the restructuring environment many participants reported that the corporation was not responsive to their needs as they were

going through their own adaptation experience. Gabel and Oster (1998) suggest that to adapt to the changes in the work environment one must adjust to the new expectations and accept the new realities of how work is accomplished. The incidents provided here and the flow of the narrative accounts suggest that workers use caution in accepting new expectations and work practice realities required by restructuring. This caution is illustrated by the categories refusing exploitative requests, receiving increased workload, making a decision concerning work, discovering and adhering to a firm guideline, and dissociation from a bad person. Although one must adjust to the new work reality, informed caution is required in how this will take place because many parts of the new reality maybe abusive (i.e. the long hours of work required) and some individuals will suffer serious emotional and physical illness as a result.

A fifth implication for theory involves the sheer number of factors that were clarified in this study. Previous research has implied that a small number of factors are crucial for adaptation to corporate change. The category system developed in the present study does not provide a small number of factors, but organization of a great number of factors. The multitude of categories suggests that a narrow focus may overlook important factors in adaptation.

Implications for Practice

There has not been adequate data to thoroughly aid the practitioner in helping those trying to adapt. This research provides a categorical scheme that represents events people utilize to adapt to corporate change. The categories provide concrete guidance for therapists, program developers, consultants, and training professionals who work with this population.

Therapists can use the categories as a guide for assessment and therapeutic focus. The clusters can be utilized to direct therapy in five key areas. Context of Restructuring Cluster can be used for the client to assess the ongoing impact they experience as a result of the implementation of change. Shaping the Work Environment, Reaching Out to Others and Shaping Personal Environment are three clusters that are useful for clients to assess their previous actions and then to focus on new adaptive efforts according to the types of adaptive incidents suggested in the categories. The Types of Support Cluster provides a frame of reference for assessment and realization of external resources that can help facilitate adaptation. Therapists are encouraged to hold an integrated stance because the data provide a large variety of incidents. An important posture for therapists who deal with such adaptation issues is to ask the right questions and offer accurate information to facilitate conscious and unconscious processes to help the client increase their repertoire of facilitative responses, as well as decrease hindering responses when adapting to a changing work environment (see Appendix E). Another possible aid to therapists is sharing the personal examples documented in this study with clients interested in learning from others' experience.

This research provides guidance for corporate program development by providing a map of adaptation categories that indicate factors for helping employees adapt. High levels of personal awareness, personal responsibility and psychological development are said to be key factors for surviving and adapting to the changing work environment (Hall & Moss, 1998; Klien, Gabelnick, & Herr, 1998). Employers can help their employees develop personal awareness by providing a forum for evaluating specific effects of the changes on individuals and departments using the nine categories in the Context of

Restructuring Cluster as a guide. Employees can be encouraged to take more responsibility in the work environment by delineating the nine categories in the Shaping the Work Environment Cluster. For example, individuals can be encouraged to initiate a beneficial change and then receive recognition for their efforts, which offers the individual affirmation for job competence. Encouraging altruistic actions can be stimulated through creative use of the categories in the Reaching Out to others Cluster. Psychological development of employees can be promoted by providing career development forums or wide spread exposure to adaptation factors through internal information systems in which the following four categories are addressed: (a) making a decision concerning work, (b) discovering and adhering to a guideline, (c) realization of a positive perspective, and (d) preparing for change.

Consultants can use this categorical framework as guidance to help minimize the demoralizing incidents that take place in the restructuring environment. The hindering categories (see Appendix E) of the adaptation process also indicate problematic areas to avoid in the implementation of change (i.e. enduring a negative state and being excluded from decision making).

This research can also be employed in training professionals of all types who work in the arena of corporate change. The various categories can be delineated within the framework of the five clusters to develop awareness of the multiple dynamics involved in adaptation. Sensitivity to the personal interwoven dynamics involved in adaptation to corporate change can be taught through illustrations of specific incidents and the narrative accounts.

