



Tips to Adapt to Change



Quick Tip:

To better adapt to change and influence others to do the same, seek to better understand it. Personal and team resistance to change may be driven by a lack of factual information about the what, where, when, why and how of a new environment or process. Learn as much as you can to get more

control and ability to plan for the future.

Adaptability is a matter of mindset and planning.

Being adaptable and flexible is important for personal, project and business success. Some people have a mindset to resist change and as a result, become frustrated and angry. Some people try to be adaptable but just acquiesce to a change even though they don't understand the consequences. With that mindset, they become victims. Others enthusiastically embrace a change but without a good plan and adequate support, they struggle and can become discouraged. In our changing world, developing an adaptable mindset and skills are critical for surviving and staying relevant.

When I moved out of a Fortune 50 company to start my own consulting practice, I was faced with incredible personal and professional change. My adaptability mindset and skills were most closely aligned with the third example. I developed a service offering, acquired certifications, and started networking with potential clients but soon realized that I underestimated the need for support and additional skills. In hindsight, my best path would have been finding partners with skills that complemented mine.

Taking on a major change in your life, career, business, or project without building a robust plan and a skilled support network makes change harder.

Plan for Change

Consider what types of change you may face in your life, your career or in your business and have a couple options in mind if a change is needed. Regardless of how well things are going, significant change can happen with little warning. The old saying "expect the best and plan for the worst" comes to mind. Being a little prepared for what could happen in the future will increase your adaptability. Some examples:

- * Share responsibility for household finances, maintenance and chores to help adapt if your partner is injured or ill.

- * Get a certification in your area of expertise or learn new technical skills to enhance your resume in case your position is eliminated.

- * Document a risk management plan for your project with risk probabilities and corrective actions. See previous blogs "What's the Risk?" and "Protect Your Sponsor from Risk".
- * Develop a business continuity plan for your company by documenting procedures and having adequate cross-training so basics can be sustained during a crisis.

These are limited examples, but you get the point. Having alternative paths to move forward is an important part of being adaptable. Then when a change presents itself, you can build a more robust plan.

Create Team You

When times get tough, it's important to have a network of people to support you. It can be hard to be vulnerable and ask for help so build a network well in advance of any potential change and keep it active. Invite people for coffee or lunch to build friendships, learn about their work and potential opportunities in their company or organization.

I have been fortunate to have a good network. When I started consulting, several colleagues needed transformation support with their clients or company and I was able to find engagements despite my limited sales and marketing skills. Networking also led me to marketing experts that gave me ideas and helped me improve. Always work on building your network!

Whether in business or life, we all need friends and colleagues. Pay attention to the people in your network! People don't always know what help they need or how to ask, so when you see someone overwhelmed with a change in their life, offer help and support. Work and life are a team sport.

Develop an Adaptable Mindset

How do you react when you feel discouraged or frustrated with small changes or daily inconveniences? If you feel sorry for yourself, become angry or look to retaliate and blame others for their (and your) shortcomings, then you probably need a more adaptable mindset. Learning to adapt to these small changes will prepare you to handle larger change in your life. When you observe strong negative reactions for insignificant things, STOP yourself from becoming upset. Acquire skills for managing anxiety and anger, learn steps for forgiveness, get counseling, do whatever you need to stop unhealthy negative reactions for small things. Face it, most daily challenges are truly "small things". The better you manage inevitable disappointments and frustrations, the happier (and more adaptable) you will become.

Practice Being Adaptable

When you are faced with daily frustrations, practice the techniques that you have learned to remain composed. Approach the situation rationally and consider it as an opportunity to do something different.

- * Your trip gets cancelled due to weather or work obligations, find a couple local activities that you've never done and enjoy something new.
- * You failed to get a promotion that you thought you deserved, consider it an opportunity to understand what you need to improve and increase your efforts to build your network.
- * Your product launch wasn't as successful as you hoped, plan to visit several customers to better understand their needs.
- * You get cut off in traffic, maybe they are having a difficult day. Say a prayer for their protection and better driving skills.

When faced with adversity, practicing adaptability skills is helpful to develop maturity and grace, find positive solutions, increase your ability to overcome obstacles and ultimately better handle change.

Building an adaptable mindset and skills over time, having a strong personal support network and developing plans to react to potential change will help you adapt more successfully when change shows up. You're less likely to be frustrated, become a victim or experience heroic failure. You will be prepared for change!

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Additional Resources:

Read the book "ADKAR, How to Implement Successful Change in our Personal Lives and Professional Careers" by Jeffrey M. Hiatt. This book provides practical tips for building change awareness, desire, knowledge, and ability and then reinforcing change.

Check out this [Infographic about the Adaptability Personality](#) and how to seek people with different strengths to help you through a change:

If you are leading a team through transformational change, review "[Tips for Leading Change](#)" for ideas about creating, understanding and sustaining change.

Talk to Me!

For ideas about how to tackle your next

transformational change, give me a call.



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About Annette

Annette is a business transformation coach focused on supporting better leaders, more effective operations and greater business value. Both vision and execution are key to transform work. She guides leaders to develop transformation vision and strategy, structure implementation roadmaps, and mentor teams to be successful. Her blog and newsletter share transformation tips, resources, and best practices.



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