

Managing Change

by Liggy Webb

Life in the twenty tens has seemingly propelled us into a rapidly changing world where the escalating pace of change is greater today than at any other time in our recorded history. Every aspect of our lives is changing including the way that we work, the way we communicate, the way that we shop and eat and, for the majority, the entire way that we live our day-to-day lives. Never before have so many people needed to deal with so many life changing decisions, in so many different life areas, on such a consistent and accelerating basis. One of the great challenges of our times is the ability to cope with change.

The only future thing of which we can be certain is that there will be change in all of our lives. At times, the changes may be only minor while, at other times, they will be major, but all of us will experience some degree of change. It is inevitable. You cannot stop it! What you can do however, with a little knowledge, skill and effort, is to learn how to manage it.

Change is, in fact, a vital criterion for any form of evolution or growth, whether as individuals or as an entire community, society, country or world. Without change there can be no movement or growth, either personal or global.

The Benefits of Change

People in every age have learned how to benefit from the winds of change. Great leaders, inventors, pioneers, innovators, builders and in fact every great success, in any area of life, will have been achieved in some way through learning to adapt successfully to change and embrace the potential it can bring.

The paradox sometimes is that we want something to get better however we are not prepared to come out of our comfort zone and make the necessary changes to achieve it. Sometimes we need to grasp the nettle and go for it. There is a great quote by Henry Ford that says *“If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got”*. Let's face it, if life always stayed the same and nothing ever changed wouldn't it get a bit boring?

There so many benefits to change and it's important to focus on these when things feel a bit daunting. The personal benefits of change are that it can help you to be more versatile and learn to go with the flow, which sometimes is a positive thing to do.

It also helps you to learn to be more flexible and blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape!

Change can make you a lot smarter. If things never changed, you would never learn anything new. And every time you learn a new skill, even if it is just how to be better at adapting, you are that much smarter than you were yesterday.

I also believe that change reminds us that anything is possible. It is so easy to get stuck sometimes, perhaps in a job you don't like, a home you feel uncomfortable in or maybe in a relationship you are not happy with. When you see things change, whether it is in your life or someone else's, it's encouraging to know that nothing stays the same forever.

Change brings about growth and the opportunity to create new approaches to problem solving and solution finding which is very useful with some of the challenges we face today. Change challenges the status quo mentality and can facilitate growth in a positive way. Change can also promote flexibility and appropriate change can help us to respond better to negative internal and external driving forces.

Most of all change provides us with new opportunities and paves the way for greater things and the more open minded we are the more we can embrace the benefits.

Managing Change

Managing personal change starts with a clear understanding of what our unconscious or hidden commitments and values really are. This will be the biggest stumbling block to being open and receptive to change. From early childhood onwards we all develop our own inner map of reality and we understand, interpret and relate to the world "out there" through this inner map.

Our capacity to be conscious or aware of our own inner map and especially how we create our experience of life through it is determined by our level of self-awareness. Raising our levels of self awareness is a very useful thing to work on. However, for most of us, most of the time, the way we perceive our world can be an unconscious process. In accordance with this inner map we have our own inner commitments to our own personal priorities. These will have been built up over the years from the negative and positive experiences that we have had.

Our inner hidden commitments have a high priority and will over-ride any counter intentions that conflict with them. We assign this a high priority because the hidden commitment is inextricably linked to a perception that we have of our own physical, psychological, social or emotional safety and requirements. This hidden commitment is nearly always outside of our conscious awareness. The easiest way to identify our inner resistance is to observe our reactions and behaviour in our attempts to change. Taking note of how you react in certain situations will help you to be able to process the information so that you can understand yourself better and manage change.