Implications for Future Research

Based on the results of this present investigation, several avenues of research appear to be promising. A replication of this study in which workers are interviewed who represent different countries, different socio-economic backgrounds, and different types of companies could further enrich and validate the categories as well as begin to establish generalizability of the results.

The categories could provide the basis for a questionnaire. This questionnaire could be used in a traditional quantitative study to further test the reliability of the factors.

Categories could be used in designing and field-testing a program to aid people involved in corporate change. This type of research is necessary to help people explore ways to expand their adapting capabilities and to examine the results of practical use of the categories in the work environment.

The adaptive factors identified by the workers in this study warrant further research. For example, two categories with a high participation rate, the discovery and adherence to a personal guideline and realization of a positive perspective. These two incidents indicate that knowledge and application of personal belief systems or worldview could be important in the adaptation process. This type of focus is important in light of the research by LaBier (1986) that demonstrated when people disregard their core beliefs or values when they adapt in the work environment, they can become emotionally disturbed. Research from various theoretical preferences that focus on the conscious, pre-conscious, sub-conscious, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of the of a person would provide a greater spectrum of insight and illuminate possible therapeutic interventions.

These types of categories need to be explored and applied to broader theory to understand how and why they facilitate the adaptive process.

The narratives offer personal adaptation stories that include examples of the continuous challenge and difficulties some companies experience while planning and implementing change. An examination of multiple narratives could be helpful to identify a possible flow of phases in personal adaptation to corporate change. The narratives also personalize big questions such as, Why do some companies choose not to communicate a reasonable amount of information? If the information and research available on the negative effects of withholding information alone were believed and implemented it could facilitate adaptation to the difficult work situation. Information and knowledge in itself do not effect change. Psychologically aware persons are needed to help, assess, and guide corporate adaptation and individual adaptation to the necessary changes that will take place in the restructuring work environment.

Future research could focus on personal hindering factors to adaptation. In this study blame for hindering adaptation, as reported by the participants, fell on the company or other individuals, not on themselves. This appears to be a one-sided emphasis. However, this focus does not diminish the fact that the hindering events cited by the participants were truly hindering, substantiated by other research, and often so blatantly negative that it was easy to focus on them because they appeared so evident from the described behaviors. Nevertheless, research that further explores the ways the individual personally hinders adaptation would be illuminating and provide a more balanced view of the adaptation difficulties workers encounter with change and those who are facilitating the

change. This is a means through which the counselling psychologist may contribute to this vital area of need through counselling, research, and advocacy.

Summary

As a counselling psychologist who has worked with many clients struggling with adaptation, I was aware of many difficult work situations. I engaged in this study to gain useful information that would give me more insight and concrete examples about adaptation to corporate change so that I had more to offer clients. As the participants told their adaptation stories, I was struck by the fact that each had struggled intensely during their adaptation process. Although the stories mirrored what I have heard from clients over the years, it was daunting to begin to understand that a huge number of people are living with these profound struggles. The adaptation struggles consumed the majority of their waking hours, and the process appears to take at least a year.

The participants gave vivid accounts of their own adaptation experiences. Through organization of the adaptation incidents, this study contributes a reasonable category scheme of factors that facilitate and hinder personal adaptation to corporate restructuring. The category scheme integrates a large variety of factors reported to be key in the adaptation process. Personal narratives give specific and holistic descriptions of individual adaptation. These elements provide therapists with a documented picture of adaptation, and suggest possible therapeutic interventions specifically tailored for clients experiencing corporate change.

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APPENDIX A

Helping and Hindering Incidents Suggested by Research

Types of helping and hindering incidents suggested by the research:

1) situations in which a sense of accord was experienced with the job changes, because personal skills and abilities were used more fully to perform new job tasks.

