



The **Satir** Model

APPLICATION
FOR BUSINESS &
CORPORATE COACHING

WWW.VIRGINIASATIR.CO.UK

Virginia Satir

Virginia Satir (1916 - 1988) is internationally recognised for her approach to family therapy and her systemic work such as family reconstruction, that has also inspired Bert Hellinger to create family & business constellation work, now widely known to coaches.

One of Satir's most novel ideas at the time, was that the 'Presenting issue' or 'Surface problem' itself was seldom the real problem; rather, how people coped with the issue created the problem.

Satir also offered insights into the particular problems that low self-esteem could cause in relationships, both in private life and at work.

Moreover, help in issues with leadership, team work, motivation, executive charisma and presence stem as the result of her work.

Virginia Satir

In the mid-1970s her work was extensively studied by the co-founders of Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), Richard Bandler and John Grinder, who used it as one of the three fundamental models of NLP.

The Virginia Satir Global Network, originally named "AVANTA" by Satir, is an international organization that carries on her work and promotes her approach to family therapy and beyond.

Virginia is also known for creating the Change Process Model, a psychological model developed through clinical studies.

Change management and organizational gurus of the 1990s and 2000s embraced this model to define how change impacts organizations.

The Change Model

Change and improvement are always possible. This is the underlying principle that the Model is based on.

The Satir Change Model consists of 5 stages: status quo, resistance, chaos, integration and new status quo. It describes the effects of each stage on feelings, thinking, performance and physiology. (Figure 1)

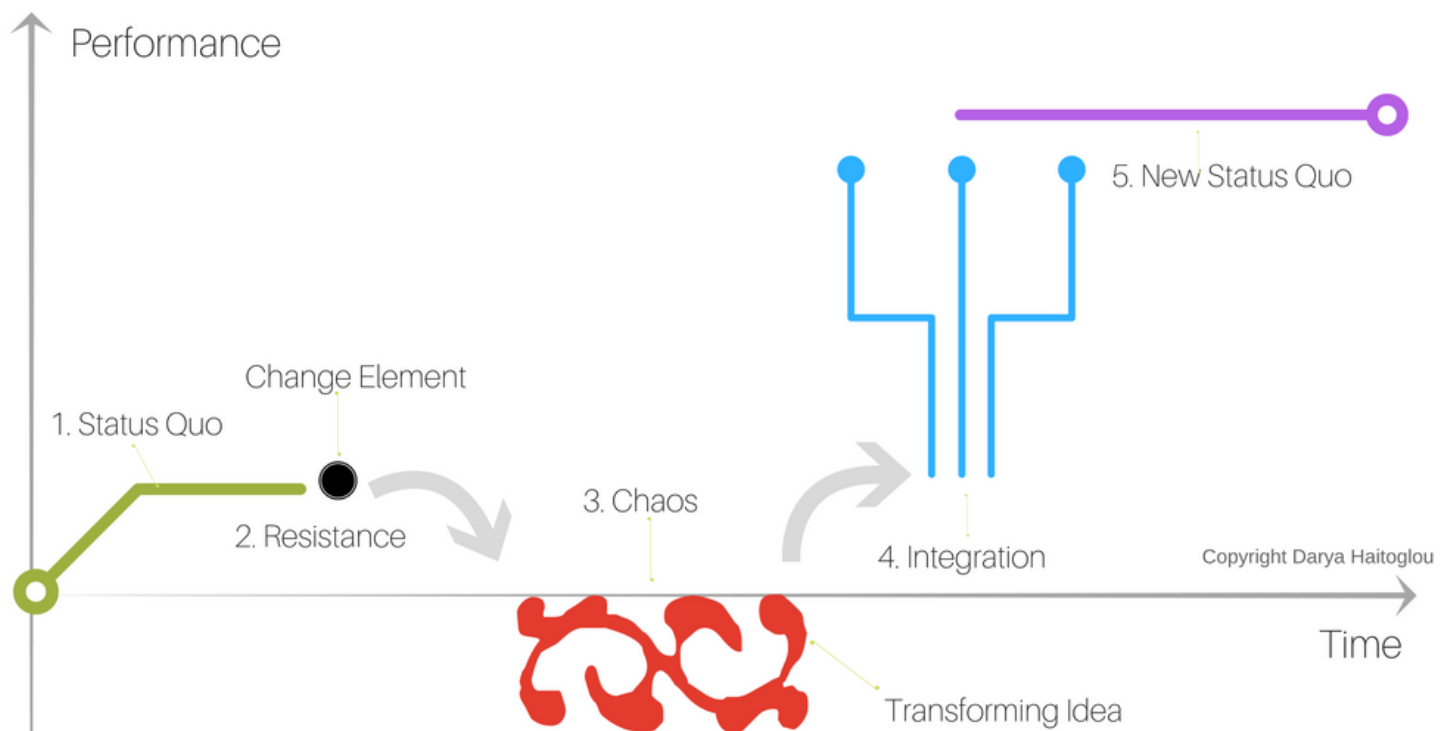


Figure 1. The Impact of a change process on performance for a well-established team or individual

The Change Model

Stage 1. Status Quo

'Don't rock the boat' is the motto of the old status quo. Consistency. Familiarity. Perceived stability. Stable relationships give a sense of belonging and identity. People know what to expect, how to react, and how to behave.

