

Kurt Lewin Model of Change



Stage 1: Unfreezing

- ▶ The Unfreezing stage is probably one of the more important stages to understand in the world of change we live in today. This stage is about getting ready to change. It involves getting to a point of understanding that change is necessary, and getting ready to move away from our current comfort zone. This first stage is about preparing ourselves, or others, before the change (and ideally creating a situation in which we want the change).
- ▶ The more we feel that change is necessary, the more urgent it is, the more motivated we are to make the change.



Stage 2: Change (or Transition)

- ▶ Kurt Lewin was aware that change is not an event, but rather a process. He called that process a transition. Transition is the inner movement or journey we make in reaction to a change. This second stage occurs as we make the changes that are needed. People are 'unfrozen' and moving towards a new way of being.
- ▶ That said this stage is often the hardest as people are unsure or even fearful. Imagine bungee jumping or parachuting.



Stage 3: Freezing (or Refreezing)

- ▶ Kurt Lewin refers to this stage as freezing although a lot of people refer to it as 'refreezing'. As the name suggests this stage is about establishing stability once the changes have been made. The changes are accepted and become the new norm. People form new relationships and become comfortable with their routines. This can take time.
- ▶ Practically there is never time for this 'freezing' stage. And it's just this that's drawn criticism to the Kurt Lewin model.
- ▶ In today's world of change the next new change could happen in weeks or less. There is just no time to settle into comfortable routines. This rigidity of freezing does not fit with modern thinking about change being a continuous, sometimes chaotic process in which great flexibility is demanded.