

## **Guidelines for Coping with Change**

(taken from "Coping with Change in the Workplace")

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**Share your fears.** Share your fears with your life partner or the person closest to you. Home should be your refuge. Keeping worries to yourself can destroy your home life.

Don't create additional problems by freezing out someone who cares and who may be able to help you be more objective about dealing with your worries and fears.

Acknowledge that change is constant. Accept the fact that change is now a constant in our work lives. If you accept it, you won't be overwhelmed by it. In fact, change is good for you; it is the path to personal growth. It forces you out of comfortable and predictable grooves, no matter how comfortable that rut has become.

**Avoid bitterness, grudges and blame.** One of the factors that keep us from accepting something new and different is the very natural desire to blame someone for our turmoil. Perhaps we think we have been treated unfairly. It is so easy to feel bitter, to hold grudges, to blame the boss or "the system" for failing us. But the more we hold tight to that bitterness and focus on how unfairly we have been treated, the harder it will be to accept that there is no going back to the comfort and predictability of the past. Focusing on how we have been "wronged" takes precious time and energy away from actually dealing with the situation itself. Be aware of this type of unconscious thought behavior. Choose to get beyond it. Look forward, not backward.

**Prepare for change.** Keep your skills current and be aware of trends in your environment that could affect your career. Keep your resume current.

**Take breaks.** Take breaks when work stresses threaten to overwhelm you. Get outdoors. Take a short walk when things get tough.

**Keep networking.** Even if you are happy in your current job, keep your eyes open for the next opportunity. Remember that your current position is your 'current temporary assignment.'

**Take care of your body's basic needs.** Exercise regularly and get enough sleep. Many people suggested yoga as an effective counter to stress.

**Update your financial plan now.** Know your financial situation and your financial worth so you can be realistic about how long can you survive without a paycheck. Talk to an experienced financial planner. You may be surprised at the resources you do have. When you have a plan for dealing with financial setbacks, you will be surprised at how much stress will disappear.

**Strive for work-life balance.** Remember: It's just work! You can keep your work worries in proportion if you don't define yourself solely by your profession. You are more than your resume. You are a person with many and varied talents, values and abilities. Your job uses just some of your skills, but not necessarily the most important ones. If you recognize your other talents and abilities, you will find a period of tension on the job or of unemployment to be not quite so demoralizing. You will maintain your self-confidence.

**Develop non-work-related interests.** Take time to develop interests and goals that are different from and unrelated to what you do at the office. Focus outward on the people in your life, not inward on your worries. Reach out to family, friends and worthy organizations. Appreciate how much there is of value in your life. This will go a long way toward helping you cope with the stresses of change.

Thomas Carlyle understood that the worst consequence of wave after wave of unanticipated change and the ensuing workplace chaos was its affect on our self-confidence. It doesn't take much of this kind of buffeting to undermine our sense of self. And the more prolonged the crisis, the more thorough the battering the psyche takes. The guidelines above can help you avoid this sort of personal wear and tear. However, no matter how helpful each guideline may be, it won't help until you take action personally. So row your own boat. Don't sit there waiting to be tossed about by each breaking wave.

I find the following thought (as said by Deepak Chopra) immensely comforting in times of great upheaval: "Nothing limits us except ourselves; for the truest aspect of every person is unbounded potential."