Implicit and explicit rules underlie behavior. People attach survival value to the rules, even if they are harmful.

Often poor communication and negative feelings become a new norm when an organisational system becomes unbalanced. Members use blaming, placating, and other incongruent communication styles to cope with feelings like anger and frustration. Stress may lead to physical symptoms such as headaches and gastrointestinal pain that create an unexplainable increase in absenteeism. Other issues could be emotional and mental burnout, depression, lack of focus.

The Change Model

Stage 2. Resistance

When a person or a team of people reach the 'wall of problems', a foreign element emerges. This change element 'rocks the boat', but encounters resistance from the rest of the team.

Most people deny the issue. That's the classic 'being in denial' stage. The change element is perceived negatively and is often regarded as threatening and not appropriate for the team.

These blocking tactics are accompanied by unconscious physical responses, such as frowning and closed posture.

Resistance clogs awareness and conceals the desires highlighted by the change element.

Members in this stage need help opening up, becoming aware and conscious of their reactions. This will help overcoming the reaction to deny, avoid or blame.

The Change Model

Stage 3. Chaos

The person or group enter the unknown. Relationships are under threat: Old expectations may no longer be valid; old reactions may cease to be effective; and old behaviors may not be possible.

The loss of belonging and identity triggers anxiousness and vulnerability. On occasion, these feelings may set off nervous disorders such as shaking, dizziness, tics, and rashes. Members may behave uncharacteristically as they revert to childhood survival rules.

Managers of groups experiencing chaos should plan for group performance to plummet during this stage. Until the members accept the foreign element, members form only halfhearted relationships with each other. Chaos is the period of erratic performance that mirrors the search for a beneficial relationship to the foreign element.

All members in this stage need help focusing on their feelings, acknowledging their fear, and using their support systems. Management needs special help avoiding any attempt to short circuit this stage with magical solutions. The chaos stage is vital to the transformation process.

The Change Model

Stage 4. Integration

The person or members of the group discover a transforming idea that shows how the foreign element can benefit them. It becomes exciting. New relationships emerge that offer the opportunity for identity and belonging. With practice, performance improves rapidly.

Awareness of new possibilities enables authorship of new rules that build functional reactions, expectations, and behaviors. Members may feel euphoric and invincible, as the transforming idea may be so powerful that it becomes a panacea.

Members in this stage need more support than might be first thought. They can become frustrated when things fail to work perfectly the first time. Although members feel good, they are also afraid that any transformation might mysteriously evaporate disconnecting them from their new relationships and plunging them back into chaos. The members need reassurance and help finding new methods for coping with difficulties.

The Change Model

Stage 5. New Status Quo

If the change is well conceived and assimilated, the group and its environment are in better accord and performance stabilizes at a higher level than in the Old Status Quo.

A healthy group is calm and alert. Members are centered with more erect posture and deeper breathing. They feel free to observe and communicate what is really happening. A sense of accomplishment and possibility permeates the atmosphere.

In this stage, the members continue to need to feel safe so they can practice. Everyone, manager and members, needs to encourage each other to continue exploring the imbalances between the group and its environment so that there is less resistance to change.

How to help

There are different activities you can do to help your coaching clients and teams going through change, in each stage.

Stage 1. Status Quo

Help question the norm, raise self-confidence, find their voice, flush out the negative feelings

Stage 2. Resistance

Help observe inner-feelings and acknowledge inner-resistance, mindful breathing, push through the fear, walk together with them

Stage 3. Chaos

Help validate them, acknowledge it's a temporary stage, assist in collecting the pieces of their puzzle

Stage 4. Integration

Help assist in synthesising information, making decisions, following through, establishing new relationships

Stage 5. New Status Quo

Help support them to feel safe to practice

Benefits

Here are some of the benefits and unique touch-points of the Satir model when applied to business and corporate coaching:

- Transformational experiences that lead to sustained improvements
- Higher self-esteem
- Raised confidence
- Increased creativity
- Better relationships
- Improved productivity and effectiveness
- Increased work with passion
- Found voice to say your truth
- Sense of relief from childhood burdens
- Alignment on different levels (work & home)
- Improved leadership skills
- Enhanced communication
- Trained cognitive abilities
- Better performance
- Clarity of focus
- Enriched well-being
- Deeper understanding of the Self

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