

## DEFINING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

In the context of change within organizations, here's our definition:

*Change is something that dramatically shifts in our external world, causing us to resist, then to consider, and ultimately to adopt a more effective belief system.*

While this definition appeals to the linear part of the brain, until the brain's emotional sector agrees, change, as we have defined it here, doesn't happen.

This tornado story by Dr. Nancy Harkrider shows how change vibrates with global relevance regardless of where in the world you call home:

*Nancy grew up in a Texas farm family. In those days farmhouses were built on brick pillars with crawl spaces underneath large enough for children to play in as well as provide shelter for the dogs.*

*These houses worked well for a lot of reasons but were dangerous in a tornado.*

*Her great-grandparents Tom and Mary Ann lived on the backside of my grandparents' farm in just such a house.*

*One day, a tornado whipped the house off its foundation, taking it skyward. Mary Ann, an unflappable farmwoman, happened to be standing at the kitchen sink.*

*As the house spun upward, she looked out the window and exclaimed: “My Lord, Tom, we’re passing over William’s peach orchard!”*

*Their house landed in her grandmother’s herb garden.*

*When the rest of the family exited their storm cellar, they discovered Tom and Mary Ann sitting calmly on the porch of their transported house, none the worse for wear.*

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How did they survive? They stayed calm. They could see where the storm was taking them. After the tornado, they viewed their son’s farm from an entirely different perspective. They appeared the same on the outside, but the experience left them forever changed. That’s the kind of change we will explore in our book .

To this day, when anyone in Nancy’s family experiences emotional upheaval, they describe it as “passing over William’s peach orchard,” and everyone understands that one of the relatives has experienced and consciously absorbed some kind of significant shift.

We strongly recommend you work with others in your organization to create a story that captures the hearts and minds of your people. Nothing resonates like a powerful story, one with a “stickiness” that goes beyond description. It truly gets to the heart of change.

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**Excerpted from:**

Leading Change that Matters: Making Adoption a Reality

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