2) when personal values and the new values demonstrated at work corresponded

3) events describing a modification made by management to a new job description which matched a persons skills and/or values

4) learning a new skill that corresponded directly to new work demands

5) specific decisions made that were necessary to accommodate new work demands

6) events when a challenge to the compatibility of one's self-concept with the requirements of the new work role occurred

7) events in which personal values of fairness and truth came into conflict

8) events when work role and life style compatibility affected adaptation

9) incidents of acting upon the work situation

10) a disruptive personal event

11) learning a new relational skill or work skill that the restructuring has made necessary for office relations

12) events when a change of a personal work goal was made to match the new work opportunities offered because of restructuring

13) different types of self-validation

14) different experiences of self-sameness

15) one gained a new self-understanding of personality traits because of new interactions required in the work environment

16) experienced a continuity of self in the work environment

17) received validation for a specific personality characteristic from colleague

18) events in which validation of some aspect of self took place

19) receiving support from others in regards to their possible contributions to the new job

20) receiving validation for competence in the new the job requirements by supervisors

21) validation of positive aspects of identity from self or others

22) events in which a job position was secured

23) incidents of obtaining autonomy in dealing with the new demands at work

24) an event that gave confirmation of a meaning in life

25) events when an action was initiated to build relationships with colleagues

26) found new ways to self-validate in the new situation

27) discover the intricacies of a new work system

28) seek information from colleagues about the new changes in the work culture

29) incidents when a conscious knowledge of an initial appraisal of a situation came to light

30) defining and focusing on a specific problem

31) avoidance was used to push aside disturbing emotions about the corporate

32) an event in which collaboration with colleagues was initiated

33) events in which help was given by co-workers to aid accomplishment of the new work load

34) an appraisal of purposefulness was made according to religious beliefs

35) enactments of a religious practice

36) incidents of religious experiences

37) gaining a clearer picture of the new work role

38) use positive self-talk during the changing work situation for self encouragement in difficult situations

39) sustain focus on the work tasks

40) a reappraisal of the work situation from disastrous to a chance for personal growth

41) watching television was used to push aside disturbing emotions and thoughts about the restructuring

42) sought feedback on work performance from co-workers

43) concerns about the work situation were shared with another person (friend, family, co-worker, or supervisor)

44) an incident that clarified work roles

45) events when differentiation of roles was attained

46) an event in which managing multiple new work roles was accomplished

47) incidents when information about the restructuring and its effects was shared in groups of co-workers

48) incidents of participation in planning change

49) incidents when a work related group intervened on the workers behalf

50) one attributes a success or failure in new work role adjustment to their own work or external circumstances

51) events that describe facing the negative emotions produced by the changes at work

52) a time when shaping a new work role took place

53) negotiating with others about diminishing the negative personal effects of work changes

54) events resulting in self dependency

55) any event that diminishes negative emotions

56) any event that unblocks repressed emotions

57) obtain the information needed to perform new tasks well

58) encouraging verses discouraging home life and significant other

59) event that results in dealing with what was lost

60) acceptance of new work practices

61) any behavior that matches the new work requirements

62) any event that includes or helps to develop dialectical thinking

63) times when there was an increase or decrease in; work responsibilities, quantity of work load, amount of personal decision power, time required to work alone, quality of work conditions, and required amounts of physical exertion

64) identifying one's motivations

65) specific clarification or conflict took place between the designated self as given from the family and the actual self

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTION LETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Counselling Psychology
Faculty of Education
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, B. C. Canada
V6T 1Z4

Tel: (604) 822-5259
Fax: (604) 822-2328

Dear _____ ,

Your name was given to me by a mutual contact, _____, as a person qualified to participate in my doctoral study. He/she has informed me that you have some interest in participating in this research. The research is being conducted to collect information from individuals who have experienced a restructuring in their corporation that began a minimum of one year ago, as to what helped and hindered them in successfully adapting to the changes in their work environment.

Participation will involve two 60 minute interviews. During the interviews, you will be asked to recall incidents and identify the factors that either helped or hindered you in adapting to corporate change. Interviews will be tape recorded, given a number code to ensure confidentiality, and transcribed stripped of any identifying data. The tapes will be erased upon completion of the study. The amount of time that will be required of you will not exceed two and a half hours.

