

'My Fire's Gone Out' – Liam O'Connell

Reviewed by Claire Cahill (July 2020)

How to cope with change in your work and your life is something that all of us are currently experiencing as we adapt to the daily challenges of Covid-19 world pandemic. Since 23rd March 2020, I've had the opportunity to revisit books that I enjoyed reading as part of my journey to become a qualified Executive Coach and over the coming weeks I'll share with you my learning and views on the books.

Who is the book for?

This book was written by Liam O'Connell and is an alternative to "Who moved my cheese?" Some may argue it is the new "Who moved my cheese". It's a book for anyone who is going through and experiencing change whether that be in their personal or work life. The theory can be applied to any type of change from redundancy to starting a new relationship. It covers the universal themes of common sense and the reality of life in general. By reading this book can help you achieve positive success and enable you to enjoy your life and work.

What did I like about the book?

I read this book in an hour. It was simple, funny and yet a profound story about coping with change. The fire is a metaphor for what is really important to you in your life and at work. Sometimes our personal fire can go out and throughout this story, it helps to get your spark back to relight your fire!

The 4 devils who are the characters in the book have been illustrated in colour during chapter 1 and being a visual learner enabled me to picture the devils throughout the book as I read the story. Imagine my excitement when the characters kept reappearing in colour throughout the book.

The 4 devils are called Sparky, Oxy, Diesel and Stubbo. For those that know me well, would describe me as a combination of Sparky and Oxy. You will have to read the book to decide if that is a true reflection. It's fair to say there is no right or wrong character. We are who we are when it comes to dealing with change and knowing what we know can help or hinder the situation. I would love to know which character you are and why?

After each chapter there is also a reflection titled "Thoughts from the flames!". These are great go to sections of the book as a reminder of the thoughts and feelings that can occur as we go through change and helped me to understand that everything we experience is normal.

My favourite thought from the flame which resonates with me and is part of my brand is "If you believe, you will achieve, without belief you have nothing. If you have a dream, make the dream come true!"

How have I used my learning?

Since first reading this book in 2013 when studying for my Corporate & Executive Diploma with The Coaching Academy and setting up my business, I've held onto the thoughts from the flame and

frequently reflected back on them as I've gone through change. I've not only used the learning myself, I've used it with my clients by creating a safe space for them to "Dream what their future could be, Inspiring their confidence to Achieve their hopes, dreams and aspirations by Making It Happen". On my business cards and website you will consistently see "Dream, Believe, Achieve – Make it Happen".

I've had the pleasure of experiencing all of my clients become unstuck as they've taken the action they've needed to make the change resulting in them coming out the other side with increased self-awareness, increased confidence, improved leadership skills, more effective decision making and improved communication skills.

Having remained in corporate world for the last 29 years because it was safe, secure, reliable and I'm fiercely loyal, it took for me to have a 6 week loyalty sabbatical before I did what I encourage my clients to do and take the final leap of faith to follow my passion. Like Stubbo I kept returning to the familiar routine despite craving freedom and independence. I was waiting and hoping for the redundancy payment that never materialised. I looked at the thoughts from the flames "Change can be frightening – talk about it with people who are close to you and take positive action to change things for the better". This is what I did and have never looked back. Every coach needs a coach and mine have helped me over the years to get to where I am now. Taking small steps forward daily help us with the change process and transition.

How will I use this learning to grow my business further?

There are currently many employees who are furloughed from work and considering their worth, wondering if they have a job to return to and if so, is that the place that they want to return to? We are all one of the red devils in the book and my role is to understand which character my potential clients are and how I can best help and support them to move from where they are now to where they want to be.

There are also many CEO's, Senior Leaders, Head of Departments, Managing Directors and Business Owners who are currently like hamsters in wheels, wondering when it is going to stop and how they can get out of the wheel to strategically think about their employees and operations. I want to be able to support these key people in their decision making process by using my expertise of employee engagement, corporate and executive coaching skills, knowledge and behaviours to enable them to thrive not just survive and achieve the results to celebrate success.

The final thoughts from the flames!

- Change happens
- Anticipate change
- React positively
- Plan and focus for the future
- Take action and the opportunity that change brings!

Remember..... Change can be good..... You only have one life, so live it, enjoy yourself and remember never, ever give up!