



Accepting change is vital to your health and happiness

Have you ever heard the old adage *“the only constant in life is change”*? It is one of the truest statements there is: change is inevitable, it happens to everyone, and it will happen again and again and again. Though change may be constant, for many people, managing change remains one of the most difficult challenges of day-to-day life; we prefer the known over the uncertain. Accepting change and building resilience are fundamental to good mental health.

Change comes in all forms and in all areas of life: personal and professional relationships begin and end, you start a new job, your family moves, loved ones die, you have children, you report to a new boss, new workplace protocols are introduced, and so on. Even positive change, can be difficult to adapt to. Some changes in our personal or work life can ask us so much from us that the impact can lead to depression or anxiety. However, proactive resilience building can make change less frightening and a more fulfilling prospect.

Here are some building blocks for a resilient self that will help you be more flexible and prepared for change:

1. Foster radical acceptance

Radical acceptance is a psychological tool that teaches us that while change can be painful, it is resisting change through the negative stories we tell ourselves, such as “this isn’t fair” or “I can’t get through this” that causes real suffering. Reality is the way it is and if we can’t change it, accepting it is really our only choice.

2. Put effort into nurturing friendships

When change happens, we rely on the people around us to help us move through difficult times. Make and maintain strong connections with friends and family members. Not only does this allow for mutual support, but it also helps to remind you of your true self regardless of changes happening around you.

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3. Make a resilience plan

When a big change comes your way, be prepared. A resilience plan should involve financial considerations like allotting part of your savings that is specifically for unexpected changes. It should also include self-care strategies and people you can call when you need to talk about how you are feeling and what may come next.

4. See change as a virtue

Certainly, some changes are painful, even devastating but fortunately change also means opportunity for growth. By actively seeking change in the form of self-improvement and personal growth you will increase your resilience. Build positive change into your life by pursuing continuing education, setting new personal goals, and taking up new interests.

Increasing your resilience does not mean you will be insensitive or unaffected by change, only that you won't be loose your balance or feel incapacitated to take action. People who practice radical acceptance still experience grief and the emotional impact of change and loss, but are able to move through these states and maintain positive mental health.

Including the tips above in your day-to-day life will help you be prepared for change and be ready to make the best of it when it happens.

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Communication tips for the digital age

Clear and effective communication is a skill that comes with different demands and requirements depending on the medium that is being employed. In today's digital age, there are more factors than ever before to take into account when engaging in communication as expectations, tones, and styles vary across different technologies. Speaking with someone face-to-face different than sending an email and a phone call is different than a text message. Different mediums are used at home and at work, bringing even more nuances into play. Here are some factors to consider when you are using and moving quickly between multiple forms of communication.

Choose your form wisely. When is the right time to send an email and when would making a phone call be more efficient or effective? If you need an instant answer, you might be better off making a phone call. If what you need to communicate contains lots of details such as dates, times, places an email is going to be your best choice. It can also maximize the effectiveness of your communication to "double up", by sending an email and following up with a phone call or vice versa.

Shift your tone for work and home. Now that we have messages to our colleagues interspersed with texts to friends and family, it is important to be attentive to tone. Texts and emails often have us writing in shorthand, using abbreviations and slang without even realizing it. Keep your audience in mind when you send a message as this type of digital-speak isn't appropriate for all your contacts. This also shifts generationally with younger people using and understanding digital slang - always keep your audience in mind when sending a message.

Don't hit 'send' when emotions run high. Whether it's an argument with your partner or a friend, or tension with a coworker, conflict rarely goes smoothly when you are using text and email. Most of us know that it is all too easy to write a fiery response and hit send before we have thought it through. Forbid yourself from responding immediately when things get heated, and allow yourself to cool down before you type out something you'll regret.

When it truly counts, talk in person. For conversations that really matter, nothing beats sitting down with someone face-to-face and discussing it. So much of communication is non-verbal, and this simply does not translate over our devices. If it is absolutely impossible to meet, use video-call software to speak in-person and allow your voice, ears, and body language help you communicate.

Engage with those around you. You know that feeling when you are at the dinner table and the person across from you is scrolling through whatever is on their phone? We are all familiar with it and most of us have done it but it can have a negative impact on empathy and attention span. Unless you are expecting an emergency phone call or are in the midst of a crisis, put your phone away when you are spending face-to-face time with someone.

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Unplug from time to time. Being constantly reachable can become exhausting. Take time away from your smartphone by leaving it at home when you go for a walk, or setting it on airplane mode before you go to bed. It can feel like a huge relief to know that for a few hours you can't be reached - don't worry, the world will still be there when you plug back in.

The main difference between older forms of communication and the digital communication of today is speed. Because information does travel so rapidly now, don't be afraid to slow down and think about what you want to say and what technology you want to use to say it.

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