

# Managing Resistance: Perceived Losses

All humans experience an emotional reaction to change. Those reactions come from concerns or fears they perceive will happen. In the book *Leading Change* by Jeffrey and Linda Russell, discuss these perceived losses people experience during a professional change. Use it as a discussion starter with an employee who is struggling or simply for your own reference when attempting to help someone through change.

**Job Security:** People may fear job loss or a loss of financial resources due to a reduction in their job or income level.

**Psychological Comfort or Security:** People want to feel safe, secure, and comfortable. They may perceive that the change threatens their level of safety, security, comfort, and self-confidence by reducing their level of certainty about the world around them.

**Control over One's Future:** Related to the perceived loss of psychological comfort or security, people may perceive that the change threatens their ability to control their future.

**Purpose or Meaning:** People may perceive that their fundamental purpose and meaning in life is jeopardized. Change, they believe, threatens to take away the identities, hopes, and aspirations that make their lives meaningful.

**Competence:** People may believe that the change will reduce their ability to do their work or jobs well. They may feel unprepared for new responsibilities and duties, which can lead to embarrassment and a reduction in self-confidence.

**Social Connections:** People may believe that their social contacts with customers, co-workers, or managers will disappear. This can result in a loss in their sense of belonging to a team, group, or the organization. Since so much of our sense of self evolves through our relationships to others, this perceived loss tends to be the most traumatic.

**Territory:** People believe they may lose a sense of certainty about the territory or area that used to be theirs. This territory includes physical workspace, expertise, job titles, assignments, and psychological space.

**Future Opportunities:** When a change threatens expected rewards and opportunities, people fear they may lose a deserved reward that they have worked hard to achieve.

**Power:** Change can threaten a person's sense of power and influence in their organization and life. People may perceive that the change takes away part of what enables them to feel effective.

**Social Status:** People may perceive that the change will erode the status that they have achieved (through competence, influence, or hard work) compared to other people. They fear that what they have worked hard to accomplish may disappear.

**Trust in Others:** People may lose their trust and faith in others - especially leaders and others whom they have admired in the past - when the impending change threatens to take away other things of value.

**Independence and Autonomy:** When change is introduced, the perceived loss of competence creates a related secondary loss of independence and autonomy, in which people perceive that their ability to be self-directed and self-managed will be eroded.



Ask us about our leadership workshops and coaching packages.  
Abeo Consulting Group, LLC | [www.abeoconsulting.com](http://www.abeoconsulting.com) | 763.232.1020

FREE  
TOOLS