



WIRED TO RESIST

The Brain Science of Why Change Fails
and a New Model for Driving Success

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 7th Mind
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**NEW Prologue
and Epilogue on
managing change
in the global
pandemic.**

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Prologue—Living Through a Crisis

I hadn't intended to record this audio book during a global pandemic. But as I wrap up the last chapter, the state of California, where I live, has declared a state of emergency and we are all on mandatory lockdown. Like many families around the world, we are trying to deal with this dramatic and frightening change in our lives.

While I wrote this book about professional change, the kind we see all the time in our work lives, I am both surprised and gratified how much the research and model are relevant now, during this worldwide crisis that is impacting every citizen in every country.

Accepting the timeliness of the recording, I decided to write this new prologue and epilogue to specifically address readers at this unique time we are living in. The neuroscience of change is helpful in understanding what happens to us, biologically, when we go through change.

Change comes in all kinds of forms, from the small and annoying to the epic and shattering we are witness to now. Any imposed change compels us to act, whether we want to or not. But in which directions will change move us? As you will learn, we can assess the impact of change by observing how long it takes to get acclimated to the new normal and how much disruption it creates in our daily lives. Needless to say, this pandemic is highly disruptive, will take several months to go through, and will take years, if not decades, to recover from.

Readers of this prologue come from all levels of this newly forming strata of pandemic-impacted employees, leaders, business owners and teams. The change models in *Wired to Resist* offer organizing principles that can guide us even through complete disruption of workplace norms. The neuroscience research offers education about the shared human experience that can guide us personally and professionally through the shifts.

Neuroscience teaches us that there are several brain structures that can get activated by change. And I see all of them happening to us now. The amygdala sees change as threatening and tends to respond with fear and anxiety. That's certainly happening to me—check.

The entorhinal cortex creates mental maps of our physical spaces and social networks, and if change impacts either or both of those, it has to do some heavy lifting. Yep, that's happening too—check.

The basal ganglia turns repeated behaviors into habits that we can automatically do without thinking. Some changes require us to not

only develop new habits that are awkward and uncomfortable at first, but also requires us to leave behind well-grooved and easy habits. For sure—check.

And we can also experience change fatigue when change is coming faster than our ability to adjust. Absolutely—check!

You'll also learn that we can look at people's motivation for change, based on whether we chose the change (yes or no) and whether we wanted the change (yes or no). We can agree this global crisis is a NO and NO, which means we are more likely to resist this terrifying change, and find it more difficult to lean in to what is being asked of us.

And yet we will. While humans are wired to resist change, we are also incredibly adaptive. We're already adapting. You can see examples everywhere—people of all ages are practicing new kinds of hygiene and engaging in social distancing, medical professionals are innovating solutions while fighting for lives on an hourly basis, and leaders are making rapid decisions and taking unprecedented actions.

In fact, leaders at every level play a central and very powerful role in how we each respond to and move through change. By the time this is done, we will have seen several examples of leaders who provided extraordinary guidance, and others who did unfortunate damage.

You'll be able to see how well they used the various strategies in Chapter 17 for leading successful change (“The Leaders Toolkit: Navigation, Motivation, Connection”). And you will also be able to be more proactive in your own journey through this difficult time, using the strategies outlined in Chapter 16 (“Tips for Travelers,” named for travelers on the change journey).

At the time I wrote *Wired to Resist*, I was on the other side of an unexpected merger and acquisition as an employee, something that was pretty intense at the time. In comparison to our current situation, the experience seems tame.

And yet, my research led to information that formed a new model and strategies that are absolutely relevant to this moment in history, and well into our future. We are each of us doing what we can to move through this time. We are each traveling on a change journey now. It is my hope that *Wired to Resist* will help you recognize your position in new and unfamiliar territory, and give you tools to help you navigate this change to the other side.

Epilogue—Thriving Through Extraordinary Circumstances

Now that you have read or listened to *Wired to Resist*, I want to frame the current global pandemic through the Change Quest™ Model.

Clearly, it is a change that we did not choose nor did we want. Humans will resist the imposition to drastically change their daily lives. Our various levels of government will respond with declarations and consequences to force compliance.

While we will largely obey, we will still go through all of the emotions of the change curve, especially those early difficult feelings of anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, and depression. But now, we will feel some of them more keenly without the distractions of our daily work and routines.

Since this pandemic is all about survival, our amygdala will be highly active causing us to feel ongoing waves of anxiety and fear. To manage the unknown, we will do things like obsessively read the news and hoard toilet paper.

However, because we are also wired to belong, we will care about others, even strangers, in ways we have not in a long time. We will make sacrifices to protect the most vulnerable among us, and we will help each other in new and innovative ways. Heartwarming stories, from around the world, of people coming together are already filling our social media streams and reaching our newly video-conferenced networks.

This global pandemic qualifies as both a “Quick Hike Up a Steep Hill” and a “Long, Intense Climb.” The immediate response to stop the spread of the virus and limit the death toll is the Quick Hike part. For a short but intense time, we are engaging in social distancing, not leaving our homes, and building temporary hospitals. It will be measured in weeks and will be highly disruptive.

It is also a long, intense climb because the aftereffects of the death toll, job loss, and economic recession will last, likely for months and even years. We cannot fully imagine or predict what is to come, which can fuel more anxiety.

Sadly, too many of us will be adapting to lives having lost loved ones or a job, possibly both. It is impossible to know what the future will bring, and it seems surreal to recognize that we are living through a global historic event that will be talked about for generations to come.

But I DO know that while we are wired to resist change, we do adapt, and often disasters usher in a period of great innovation and closer connection. Please use the tools in *Wired to Resist* to help you successfully navigate your work life and personal life through this global change. My hope is that each of us embraces this opportunity to lean in to this challenge and that we come together in recognition of our shared humanity.