

Botanists say that trees need the powerful March winds to flex their trunks and main branches, so the sap is drawn up to nourish the budding leaves. Perhaps we need the gales of life in the same way, though we dislike enduring them. --Jane Truax

Adapting to Change

Behavioral scientists explain that when you go through a major life or work change, there are some predictable feelings that most people experience.

Shock and Denial

When there is restructuring at work or major changes in your life outside of work, you may have a hard time accepting what has happened. Sometimes, you were totally off guard; sometimes you knew it was coming. Often it is still hard to grasp what this change will be like and what adapting to this change will entail.

Anger and Frustration

Often the actual change is uncomfortable at best. People sometimes feel betrayed by their company or family and angry at the people responsible for the change decisions.

Bargaining

As you begin to adapt you often begin to change some of your thinking. Some people consider changing work habits or life style. In order to move on, sometimes you have to change your expectations.

Depression

When change becomes overwhelming, even strong, capable people have times of depression. You may feel very alone and even afraid when the reality of your situation really begins to set in. You may worry a lot and even feel guilty about your situation. It is not uncommon to be moody, confused and even physically tired or ill.

Acceptance

As you begin to adapt to change, it gets easier. If you practice healthy stress management, you can even begin to see the good coming from your transition. Often people feel stronger and more capable than they did before. They are often more open to new situations and people and celebrate the **winds of change**.

Stress Management Behaviors

- **Don't compare yourself to others:** Each of you is unique. There is no right way to handle change.
- **Become part of a support group:** When under stress, it is normal to isolate but not very effective.
- **Be honest about your feelings:** Manage your emotions instead of letting them manage you.
- **Get to the root of your anxiety:** By facing your fears, you can address them.
- **Focus on what you can control:** Practice the Serenity Prayer.
- **Avoid Negative People:** Pessimistic people reinforce your fears. Optimistic people will inspire.
- **Take care of yourself:** Get enough sleep, exercise and eat well. Avoid alcohol or drugs.
- **Look for the positives:** In every situation there are positives.
- **Manage your time and organization:** Plan, prioritize and organize.
- **Have fun:** Laughter heals.



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