

Coping With Change

Traumatic life events and major changes are an inevitable part of life. From the death of a loved one, personal illness, financial set-back or divorce, to starting a new job or moving into a new home, change throughout life is constant. How is it that some people can move beyond crisis and disappointment and actually make their lives better, while others never quite recover and continue to suffer?

The changes that seem to cause us the most problems are the changes that we feel we have no control over. Indeed, numerous external events will force changes upon us, changes which we do not want, changes which can make our life painful and difficult.

People who deal effectively with traumas and changes understand that they have no control over such external events. They realize that they cannot change the traumas or crises; that they can only change themselves.

Your greatest power in the face of adversity is your power to choose how you will react.

You may not be able to control the external event. But you can maintain your self-control by choosing your response.

Approaching Change as a Challenge

Your best approach to successfully deal with a major change is to approach the change as a challenge to be mastered. By doing so, you are recognizing change for what it really is, an opportunity to learn and

improve and move forward with your life. You're choosing to be self-empowered and acknowledging that...

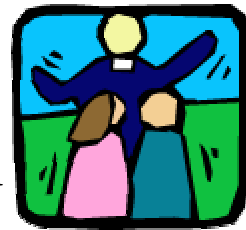
...you are responsible for your own health and happiness, no matter what happens to you.

Six Major Kinds of Change

The first step in dealing effectively with change is to recognize change for what it is. Losing your job is change. Divorce is change. Finding out someone you love has a drinking problem is change.

Researchers have identified six major kinds of change that seem to cause the most turbulence in our lives:

- 1. Loss** - Loss of anything that is important: a loved one, friendship, job, income, loss of a hope or dream.
- 2. Separation** - Being apart (physically or emotionally) from anyone or anything that is important to us: your job, home, loved ones, people or friends you are used to being with.
- 3. Relocation** - Moving, whether it be from one house to another, one city to another, across the country, or moving your office down the hall.
- 4. A Change in a Relationship** - A significant change in any relationship that is important to you: spouse, child, parents, close friends, associates at work, or boss.
- 5. A Change in Direction** - A change in goals or focus: a new career path, getting married, retirement, going back to school, undergoing major surgery.



- 6. A Change in Health** - A change brought on by illness or a health problem, or a change toward good health.

What makes change so difficult for some is that each of the major changes above always brings more change with it. One change is hard enough, but too many

changes at once can be overwhelming. Divorce, for example, can change a lot more than just the relationship itself.

It can change your finances, where you live, who you spend your time with, how often you get to see your children, and even what you do with the next several years of your life.

Guidelines For Dealing with Change

1. Recognize and understand the change - Learn everything you can about the change. The more you know it, the better you'll be able to deal with it. Ask questions such as: What's the worse thing that can happen? What do I stand to lose because of this change? How is this change affecting me now? Who or what is in control of the effects of this change now? Is there a way to minimize the negative effects of the change? What result do I want to avoid? What result do I want to create?

2. Identify your opportunities - Begin by asking yourself, in light of your change: What are my possibilities and opportunities for growing? for learning? for becoming wiser? stronger? healthier? more loving? more productive? What benefits or gains are hidden in this call to change?

3. Choose your action - To deal effectively with change, there is nothing more important than what you actually do about it. Review your possibilities and then ask yourself: What is the most important thing for me to do next? What action can I take today? What action can I take tomorrow? Write down, on paper, the action steps you are going to take. Writing them down on paper is a well-proven method for making goals real and focuses you toward making them happen.



4. Review your progress and make adjustments - On a regular basis, review everything you are doing in dealing with the change. Ask yourself: Am I doing the right thing about this right now? Which strategies are working and which ones are not? Is there something else I should be doing?

The Road Through Crisis and Trauma

If you're currently experiencing the initial impact of a major loss or disappointment, you may wonder if you can ever feel good about your life again. It is normal, for a time, to feel hopeless, overwhelmed, confused, angry or beaten by your circumstances; these emotions are a normal part of the healing process.



However, after a period of time, these emotions will no longer serve you well. In fact, left unresolved they can rob you of your motivation and enthusiasm for life, undermine your personal and professional relationships, trigger long-term depression and leave you highly vulnerable to physical illness.

If you feel "stuck," if you find yourself saying, "I don't know what to do next," follow the guidelines suggested above. Start by asking questions. The simple act of asking questions can not only lead to constructive answers, but also build your own conscious awareness that you are actually doing something about your life. That's something that will feel good to you and build your confidence and self-esteem.

The road through crisis and trauma is never easy. There will be setbacks and discouragement. But by approaching change as a challenge, believing in yourself and learning skills for dealing with change, you can learn to take control of change in your life. You can learn to enhance your life in spite of adversity and change.

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Your EAP is here to help

If excessive stress is negatively impacting your personal, work or family life, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you. The EAP is staffed with trained counselors who can help you assess the situation, suggest ways to help, and help you determine a plan of action.

For more Self Help Quizzes "click" here :

http://www.healthy-exchange.com/online_library/index.htm