

Making The Most Of Change

In making the most of change, perhaps the most valuable quality you can develop is flexibility. Form the habit of remaining open minded and adaptable to new information and circumstances. When things go wrong, as the normally will, don't get upset and frustrated, practise looking into the change or reversal for the opportunity or benefit it might contain.

Superior men and women are invariably those who remain calm and keep their wits about them in the midst of unexpected turbulence. They take a deep breath, they assess the situation. They keep themselves calm and unemotional by asking questions. For example, if someone does not fulfil a commitment, or if a sale is cancelled, or fails to go through, they keep their minds clear and steady by asking questions like "why did this happen?" "How did this happen?" "How serious is it?" now that it has happened, what are the various things we can do?

Robert Fritz, in his book "*The Path of Least Resistance*", makes a clear distinction between effective people and ineffective people. Instead of consciously making the decision, and they create it to what is going on around them, and they respond to their emotions, sometimes blowing up and sometimes becoming depressed. They ride an emotional roller coaster. And the very best thing they can hope for is a mode of behaviour, is it to go back to the way before they were upset.

The superior person concentrates on the future vision. Whenever an unexpected change or setback occurs, the superior person focuses on what he wants to be at a future time. This future plan has been thought through carefully. So it is easy to bring up at a moments notice.

Since your conscious mind can only hold one thought at a time, when you deliberately insist upon thinking of your goal, your mind immediately becomes calm and positive, and you feel in control. Superior people prefer future over past. They always ask what do we do know instead of walking around looking for something to do and blaming and criticizing others.

There is a poem "*two men looked out of prison bars, one saw the mud the other saw the stars, you can deal with change by focusing on the future and by seeing the glass half full rather than half empty*".

Physiology between an internal locus of control and an external locus of control. Your locus of control is where you feel in control is located for a particular part of your life. A person with an external locus feels the control he is controlled by something outside his life. Most people feel that their boss, or their bills, or their relationships, or their childhood experiences control them, or she feels a high degree of stress. And with a locus of control a person is very tense and uneasy about change. Change to them is like a threat and may leave them in a worse state than before.

On the other hand a person with an internal locus of control enjoys a high degree of determination. He feels he is very much in charge of his life. He plans his work and works his plan. He accepts a high degree of responsibility, and believes that everything that happens happens for a reason.

The only thing that you have completed over control is the content of your conscious mind. As Thomas Huxley said, “experience is not what happened to you”. Since change is not inevitable and conscious, it is how you think what is happening to you that in determining how change affects you, and whether you use it to your advantage or not.

In his book *Celebrations of life*, Rene Dubos says that “*We fear change more today ever than before, and for less reasons. The reason we fear change is because we are afraid it will make things worse than before*”.

No one fears change that implies improvement. For example, if you learnt you were going to change your life style because you won the lottery, this is one you would not have to dread. It is change that brings on an unexpected surprise and it causes you to feel that you have lost a certain part of control in your life. On the other hand a capacity to resist and fear change often leads to stagnation.

Stagnation:

The key to beating stagnation is the embracing of change. You should never have a blind love of your organisations product or service. This can cause your business to miss opportunities as the market changes. Embrace Change! Reward risk taking, encourage creativity and innovation, this will remove the roadblocks that often hinders company growth and improved business performance.

Your aim is to become a change master, to embrace change and welcome change, and to ride the tides of change. You do this by taking control of the environment that drives your life or business and by assuring that it is predominantly positive and achieves the improvements that you desire.

Boat builders know that the deeper the keel of the boat is the more stable the boat will be in the water. The same holds true for you, the deeper your keel is the more stable your life will be, and less likely you will be blown over, or off course, when an unexpected change occurs.

You can deepen your keel and increase your stability by consistently setting goals. Goals enable you to control the direction of change. With goals, change becomes planned and deliberate, instead of a random haphazard. Goals ensure that the changes that take place in your life are primary self-determined and self directed. With clear and specific goals the changes that take place will tend to be positive and move you towards the realisation of something that you want to achieve, rather than blow you off course.

For example if you own a business or in sales, you will have many disappointments and setbacks. That is the nature of the game. They are inevitable and unavoidable. Some things work out and some things don't. Sometimes you win sometimes you lose, in spite of your best efforts, unexpected events will derail you even with the best laid out plans. The beginning of setbacks will begin when you first enter the world of working, and it is a continuous process for the rest of your life. Problems and obstacles to peak performance are like changes in the weather, they just happen.

