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*In Your Work and In Your Life..*  
Cheese?

**DR SPENCER JOHNSON**

Foreword by KENNETH BLANCHARD PH.D.

From the bestselling co-author of  
*The One Minute Manager*

## ***Who Moved My Cheese?***

### **An A-Mazing Way To Deal With Change In Your Work And In Your Life**

*Who Moved My Cheese?* is a simple parable that reveals profound truths about change. It is an amusing and enlightening story of four characters who live in a 'Maze' and look for 'Cheese' to nourish them and make them happy.

Two are mice named Sniff and Scurry. And two are little people' - beings the size of mice who look and act a lot like people. Their names are Hem and Haw. 'Cheese' is a metaphor for what you want to have in life - whether it's a good job, a loving relationship, money, a possession, good health, or spiritual peace of mind. And 'The Maze' is where you look for what you want - the organization you work in, or the family or community you live in.

In the story, the characters are faced with unexpected change. Eventually, one of them deals with it successfully, and writes what he has learned from his experience on the maze walls.

When you come to see 'The Handwriting on the Wall', you can discover for yourself how to deal with change, so that you can enjoy less stress and more success (however you define it) in your work and in your life.

Written for all ages, this story takes less than an hour to read, but its unique insights can last for a lifetime.

# ***Who Moved My Cheese?***

## **Contents**

*Parts of All of Us*

A Gathering: Chicago

*Who Moved My Cheese?: The Story*

Four Characters

Finding Cheese

No Cheese!

The Mice: Sniff & Scurry

The Little people: Hem & Haw

Meanwhile, Back In the Maze

Getting Beyond Fear

Enjoying The Adventure

Moving With The Cheese

The Handwriting On The Wall

Tasting New Cheese

Enjoying Change!

*A Discussion: Later That Same Day*

New Cheese !

## ***Parts of All of Us***

### ***The Simple and The Complex***

The four imaginary characters depicted in this story — the mice: "Sniff" and "Scurry;" and the Little people: "Hem" and "Haw" — are intended to represent the simple and the complex parts of ourselves, regardless of our age, gender, race or nationality.

Sometimes we may act like

#### ***Sniff***

Who sniffs out change early, or

#### ***Scurry***

Who scurries into action, or

#### ***Hem***

Who denies and resists change as he fears it will lead to something worse, or

#### ***Haw***

Who learns to adapt in time when he sees changing can lead to something *better!*

Whatever parts of us we choose to use, we all share something in common: a need to find our way in the Maze and succeed in changing times.

## **A Gathering**

### Chicago

One sunny Sunday in Chicago, several former classmates, who were good friends in school, gathered for lunch, having attended their high school reunion the night before. They wanted to hear more about what was happening in each other's lives. After a good deal of kidding, and a good meal, they settled into an interesting conversation.

Angela, who had been one of the most popular people in the class, said, "Life sure turned out differently than I thought it would when we were in school. A lot has changed."

"It certainly has," Nathan echoed. They knew he had gone into his family's business, which had operated pretty much the same and had been a part of the local community for as long as they could remember. So, they were surprised when he seemed concerned. He asked, "But, have you noticed how we don't want to change when things change?"

Carlos said, "I guess we resist changing, because we're afraid of change."

"Carlos, you were Captain of the football team" Jessica said. "I never thought I'd hear you say anything about being afraid!"

They all laughed as they realized that although they had gone off in different directions—from working at home to managing companies—they were experiencing similar feelings.

Everyone was trying to cope with the unexpected changes that were happening to them in recent years. And most admitted that they did not know a good way to handle them.

Then Michael said, "I used to be afraid of change. When a big change came along in our business, we didn't know what to do. So we didn't adjust and we almost lost it.

"That is," he continued, "until I heard a funny little story that changed everything."

"How so?" Nathan asked.

"Well, the story changed the way I looked at change—from losing something to gaining some-thing—and it showed me how to do it. After that, things quickly improved—at work and in my life.

"At first I was annoyed with the obvious simplicity of the story because it sounded like something we might have been told in school.

"Then I realized I was really annoyed with myself for not seeing the obvious and doing what works when things change.

