



Who Moved My Cheese?

By Spencer Johnson, M.D.

If coating change with cheese makes it that much tastier, then this book has hit the mark. Its author, Spencer Johnson M.D., co-wrote the One-Minute Manager with Ken Blanchard as well as dozens of other books. In 94 pages containing big print, which can be read in less than an hour, the author provides a reference we can use when dealing with change, whether at work or at home. The cast of characters consists of two mice, Sniff and Scurry and two little men their same size, Hem and Haw. Sniff is always out looking for new opportunities. He's the type of mouse who is always going to be the first one to a new opportunity. Scurry however is no dummy either. Even if it is others who have opened his eyes, he is quick to take action. (Remember it was the pioneers who got all of the arrows and the settlers who get all the property.) In stark contrast, Haw is slow to embrace the notion of change and is much more comfortable in his existing circumstances. However, he has the ability to break past fear and eventually embrace change – even if reluctantly driven to do so. And lastly, there's Hem who is hemmed into his situation and simply refuses to change.

You can imagine how Dr. Johnson takes us through a parable using these four characters and their quest for the cheese. From my perspective the most powerful question asked is "What would you do if you weren't afraid?" As Dr. Johnson points out, it is fear that is the greatest impediment to change. The other interesting point that he makes is that "The New Cheese can be a new relationship with the same person". Directly after that quote is another that I favor "I like the idea of letting go of old behavior instead of letting go of the relationship. Repeating the same behavior will just get you the same results." These two quotes are near and dear to my heart and the message I share in my presentation *Building Powerful Employment Relationships!*

I think the greatest benefit of "Who Moved My Cheese" is it gives people a common reference for dialogue. It will help people define themselves and others in terms of a Sniff, Scurry, Hem or Haw. It will allow us to look at change in new light.

I am generally not a big fan of using animal metaphors when dealing with people issues. Whether the analogy is to an individual or an organization as a cat, wolf, elephant, whale, monkey, reptile, or other four legged animal. The fact is, we are people - not animals. However, in the context of this story, the metaphors are extremely appropriate and create a common language for continued dialogue.

I give two thumbs up for "Who Moved My Cheese". You and everyone you work with should read a copy. You can order this book by going to Dr. Johnson's web site at www.spencerjohnson.com.