

Spencer Johnson<sup>1</sup>,  
Paul Andrew  
Bourne<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Northern Caribbean  
University, Mandeville,  
Jamaica.

**Correspondence to:**  
Mr. Paul Andrew Bourne,  
Northern Caribbean  
University, Mandeville,  
Jamaica.

**E-mail Id:** paulbourne1  
@gmail.com

**How to cite this article:**

Johnson S, Bourne PA.  
Who Moved My Cheese. *J  
Adv Res Eng & Edu* 2016;  
1(3&4): 60-63.

ISSN: 2456-4370

## Who Moved My Cheese

History is replicated with so many changes that it is totally impossible to accounts for all of them. Change in life is a fluid variable, particularly in human existence. Humans are social being, which means that interactions among themselves vary and predictability is highly improbable because of the unlikely choices that can be taken and oftentimes many of these are irrational. This irrationality is another justification of the combinations in decisions and why peoples' behaviour is always changing. An author opined that only thing in life that remains constant, change. Some people are thrilled by risk taking (I will refer to them as the change agents) and others are constricted by fear of the unknown. The change agents want to grasp on to new and different opportunities that present themselves, while non-change agents are the total opposite in their approach. Historically, a significant number of innovators refused to accept the reality of their circumstances; took the risks, embarked on the journey to make changes and were successful in their respective pursuits. The non-risk takers failed to see, accept or recognized the possibilities embedded in the unknown and failed so they were dormant. The result of their inactions is the continuity of the old order, no changes and fear overrides risk taking. The risk takers, on the other hand, blatantly refuse to let fear cripple them and embark on an exploration, which oftentimes result in change. This is a review of a book on 'change', the characters are fictitious, language is simple and the author takes the reader on a journey with them showing the difficulty involved in change and how risk takers change the landscape of their present realities. The book "Who Moved My Cheese" sought to educate readers of indecisiveness, fear of risk taking and how different personality types operate in decision making. The author of the book Dr. Spencer Johnson explain in simplistic way how one should and can dissect a most complex situation in an easy and exciting way, and how personality type influences the decision making process. "Who Moved My Cheese" outlined how four characters displayed different attitudes to changes, how people respond to changing situations. My examination of the material will be based on 1) how the text is written including word length of paragraphs, sentence structure and picturographs, and 2) the essence of the material pertaining to the characters, message and contribution of the work.

I will commence my review of the book by examining 'How the text is written'. The author used simple words, large fonts (16 fonts), and three sentence paragraphs. On average, most writers use smaller fonts, at least four sentence paragraphs, characterization of the work and verbose sentences.

In this book, Johnson used a few sentences to form paragraphs, Italics are used for emphasis example, *“Who Moved My Cheese”* and the *“One Minute Manager”*, pictures of cheese in which phrases are embedded and the readability of the text is at a grade five level. An example of the use of picturographs is on page 46 and on the cheese it reads “If you do not change you can become extinct.” The entire book is one character in which the author glide through stories, emphasis of issues, vivid examples by way of characterizations, and easy to read words. There was rarely a case in which the length of a word was longer than four syllables, simple words were used and the book was written like a child story book. From the covers of the book to the contents therein, the book attracted attention, the characterizations, the stories, the messages to the use of picturographs grabs the attention of the reader. The length of the book is pages, with illustrations and characterization that draws the reader into it. The book is some simply written, easy to read, written with such friendliness that even with a busy schedule is captivates the readers. (S) He will not close the book until the final page has been read.

The second aspect of the book deals with the ‘Essence of the material pertaining to the characters, message and contribution of the work.’ The book is a fictional one; but its messages have applications to the rear world. Although *“Who Moved Why Cheeses”* is a non-scientific manual, that is void of an employed methodology, literature review, this testing of hypothesis, findings garnered and ‘chapterizations’, it is an account of real life situations using the characters of ‘Sniff and Scurry’ and ‘Hem and Haw’ to relate a message of behaviour and what results from fear of risk taking. The characterizations were used to emphasis ‘The issue of change and how resistance can have significant negative consequences’.

We will briefly examine the characters Sniff and Scurry in order to show how the author used characterization to elucidate his

message. Both characters were extremely comfortable in their present situation and were comfortable in wanting it to remain as is. They enjoyed “Cheese” in abundance at a “Cheese Station C” (a characterization of issue). Sniff and Scurry detected from early that there were subtle changes occurring on their customary visits to “Cheese Station C”; but paid little attention to the implication of the situation. Having made those observations, they observe that something was happened but hope it would go away. They scanned the environment in anticipation of the possibility of any a change occurring. On their arrival the “Cheese Station C” one morning, they observed that all the “cheese” had disappeared and they were both disappointed. Their disappointment however did not paralyze them. They had already prepared themselves for this day having scanned the milieu sometime in the past. Sniff and Scurry were mentally for such a situation. They instantly ran off in a maze that they had already scanned, having anticipated the change. They were flexible and were themselves able to change with the situation that they were confronted with.

