

Be open minded

Your mind is like a parachute it works best when it is open. Sometimes we can drag the baggage of the past and superimpose it on to situations without being open minded and taking a fresh perspective. One thing that you hear a great deal from people who resist change is *“Well we tried that before and it didn’t work”*. Every situation is different and just because something didn’t work last time it doesn’t mean it won’t work this time.

Prepare your emotions

Accept the fact that you may be emotional during the change process. In the face of change you may feel unhappy, fearful, insecure, unsettled or frustrated. On the other side of the table however you may feel enthusiastic, delighted and excited. Any of those emotions will have an impact on your energy levels so it is important to prepare yourself.

Relax and go with the flow

Sometimes change happens and we have no control over it whatsoever. When this happens you have to choose how you are going to respond. If you resist change and remain rigid and inflexible it will be a lot more difficult and may even be painful. Going with the flow sometimes is the best approach. It may help to think of yourself as a boat in a storm. If you turn against the waves they will crush you, if you go with them they will carry you home.

Be Positive

Having a positive attitude about change is the right mindset to cultivate. If you go into a change situation believing that it is negative then you are more likely to experience negative outcomes. Whilst it is important to understand the risks and pitfalls involved, it is also important to focus on positive outcomes.

Keep calm and carry on

This old war expression is very apt. Some people literally panic when change happens because it totally destabilizes their world. If change is happening to you and its quite big then keep up as many familiar things as you can as reminder of how much there is in your life that isn’t changing. Stick to your usual routines, see people you normally see, and reassure yourself that not everything has to change just because some things have.

Get support

You don’t need to try to cope alone or keep your feelings to yourself. This can actually be unhelpful as repressing emotion can cause stress. Talk about it, get hugs and try to see the light hearted side of the situation. Being brave doesn’t win you any awards these days and will mean you end up managing your issues alone. It may mean finding the courage to ask for help. A supportive friend can be the best tonic and help you to get another perspective.

Challenge your perspective

Sometimes the way we view a situation can be very narrow because we perceive it through our own filter and will bench mark it against our previous experiences. It is important to really examine and look at the situation from all angles. Be careful not to get yourself stuck up a one way street with your thinking. There is always another angle and another perspective. Find them!

Chunk up change

Where possible try to divide the bigger changes up into smaller steps. For instance, a house move, a wedding or a divorce involves several stages. When you feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the change, concentrate on the step you've reached, rather than the bigger picture.

Make a plan

Change can overwhelm us, especially when our minds race and we start to imagine all sorts of bad things that could happen. We begin to catastrophize and before we know it we feel out of control. A good way to gain control and settle our minds is to make a plan of what we are going to do. Prepare for contingency. Write it down so that you can actually see it. Very often it's what we don't know and we can't see that scares us the most, especially those of us with wild and vivid imaginations.

Keep the end in mind

Change as the butterfly experiences can be painful. You may have heard the expression "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger" and sometimes we need to experience some pain in order to really relish and appreciate the reward. As change occurs and we experience discomfort it is also important to remind ourselves that this time will pass. All change comes to an end when the new circumstances are in place and become familiar to you. Every change, no matter how big, will end and you'll return to a feeling of normality.

Change and others

One thing that it is important to understand is that trying to change others can be a invidious task. Sometimes we can get frustrated with people, family, partners and people who we work with. If we expend too much energy creating an expectation of how we want someone to be and then to try and go about changing them we will set ourselves up for a great deal of disappointment. Focusing on their strengths and constructively feeding back information can help. Be careful that you are not expending too energy much energy on other people when you could be improving and changing yourself. Best to be the change you want to see and encourage others through your actions and example.

Be the change you want to see in the world - Mahatma Ghandi

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Tips on How to Manage Change

- ✓ Embrace change to get the best and most out of life
- ✓ Be open minded to all the opportunities that change can bring
- ✓ Understand the emotions that change can evoke and mentally prepare yourself
- ✓ Understand the key stages of the grieving process that may affect you
- ✓ Relax and go with the flow when you cannot control a situation
- ✓ Be positive and seek out and focus on the benefits of change
- ✓ Keep calm and carry on and manage change more practically
- ✓ Read up and get inspired by success stories of people who experienced change
- ✓ Chunk up change to make it easier and make a plan with contingency
- ✓ Get support from others and talk about how you feel to get another perspective

Personal Action Plan

What will I do?	Why will I do it?	How will I measure it?	When will it be reviewed and completed