"When I realized the four characters in the story represented the various parts of myself, I decided who I wanted to act like and I changed.

"Later, I passed the story on to some people in our company and they passed it on to others, and soon our business did much better, because most of us adapted to change better. And like me, many people said it helped them in their personal lives.

"However there were a few people who said they got nothing out of it. They either knew the lessons and were already living them, or, more commonly, they thought they already knew everything and didn't want to learn. They couldn't see why so many others were benefiting from it.

"When one of our senior executives, who was having difficulty adapting, said the story was a waste of time, other people kidded him saying they knew which character he was in the story—meaning the one who learned nothing new and did not change."

"What's the story?" Angela asked.

"It's called. Who Moved My Cheese?"

The group laughed. "I think I like it already," Carlos said. "Would you tell us the story? Maybe we can get something from it."

"Sure," Michael replied. "I'd be happy to—it doesn't take long." And so he began:

## Who Moved My Cheese? The Story

UNCE, long ago in a land far away, there lived four little characters who ran through a Maze looking for cheese to nourish them and make them happy.

Two were mice, named "Sniff" and "Scurry" and two were Little people—beings who were as small as mice but who looked and acted a lot like people today. Their names were "Hem" and "Haw."

Due to their small size, it would be easy not to notice what the four of them were doing. But if you looked closely enough, you could discover the most amazing things!

Every day the mice and the Little people spent time in the Maze looking for their own special cheese.

The mice, Sniff and Scurry, possessing simple brains and good instincts, searched for the hard nibbling cheese they liked, as mice often do.

The two Little people, Hem and Haw, used their complex brains, filled with many beliefs and emotions, to search for a very different kind of Cheese—with a capital C—which they believed would make them feel happy and successful.

As different as the mice and Little people were, they shared something in common: every morning, they each put on their jogging suits and running shoes, left their little homes, and raced out into the Maze looking for their favourite cheese.

The Maze was a labyrinth of corridors and chambers, some containing delicious cheese. But there were also dark corners and blind alleys leading nowhere. It was an easy place for anyone to get lost.

However, for those who found their way, the Maze held secrets that let them enjoy a better life. The mice, Sniff and Scurry, used the simple trial-and-error method of finding cheese. They ran down one corridor, and if it proved empty, they turned and ran down another. They remembered the corridors that held no cheese and quickly went into new areas.

Sniff would smell out the general direction of the cheese, using his great nose, and Scurry would race ahead. They got lost, as you might expect, went off in the wrong direction and often bumped into walls.

But after a while, they found their way.

Like the mice, the two Little people, Hem and Haw, also used their ability to think and learn from their past experiences. However, they relied on their complex brains to develop more sophisticated methods of finding Cheese.

Sometimes they did well, but at other times their powerful human beliefs and

emotions took over and clouded the way they looked at things. It made life in the Maze more complicated and challenging.

Nonetheless, Sniff, Scurry, Hem and Haw all discovered, in their own way, what they were looking for. They each found their own kind of cheese one day at the end of one of the corridors in Cheese Station C.

Every morning after that, the mice and the Little people dressed in their running gear and headed over to Cheese Station C. It wasn't long before they each established their own routine.

Sniff and Scurry continued to wake early every day and race through the Maze, always following the same route.

When they arrived at their destination, the mice took off their running shoes, tied them together and hung them around their necks—so they could get to them quickly whenever they needed them again.

Then they enjoyed the cheese.

In the beginning Hem and Haw also raced toward Cheese Station C every morning to enjoy the tasty new morsels that awaited them. But after a while, a different routine set in for the Little people.

Hem and Haw awoke each day a little later, dressed a little slower, and walked to Cheese Station C. After all, they knew where the Cheese was now and how to get there.

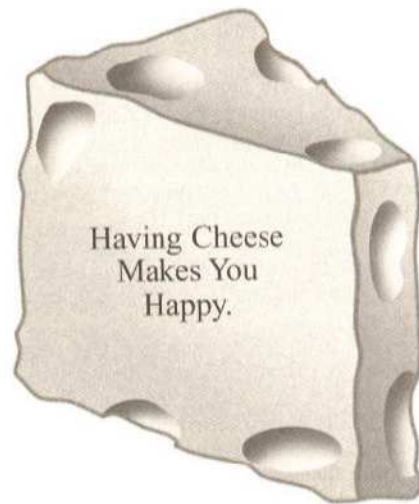
They had no idea where the Cheese came from, or who put it there. They just assumed it would be there.

