

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

- **John F. Kennedy**

The timing of me finding this quote is absolutely perfect. Right now, I'm experiencing an enormous amount of change in my life, as are some of my friends. Change isn't easy and sometimes it's really hard. But everyone experiences change and those who accept it fare so much better than those who don't. If we keep wishing that things stayed the same so we're always in our comfort zone, we'll miss out on the wonderful opportunities that are probably right around the corner. Change always happens for a reason. So this month, I've written about the best ways to deal with change so you can come out in a positive place and not miss what the future is offering. If you're still unsure after reading this, please contact me.

Yours in health,



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Adapting to Change



Change is definitely NOT easy and it's probably fair to say that many people don't like it. You may prefer to live with the status quo because it's comfortable. But that's just not reality. Change is all around us, whether or not we like it or want it.

The important thing to remember about change is that you can either accept it or resist it. Like everything, it's all about CHOICE. Each of us has the power to CHOOSE how we react to change. Even with the tremendous amount of change I'm experiencing, I know even more change is coming. So I'm going to try to take my own advice and follow these steps to help me come out even better on the other side. Here's how I think you can adapt to and ultimately accept change that happens in your life.

1. **State Exactly What the Change Is**. This probably sounds ridiculous, but often when you're presented with change, you don't want to accept it. You can't believe it. This turns into denial, which is one of the stages of grief. Change can actually put you through some of those same emotions you experience after losing someone you love. Denial is one. Anger and Depression are others. But like grief, the final phase when dealing with change is Acceptance. Once you accept change, you can move on to something better. Major changes like losing a job or more minor ones like getting a new haircut you hate can both create a plethora of emotions. So something as simple as verbalizing the change is the first step for beginning the process of getting onto that path of acceptance.
2. **Listen to Input from Others**. When change is thrown upon you, especially when it's unexpected, it helps to talk to people you trust and get their thoughts and input. Withdrawing from the world and people who care about you by doing what I call "hermitizing yourself" is the worst thing you can do. You're probably not thinking clearly and it's helpful to have people you trust as

sounding boards upon whom you can bounce ideas and get objective thoughts. When you're caught up in a situation of change, your unclear thinking is caused because you're mad, sad or even stunned. Someone else, who is emotionally detached from the situation, can offer objective advice to help solve the problem and get you moving toward that path to acceptance.

3. **Spend Quiet Time with Yourself.** If you talked to more than one friend or family member, each may have had different thoughts about your situation. After you've had the opportunity to listen to everyone, take time to process what you've heard. Maybe you need to sleep on it for a couple of nights. Perhaps you need to meditate on it, or pray about it. The important thing here is to do whatever it is you do for yourself when you need to clear your mind and just think. My favorite way to do this is to go on a hike. While I'm usually with a group of like-minded people when I'm hiking 10-12 miles to clear my head, there are always times on that hike when I'm completely alone and I can talk to God. I do some of my best thinking when I'm in the silence and the beauty of nature.
4. **Experience the Emotions You're Feeling.** Letting go of emotions is one of the healthiest things you can do. Bottling up the negative energy you're feeling because of the change can wreak havoc on your health. I truly believe that your emotions and your physical health are intertwined and holding onto negativity can (and will) make you sick. I always feel better after a hard cry when I'm upset. Some people may take out their emotions at the gym, with a punching bag or on a bike trail. Do whatever you need to do to actually feel those emotions because that will ultimately allow you to release the negativity from your mind and your heart. More importantly, it will help keep you healthy, both physically and emotionally.
5. **Talk it Out.** Now that you've stated what the change is, listened to the advice of others, processed what they've said and experienced your roller coaster of emotions, talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling. Hopefully you were able to develop a plan (or maybe even two or three) that will help you deal with and adjust to the change. If not, perhaps a brainstorming session is in order. A back and forth exchange of ideas with someone you trust may help trigger some insight into forming a plan to help you take back control, which will help ensure things will get better and get you on the path of acceptance.
6. **Take Action.** Once you've determined what needs to be done to get you where you want to go, act on it. If you lost your job, start the process of looking for another one. Update your resume. Reach out to headhunters. Begin to prepare yourself for interviews. Things will never get better if you sit around doing nothing but wallowing in your misery because you were handed a change you didn't want. Once you start to take proactive steps to make new changes that are YOUR CHOICE, you'll start to feel better and get on the path to acceptance.
7. **Move On.** This is the stage of acceptance. When you've reached this step, you've now put yourself on a positive path where you're back in control of your own destiny. Now YOU are controlling the change rather than having the change control you.

The worst part about being faced with unexpected and sudden change is that you feel like someone else has taken the steering wheel and is driving you down the road of life. When that happens, you feel completely helpless, which contributes to the feelings of denial, anger and sadness. But once you have the chance to step back, talk to people you trust, process all the information you've gathered and ultimately take action to move on, you'll reach that all important phase of acceptance. Once you're there, you're able to take back the control you thought you'd lost and drive yourself down a new path. I'm a firm believer that everything happens for a reason and remember, God never gives you anything you can't handle. He can truly give you the serenity to accept the things you can't change, courage to change the things you can and the wisdom to know the difference. But the truth is, it's ultimately all in YOUR control by the choices you make. Don't miss out on a wonderful future because of your past or present circumstances.

Have a wonderful month.