

**Kevin O'Connor: Change is Good: You Go First! Leading Others to and Through Change**  
**11:00 am-12:00 noon**  
**4/2/19**

Kevin O'Connor is a corporate consultant, professional speaker, and author of seven books. He spoke for approximately 45-50 minutes on philosophical, psychological, and practical aspects of organizational change and leadership using a variety of vignettes and personal life experiences to illustrate things he discussed.

-solicited the audience to say "change" out loud first with an exclamation, then a question mark, then a period. He emphasized that each way expresses something a little different

-related the story of a speaking with a doctor who sold his practice to a hospital. The doctor expressed that after a while, he felt less like a doctor, and more like an employee. The doctor also concluded that in life you often "are either at the table, or on the menu"

-O'Connor emphasized that leaders "inject and engage". He suggested a meeting strategy of being a summarizer and a collator at meetings. Be the person who organizes, collects ideas, then at the end poses a question

-References Richard Rohr (author, spiritual writer, speaker) and his ideas of order, disorder, and reorder

-O'Connor introduces the idea of "moments" and suggests the strategy of "initiating a moment" in our interactions with people (e.g. engaging with a person in an elevator)

-References Alfred Adler (1870-1937), psychotherapist; idea that people are born with inferiority and uncertainty, and what we want in life is significance and usefulness

-O'Connor uses a story of an experience from a horseback riding lesson as well as an experience at a party in graduate school to discuss human interactions, and to pose the question "what is your winning formula?" He stresses the importance of leading with our ears, and uses a horseback riding analogy to suggest the idea that you don't want to just be riding "on" the horse, but riding "with" the horse

-Next O'Conner shows image of Seurat painting "A Sunday on La Grande Jatte" and asks audience to pair up and ask what each other notices. He then explains the many things a painter considers before actually painting (order, design, harmony). O'Connor suggests that good leaders let people discuss things in groups of 2 or 3 to bring forth ideas.

-In describing compromise, and the different types of roles one can play, he uses the analogy of a drummer. A drummer needs to determine...depending on the situation and type of music they are playing "is it time to lay down the beat, to listen, or to do what you're told"

-Democracy: "I'm not going to [necessarily] get my way, but I'm going to get my say"

-O'Connor suggests a number of "tools you can use"

- As a first response to a person, or group...paraphrase with empathy. Don't pass judgement
- Demonstrate curiosity; consider questions (non-judgmentally) before conclusions
- Use encouragement; affirm what you hear that you like from people
- Connect thoughts and ideas with "and", not "but"
- Show appreciation

O'Connor concludes with a brief recounting and explanation of the lyrics for the Earth Wind & Fire song "September" (popular at weddings), and quotes the Earth Wind & Fire lead singer's philosophy that you should "never let the words get in the way of your groove."