Unlike Sniff and Scurry, Hem and Haw faced with the same situation were restricted by fear and did not want to venture into the maze to seek alternatives and/or solutions. The latter characters were fearful of the unknown, did not want to go out in the milieu (example the maze) to seek options and sat waiting for a miracle, more cheese. Johnson used the situation of the characterizations to speak of human and link this to some people’s behaviour in life. He opined that in this world some people see the reality, sit and wait for a miracle while others prepare themselves, educationally, socially, morally and mentally for new possibilities. Johnson argued that as soon as the environment in some people is change, they are not caught off guard and are able to adjust. He lamented how some people having examined the environment do not plan for the changing realities, yet they expect a

change for the better and fear cripple their willingness to venture into the unknown for answers. The author showed that people are the most important factor in change, and if they are unwilling to take the step to change, it becomes the most difficult thing to do.

Change is “the move away from a present state toward a future state”.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the issue of change is difficult for humans as a future has no platform for reference. Actions of people are constricted by biases, socialization, psychological typology and social environment.<sup>2</sup> Hem and Haw like some humans demonstrated their unwillingness to accept or embrace change, and Rashid Md ZA et al. (2003) provide rationales for such resistance.<sup>2</sup> The fear of the unknown kept them rooted in ‘Cheese Station C’ and while they held onto the hope of a reverse of the bad situation that confronted them, their socialization, psychological typology are different which is shown in this reviewed book. It became inevitable that they are left behind in the general scheme of things; but the aforementioned issues retard their willingness to take risk.

In the book, Johnson indicated that some people like Hem and Haw believe that they entitled to what they have and blame others for changes occurring around them. He continued that even when some people are forced to move away from their present state; they hold onto customs and traditions instead of venturing out into the ‘Maze’ to examine likely issues. Using the aforementioned characterization, he showed argued that fear of the unknown retard some people from taking the necessary actions to welcome newness. While Haw eventually left ‘Cheese Station C’, he was paralyzed by the fear of the unknown and things remain as is for him. On the other hand, Johnson utilization another message showed that Haw having left the ‘Cheese Station C’ discovered that he began conquering his fears. Not only did he conquer his fear, his sojourn provided different outcomes. When ‘Haw’ finally found ‘Cheese’, to his utter amazement ‘Sniff and

Scurry’ were already there enjoying ‘Cheese.’ ‘Haw’ by then had recognized the mistakes he had made by resisting change due to fear. Those characterizations were potently used to illustrate the message of change, resistance, fear, and how unwillingness to take a ‘leaf of faith into the unknown’ will provide a different outcome.

Dunham RB et al. introduced three factors that can influence change. These are 1) cognitive, 2) affective and 3) behavioral attitudes to change.<sup>1</sup> Although Johnson did not use a scholastic approach to the issue of change, going into the factors that are associated with change, he showed the difficulty associated with the issue of ‘change’ and Dunham RB et al. now provide a better understanding as to why it may be difficult for some people to change.<sup>1</sup>

The use of the ‘Maze’ by Johnson represents the global environment in which humans must navigate, the different challenges, the complexities of the situation and the likely outcome when one succeeds. Clearly Ham which represents some people did not deal with the cognitive, affective and behavioral attitude and so it was unlikely to him to experience great outcome from risk taking. The messages forwarded by the book were clear, they were vividly illustrated, and the summative notes on the picturographs reinforce the messages.

The messages behind the book are vividly captured in the characterizations, illustrations, stories, and the simplicity of the language goes further to make the book captivating and appealing to the readers. The characterizations and stories are so written that the reader is able to become engulfed into the material, seek himself/herself, reflects on issues in life and examine how the characters can explain instances in life in which resistance to change or willingness to change had provided a particular outcome. There are constant changes occurring in the global environment especially from a technological perspective.

In summary, the book showed that there will be some individuals who will find themselves so socialized in their cultures and traditions that they will not embrace change and will be left behind. The author used 'Haw' represents those people. He bluntly refused to accept changing situations and was left behind. It can be extrapolated from Dunham et al. work such a person is not addressed the three elements of change. Change is not simply a product of psychology as it is behavioral and affective conditions. The author showed that change is a concept which ignites fear, apprehension, intolerance, resistance and disgust at times. While there is not easy way to embrace change, the uncertainty of nature is such that people cannot remain stationary in a changing world. I am of the firm belief that the message posited in this book is powerful, and the simplistic approach in writing and telling the story makes it even more meaningful and worth reading. The book is indeed worthy of being a best seller as the author invokes emotions, takes the reader for a journey, use characterization, simple language and storytelling strategies to relate a message of

profound importance. Despite the necessary reality that it may be difficult to change, the book shows the consequences of resistance to change which is worse than the risk of the uncertainty. Like the academic side to the message purported by Rashid and colleagues that people who are the most resistance to change can reduce, alter and erode the intended goal(s) of their life because of their culturalization and attitudes towards change (cognitive, affective and behavioral), this book encapsulated the same message is a storytelling way.

## References

1. Dunham RB, Grube JA, Gardner DG, et al. The development of an attitude toward change instrument. The Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Washington, DC. 1989.
2. Rashid Md ZA, Sambasivan M, Rahman AA. The influence of organizational culture on attitudes toward organizational change. *The Leadership and Organizational Development Journal* 2003; 25(2): 161-79.