

dear residents

The Courage to Change

October 29, 2023

Dear Residents,

I am somewhat nervous about the **planned change from overnight call to a night float system**. Sometimes it seems easier to not change anything and such inertia characterizes so much of how organizations conduct business. You've heard the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it..." and "fools rush in where angels fear to tread" aphorisms. As a person, I am fairly neurotic and risk averse. As a leader, I do my best to set that aside those personal traits and take risks.

Sometimes we make excuses like *change should happen slowly and deliberately* with many interim assessment steps. Sounds wise but sets you up to not get anything done – the *now is not a good time* action block. As an antidote, I have said the following to myself – *I would rather do something badly than do nothing at all*. Sometimes, I have an incomplete assessment of the possible outcomes but still feel compelled to do something, to get a start, to build momentum and to prevent *death by committee*.

The language of process improvement spans the speed of action. There is the speedy *just do it* approach where the solution is known, but some barrier is in place (that's what prevents me from tidying up my desk – perhaps the disorder on it helps me in some obscure way!) Then there is the concept of *Kaizen* where there are several possible solutions – but there is a reluctance of bringing the stakeholders together to agree on both the imperative for change and to help select one of many paths to change. When solutions are truly unknown, then *PDSA* (Plan Do, Study, Act) cycles and other more involved methods like *DMAIC* (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) are employed.

In planning and executing change it's important to use other people's time wisely. It's all too easy to assume that the only busy one is oneself and that others have oodles of spare time available. This is an easy error to make. Organizing for change respects everyone's time. I know that you have little time to spare, and that I need to be watchful of your work hours and your energy as we embark on changing the call cycles.

Resource limitations and people being stretched too thin can also stall or slow down change. The antidote is to reconfigure resource allocation and to eliminate non-value-added tasks. I will soon announce a new way of giving you funds for travel, conference registration, etc., which will eliminate the many required steps (intentional to travel, receipt submission, etc.). I am waiting for clearance from accounting.

Sometimes we are held back by perfectionism – the worry that unless we do everything well and be great at everything, we won't be good enough. You know that I'm an amateur windsurfer. And there is this maneuver called a jibe. It involves going upwind, then leaning the sail forward and using the wind to turn. I once told my windsurfing buddies that I get 75% of jibes completed – which can mean two things – I get 75% of them completed or I get ¾ of each attempt completed – It's the latter! I'm fine with being an imperfect windsurfer.



<https://howtowindsurf101.com/how-to-gybe/>

Here's a [recent video](#) – I hadn't done anything difficult other than just try and go straight and pick up some speed.

Thank you for taking these risks with me. It would be easier to do nothing – but it's brave to do something.

Best regards,

Dino Kazi