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10 ways to help you cope with change

IF YOU say you'll look back and smile in a few years, then why not smile now? Sometimes we fail to see the bigger picture when faced with change and focus on barriers in our day-to-day lives. Sometimes we become consumed with immediate issues opposed to long-term views and benefits.

But any situation, perceived properly, becomes an opportunity. Change is not always viewed that way, especially in this economic climate. When money's too tight to mention it doesn't cost much to take a step back and think. Whatever your change, be it cut-backs, a relationship, a redundancy, moving or quitting a habit, it is how you cope with any obstacle that can make the difference to your outcome.

Change can be a pebble or a mountain depending on how you view it. We tend to categorise change as being in or out of our control, depending on whether we instigate it or not. Is it possible that when we don't like the changes that are happening, and we don't want to adapt, that we may even blame it and say we have no choice?

Which is more realistic — to view change as good or to view change as bad? I guess it depends on your mindset. New beginnings can only come

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when old ways end. Change may be an opportunity when viewed in the right light. It can be wanted or unwanted, it may appear forced upon us and even out of our control. However, we always have control of our own decisions. We always have choice.

When a child is told he has no choice but to eat his vegetables, he knows he has the choice to either eat them and be happy or to eat them and be unhappy about it. And when he knows the parent doesn't like to see him unhappy, he can even open up his choices further, knowing the parent may grant him another and more quieter option of not eating them at all.

Less than two years ago I had a marriage, a home, a flying career, lots of friends and a great income; within months it all disappeared.

I take responsibility for how that life deteriorated. I also take full responsibility for how I made a complete turnaround in circumstances: Setting up a new life for myself, knowing who I was

and what I wanted to do.

Despite alien circumstances and hitting the lowest point ever in my life, I still made an action plan of where I wanted to go with my life and without doubt I still know where I am heading. My inner strength and resilience increased and continues to increase in proportion to the obstacles imposed on it. This means there is no end to the personal power we can give ourselves when facing changes or difficulties.

With experience and passion, I now work to coach other people to make the changes they desire and they deserve. In times of change, you must be willing to take action. Action doesn't guarantee happiness but is it possible to have happiness without it?

The following are my top tips for coping with change and working towards what you want and deserve:

1. Focus on what you want to happen next and not on what you don't.
2. Remember a time in the past when you had to adapt to a situation quickly. How did you do it? Pick a simple situation, perhaps something you planned that was changed last minute and you had to reschedule. Note what you did to actively make the changes required. You can use any learning from a

simple task and apply it to a much more difficult task.

3. If what you are doing is not working for you, try something different. The definition of madness is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a new outcome or result.
4. Acknowledge and list your strengths which have got you to where you are now. Your strengths will help you make the transition.
5. List your perceived obstacles and ask yourself how you can overcome these. Focus on the solution to the obstacle and not the problem.
6. Ask yourself what will happen if you don't take action.
7. Ask what will happen if you do; what's the worst that could happen?
8. Know where you are heading and begin with the end in mind.
9. Ask yourself what will take you one step close to that end point.
10. Take action.

Change is inevitable and always will be. However we have a wonderful gift in the freedom of choice so don't let it be your choice to do nothing.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, or the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

— Charles Darwin.