The best results are achieved if you commit to the setting of clear goals for your work, family and for your personal development, then no matter what happens you can concentrate refocusing and the pursuing of your goals. Rise above the challenges of the movement, and keep your eyes on your cherished dreams.

If you are in sales, and you are working toward sales goals, you will be dealing with a wide range of prospective customers. They will be short term and medium term. Meanwhile you will be working on yourself and have more knowledge in your field. You will have plans and engage in activities with important people in your life. With clear goals in your life you will be multidimensional instead of one-dimensional. Any disappointment in life is a setback and will be quickly offset by the fact that you are busy in other areas, and you will not let yourself use up too much emotional energy.

With a clear idea of what you want to complete and accomplish, you can develop resilience, which allows you to bounce right back. You develop what we call a hardy/strong personality, and become the type of person who is resistant to the negative emotions of people who have no goals and no direction.

The first step in dealing with change is to accept the change as a reality. Acceptance is the opposite of rejection or resistance. Acceptance will keep our mind clear calm and positive. As William James said, ***“the starting point in dealing with any difficulty is to be willing to have it so”***. The minute you accept that a change has occurred and you can't cry over spilled milk, you become more capable of dealing with the change and turning it into your advantage.

One-way to deal with the worry that is often generated by the unexpected is to sit down and ask yourself “What exactly am I worrying about? What is the best possible outcome from this situation? Focus on the positives of the situation rather than the negatives.

In medicine, it is said that accurate diagnose is half the cure. When you sit down and worry about a prognosis, it is then that you have a choice to decide on how you will best deal with the situation.

The second step is to ask yourself ***“what is the worst possible thing that can happen in this situation?”*** Much worry and stress come from refusal as a result of a difficult situation. When you find a possible solution, write it down and then the definition of the problem will become more visible. Your problems will evaporate as soon as you find the worst result and deal with it.

You are now ready for the third step, and that is to adjust your behaviours and actions to create a new situation. Ask yourself what are all the possible outcomes that are bad and develop appropriate strategies to make sure that they do not happen. Sometimes we call this damage control, in the business arena, it is a part of the effective decision making process. It is called the mini max regret solution. This is when you minimize to maximize opportunities from the damage that can occur from an unexpected setback? As you begin thinking of all the things you can do, you are adjusting your mind to the new information and taking steps to deal with the change effectively.

The final step in this four-step method for dealing with change is to improve on existing situations. Often, a change signals that your plans are incomplete or that you might be heading in the wrong direction. Serious changes, which bring on serious problems, are often signs that you are on the wrong track. There is an old saying, ***“Crisis is change trying to take place.”*** If instead of resisting change, like a pine tree that snaps in the strong wind, you bend with change, like a willow tree, you will often find that change is a healthy and positive step towards achieving your goals.

If you look into any change, you will always find something good and beneficial for you in the change. Look for the valuable lesson contained within every setback. Treat mistakes or bad decisions as an opportunity for learning. Ask yourself open-ended questions like “What is the hidden advantage that you can turn into a potential benefit? Is this change a signal that, if properly responded to, it would save you from bigger problems in the future? Since your mind can only hold one thought at a time, educate yourself to look at the positive aspects of any change, keep your mind clear, and remain optimistic and confident. Remember change is often an opportunity for growth and new opportunities, as the ancient Chinese proverb indicates ***“Nothing Changes If Nothing Changes”***

Viktor Frankl in his book ***“Man’s Search for Meaning”*** said, *“The last great freedom of man is the freedom to choose his attitude under any given circumstance. You cannot control what happens to you, But you control your attitude to what happens to you, and in that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you”.*

The mark of a superior person is what is called ***“tolerance for ambiguity.”*** This simply means you have the capacity to deal effectively in a rapidly changing situation. The higher you grow; the greater your income and responsibilities. The higher your status and position, the faster the rate of change that will occur around you. At every stage, it will be your ability to function with calmness, clarity and quiet assurance that will mark you as a person who is going places in life.

In the final analysis, your ability to perform effectively in the real world of ongoing change is the true measure of how developed a person really is. And the keys are to accept change, to adjust to change, to improve upon change and then move to the next situation. As you continue to do this, you will have such a wonderful feeling of self-control and self-determination that your whole life will be enriched, and so will your results.

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