

Hello, this is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and We Build Better Contractors.

This week, I want to talk about an amazing statement that I heard well over 20 years ago at an FFI meeting. So, we're all in a trade association, whether it's AGC or the Masonry Contractors Association or ABC or something else.

So back in the day, when we were family business consultants, we were members of the Family Firm Institute, I went to a convention. And one of the speakers said something that I think might be as profound as any statement I've ever heard in my entire life. She said, "Change is fragile, and it must be protected." Now she was talking about that in the context of dysfunctional family businesses, "Change is fragile, and it must be protected," and she, of course, was right. But what about even healthy construction companies? Is change fragile? And must you protect it? And I think you absolutely should.

We talk about our change model, and we'll put this graphic up, and you can download it. We've talked about it lots of times. It was even the basis for my last book. And the change model talks about, in a graphic way, the human reaction to changes large and small. You've heard me tell the story about changes in our church, changes in our club. People can't stand change. They run from change. They fear it. They loath it. They avoid it. Change is anathema to so many people, but change is a part of life. Death, taxes, and change, I mean, those are the three things that you can count on in life.

So, the change model begins with the old status quo. That's where somebody is. A catalyst takes place, an outside influence, an inside influence, a client leaves, a customer leaves you, there's a lawsuit or something like that. You know, there's some catalyst happens, and that puts you into a period of chaos. Your accounting software no longer works well for you. That puts you into a period of chaos. Today, cyber issues, cybersecurity issues throw people into a period of chaos.

But as you work through the chaos and chaos is a horrible place to be. Nobody likes to be in chaos in their lives. A transforming idea happens. You begin to integrate these new ideas, and then you get to a point of practicing the new behaviors and new ideas. And they become a part of your organization, and you reach a new status quo at a higher level. That's the way change works. What I wanted to emphasize in this blog is change is fragile, and it must be protected. And that means you have to practice.

So, it's not good enough to work through and survive catalyst, chaos, transforming idea, et cetera. You have to practice. So, let's say, for example, you change your forehand grip in tennis. You can't go hit with a pro, and he says, "Roll your grip over a little bit more and go to a Western forehand," and then say, "Okay, great. I've got it now." You have to practice. So, you might have to go back to the pro. You might have to go to the ball machine. You might have to go with your hitting buddies and go out there and hit 1000 of those balls until it feels natural, the same with a change in your golf swing. Any change that you make in business, in life, in sports, or whatever, you have to practice.

Now you think about the great ones in sports, the great ones, the Tom Bradys, LeBron James, Albert Pujols, the great ones. Do you think that they just come up with these ideas, talk to the coach a little bit, make a change? Absolutely not. They're out there practicing. You know, they talk about Michael Jordan's work ethic. Nobody worked harder in practice than Michael Jordan. Did he have to work as hard as the rookie sitting on the end of the bench? Probably not. He was Michael Jordan. He was pretty darn talented. But he outworked everybody else. He practiced.

And so whenever a change occurs, whenever you drive change in your organization, it's not enough just to implement the change, turn your back, walk away from it, delegate it, say other people are going to take care of it. You have to orchestrate practice. Intentional, dedicated practice to bring these new ideas into your organization and to integrate them into your new status quo.

So, we have the change model here available for your download. I'd like to hear about occasions when you practiced. When you went through a change in your organization, and you practiced implementing the changes and making them a part of the new status quo in your organization. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI. We build better contractors.