

► *Volume 9, Issue 3*

Put on Your Game Face

Do you want to feel good and powerful while going through change at work? Then consistently take action or “Just Do It!” on the things you can control. You will have conquered the ability to put on a Game Face. However, if you choose to not take action on things that you could control, you will feel helpless and hopeless and become an Armchair Quarterback.

We’ve all seen “armchair quarterbacks.” They are the people that sit back in an easy chair with the remote control watching football. They moan, “If I was the quarterback, I would have called a different play.” Which is why they’re sitting in their armchair with a drink? Give me a break. They are not actually practicing hours everyday preparing to play. They aren’t on the field getting battered and bruised during the game.

	Can Control	May Have Influence	Cannot Control
Just Do It!	Game Face	Cheerleader	Hanger On
Let It Go!	Armchair Quarterback	“Boo” Bird	Graceful Exit

It’s easy to sit back and think to ourselves, “If I were in management, things would be a lot different. If I were a Vice President/Manager (fill in the blank), the change would have never been introduced the way it was. I would have involved the employees.” If we stay in our armchairs long enough, we

can end up “ROTJ” -- Retired On The Job. When we criticize the change process at work and don’t get involved, we don’t impact the change. It’s no more fun to play football from an armchair than it is to “whine and dine” about change to someone who cannot impact the change.



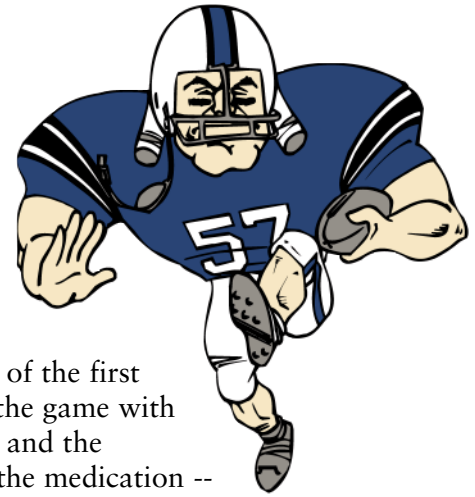
Think about all the things we can control: our attitude; morale by encouraging cooperation and passing on information; diet, exercise, relaxation; our niceness; showing up for work; provide positive feedback to others; our personal productivity and work

habits; what we think about; the techniques we learn and try out; our level of efficiency; our work quality; our communication (up, down, to co-workers); personal safety; and so much more. If you really sat down and brainstormed ideas, you would come up with many more ideas in the Can Control category than in the May Have Influence and Cannot Control categories.



The Game Face

We need to learn how to get in the game and take action on the things we can control. One of the best examples of putting on a Game Face was the 1997 Super Bowl Football Game. Most of the pre-game attention was on quarterback, John Elway. It was Elway's fourth year to bring the Denver Broncos to the Superbowl. His team lost the first three times he quarterbacked in the Superbowl.



The most interesting story behind the 1997 Super Bowl was not Elway but Terrell Davis, the Bronco's running back. Davis was clearly the star of the first quarter of the football game. However, after a brutal tackle, Davis left the game with a migraine headache. He was out of the game the entire second quarter and the extended half time. Despite his pain, Davis fought back -- woozy from the medication -- to play the second half of the game brilliantly. Not only did Davis help the Broncos win the 1997 Super Bowl, he was also awarded the most valuable player award.

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Personally, I don't think Davis was miraculously healed of his migraine headache during halftime. He didn't come back in the second half saying, "I feel great. I love playing football." I think Terrell Davis forced himself to put on a game face and said, "I have to just do it. I don't care how much pain I'm in. I don't care how uncomfortable I am. I'm going to go in and play this game because I can." Have you ever suffered from a migraine headache? Have you ever played football with a migraine headache? It's doubtful. Terrell Davis's courageous act exemplifies the term "game face." We can all learn from his example.

A game face is what winners put on in changing organizations. Change will be painful. But all of us can put on our game face and just do it. We need to "suck it up" and force ourselves to be productive. We can make our attitude positive because we control it, NOT because we feel like it. If we choose to put a game face on, we'll feel good and powerful, but not necessarily happy. Happiness does not always come hand in hand with feeling good and powerful. Terrell Davis probably felt somewhat powerful while playing in the Super Bowl, but not necessarily happy about his condition. Happiness came with the victory, not during the play.

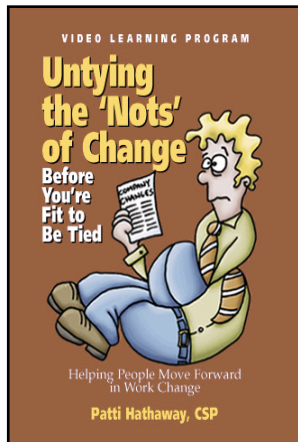
Our Choice

We all have choices. You are going to choose in your change situation to either become a victim of change or to become a change agent. It is not an easy process. If you go back to your organization with a vision to put your game face on and to be a cheerleader, inevitably you will encounter people in your organization who will not be supportive of that decision. It is difficult to thrive in change when we're in pain. Our negative co-workers will want us to sink low and to feel as lousy about our situation as they do. Yet, the decision is ultimately our own. What will your choice be?

This article is excerpted from Patti Hathaway's book "Untying the 'Nots' of Change Before You're Fit to be Tied." To order a copy of her book go to www.thechangeagent.com/products.html



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