The purpose of these interviews is to collect personal adaptation experiences for the aim of developing a reasonably comprehensive categorical framework of what facilitates and hinders adaptation to corporate restructuring. The development of such a framework from those who have experienced adaptation themselves will have an impact upon theories of cultural adjustment, leadership, and management. In addition it could also impact upon the practice and training of counselors and consultants who work in this arena.

corporate change. Interviews will be tape-recorded. You will also be asked to complete a general information questionnaire. The total amount of time that will be required of each participant should not exceed two and a half hours.

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Confidentiality: Each tape-recorded interview and questionnaire will be given a number code and stored in a locked cabinet to ensure confidentiality. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the study. Recorded incidents will be stripped of any identifying data when transcribed. The tapes will be erased upon completion of the study.

Contact: Dr. Larry Cochran, the Principal Investigator, is available to answer any questions you might have concerning the study either before or after the interview. If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant you may contact the Director of Research Services at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Richard Spratley at (604) 822-8598.

Consent:

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequence.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I consent to participate in this study.

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

_____   Date_____
Participant Signature

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

PARTICIPANT NUMBER: _____

General Information:

Age_____ Sex_____ Marital Status_____ Children _____

Nationality_____ Do you live in your country of origin?

What is your work title?

How long ago did you first hear about the changes going to take place in your work situation?

How long have you worked for this company?

How many different companies have you worked for?

How many times have you experienced a corporate restructuring?

How many different countries have you lived in?

How many moves have you made in your lifetime?

What higher education degrees or certificates have you earned and in what subject?

APPENDIX E

FACILITATING AND HINDERING CATEGORIES

Facilitating Categories in Clusters

Clusters	Categories	Frequency	Participation Rate
Context of Restructuring Cluster			
	Receiving a position	16	39%
	Encountering an encouraging situation	12	25%
	Participation in decision-making	7	21%
	Stabilizing moves	1	3%
Shaping Work Environment Cluster			
	Discovering and adhering to a firm guideline	39	64%
	Making a beneficial change in the work setting	30	60%
	Making a decision concerning work	21	46%
	Refusing exploitative requests	14	42%
	Experiencing a challenging task	18	39%
	Creating a work position	10	28%
	Accomplishing a task	4	14%
	Creating space to work	6	14%
	Dissociation from a bad person	4	14%

Clusters	Categories	Frequency	Participation Rate
Types of Support Cluster			
	Receiving personal support	31	71%
	Receiving vital information	16	35%
	Receiving affirmation of job competence	10	32%
	Receiving advice	10	32%
	Experiencing camaraderie	12	28%
	Receiving assurance about a job	6	17%
Shaping Personal Environment Cluster			
	Realization of a positive perspective	52	64%
	Initiating a change outside of work	16	39%
	Preparation for change	9	25%
	Engaging in an activity outside of work	9	25%
Reaching out to others Cluster			
	Giving empathy	9	25%
	Using humor	7	25%
	Forming a relationship	8	25%
	Looking out for others	5	7%
	Providing practical help	4	7%
	Securing employment for others	3	7%

Hindering Categories in Clusters

Clusters	Categories	Frequency	Participation Rate

Context of Restructuring Cluster

	Encountering a demoralizing situation	23	67%
	Receiving increased workload	19	53%
	Termination of colleagues	15	42%
	Enduring a negative state	18	39%
	Removed from a position	9	32%
	Experiencing negative attitudes of colleagues	16	32%
	Experiencing devaluation of the company	7	21%
	Destabilizing moves	8	17%
	Exclusion from decision-making	3	10%

Shaping Work Environment Cluster

	Blocked from accomplishing a task	4	14%

Types of Support Cluster

	Not receiving support	4	14%
	Vital information withheld	18	28%
	Receiving disaffirmation of job competence	3	7%
	Experiencing estrangement	3	10%
	Receiving a threat about a job	5	17%

Frequency is the total number of events reported in each category.

Participation Rate is the percentage of participants reporting an event.   n = 28