FACILITATING CHANGE

Change is a process of shifting from one challenge to the next. Change transforms us to new levels of thinking, believing and understanding. All people deal with change differently and change can be brought on by many different factors. People may resist, embrace, run away from, seek out and/or make change. Change can come from many different types of messengers such as loss, separation, relocation, a change in relationship, a change in direction, a change in health and/or personal growth. Change has many faces.

How do you feel about change? What changes have happened in your life recently which you feel you had no control over? Would you like to know more about change?

Leadership is change. Leaders are people who make things happen. They lead people toward group and individual goals and products. If a leader is not making things happen, he/she probably will not be a leader for long.

Leaders must learn how to deal with personal change and understand the resistance to change they will often face in working with different groups. The following set of guidelines suggests ways to reduce resistance to change in personal life and in interactions with others:

WAYS TO REDUCE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

**Be Prompt.** Announce to yourself and to others the impending change as quickly as possible.

**Explain and Know Reasons.** Know why the change is important and how it will affect you and/or the group with which you are involved.

**Explain What the Changes Mean to the Individual.** Let each member know how he/she will be affected by the change. Explain benefits of the change and pledge to protect your people against losses.

**Ask for Advice.** Look around you and find people who would be able to provide sound advice (i.e., people who have been through similar experiences, people who are professionals in the area you are attempting to change). It is ok to seek out additional guidance. Invariably, someone has been through a similar change and/or transition.

**Invite Participation.** Get organizational members into the act whenever you can. The more ownership and control members have for the change, the more investment and commitment they will feel.