As soon as Hem and Haw arrived at Cheese Station C each morning, they settled in and made themselves at home. They hung up their jogging suits, put away their running shoes and put on their slippers. They were becoming very comfortable now that they had found the Cheese.

"This is great" Hem said. "There's enough Cheese here to last us forever." The Little people felt happy and successful, and thought they were now secure.

It wasn't long before Hem and Haw regarded the Cheese they found at Cheese Station C as their cheese. It was such a large store of Cheese that they eventually moved their homes to be closer to it, and built a social life around it.

To make themselves feel more at home, Hem and Haw decorated the walls with sayings and even drew pictures of Cheese around them which made them smile. One read:



Sometimes Hem and Haw would take their friends by to see their pile of Cheese at Cheese Station C, and point to it with pride, saying, "Pretty nice Cheese, hub?" Sometimes they shared it with their friends and sometimes they didn't.

"We deserve this Cheese," Hem said. "We certainly had to work long and hard enough to find it." He picked up a nice fresh piece and ate it. Afterward, Hem fell asleep, as he often did.

Every night the Little people would waddle home, full of Cheese, and every morning they would confidently return for more. This went on for quite some time.

After a while Hem's and Haw's confidence grew into the arrogance of success. Soon they became so comfortable they didn't even notice what was happening.

As time went on. Sniff and Scurry continued their routine. They arrived early each morning and sniffed and scratched and scurried around Cheese Station C, inspecting the area to see if there had been any changes from the day before. Then they would sit down to nibble on the cheese.

One morning they arrived at Cheese Station C and discovered there was no cheese.

They weren't surprised. Since Sniff and Scurry had noticed the supply of cheese had been getting smaller every day, they were prepared for the inevitable and knew instinctively what to do.

They looked at each other, removed the running shoes they had tied together and hung conveniently around their necks, put them on their feet and laced them up.

The mice did not over analyze things. To the mice, the problem and the

answer were both simple. The situation at Cheese Station C had changed. So, Sniff and Scurry decided to change. They both looked out into the Maze. Then Sniff lifted his nose, sniffed, and nodded to Scurry, who took off running through the Maze, while Sniff followed as fast as he could.

They were quickly off in search of New Cheese.

Later that same day, Hem and Haw arrived at Cheese Station C. They had not been paying attention to the small changes that had been taking place each day, so they took it for granted their Cheese would be there. They were unprepared for what they found.

"What! No Cheese?" Hem yelled. He continued yelling, "No Cheese? No Cheese?" as though if he shouted loud enough someone would put it back.

"Who moved my Cheese?" he hollered.

Finally, he put his hands on his hips, his face turned red, and he screamed at the top of his voice, "It's not fair!"

Haw just shook his head in disbelief. He, too, had counted on finding Cheese at Cheese Station C. He stood there for a long time, frozen with shock. He was just not ready for this. Hem was yelling something, but Haw didn't want to hear it. He didn't want to deal with what was facing him, so he just tuned everything out.

The Little people's behavior was not very attractive or productive, but it was understandable. Finding Cheese wasn't easy, and it meant a great deal more to the Little people than just having enough of it to eat every day.

Finding Cheese was the Little people's way of getting what they thought they needed to be happy. They had their own ideas of what Cheese meant to them, depending on their taste.

For some, finding Cheese was having material things. For others it was enjoying good health or developing a spiritual sense of well-being.

For Haw, Cheese just meant feeling safe, having a loving family someday and living in a cozy cottage on Cheddar Lane.

To Hem, Cheese was becoming a Big Cheese in charge of others and owning a big house atop Camembert Hill.

Because Cheese was important to them, the two Little people spent a long time trying to decide what to do. All they could think of was to keep looking around Cheeseless Station C to see if the Cheese was really gone.

While Sniff and Scurry had quickly moved on, Hem and Haw continued to hem and haw. They ranted and raved at the injustice of it all. Haw started to