



# 5 Ways to make it easier to deal with Personal Change

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*Hello*

In the last newsletter I said we would be looking at aspects of dealing with Life Transitions, such as major illness, death, relationship break-ups, job loss, etc. In this newsletter we are going to look at some ways in which you can increase your ability to deal with them. While personal changes can be very challenging, and nothing is likely to make them easy to deal with, there are things you can do to build your resilience - your ability to handle the knocks that life sends your way.

**1. Self-awareness.** Some people have a strong desire to get to know themselves very well. Others don't seem to really care, and for others, the thought does not even enter their mind. There is one general rule though for living well. The more you know about yourself the better the life you can create for yourself. Self-work means taking the time to really get to know yourself well. For most of us this can take a lifetime, however once you know more, even just a bit more about yourself: your personality, likes, strengths, interests, quirks etc., you have a much better idea of how to deal with personal changes. If you lose your job and you know yourself, you know what sort of a new job to look for. If you end a relationship (or someone else ends it) and you know yourself you have a good idea of the kind of person you are looking for and you are more likely to end up with a better relationship. This is a bit of a chicken and egg situation. Life transitions usually help us get to know more about ourselves. And yet, the more you know about yourself, the better you will handle a big change in your life. The other aspect of the self that is important during times of change is self-esteem. To have high self-esteem means to feel capable and competent to deal with life and to believe you have high value. Someone with low self-esteem is going to battle to bounce back from a job or relationship loss, or any other loss for that matter, and if they do try to reinvent their life are likely to aim for far less than they deserve.

**2. Build your networks.** How strong your personal/social and business networks are will have a big impact on how traumatic personal change is for you. If you have a huge number of business contacts and you lose your job, chances are you will find another one really quickly. You have all those people to help you. If you have no business contacts and no personal contacts you are on your own and will have a huge amount of work to do to get back on your feet. Your personal contacts play a big part in helping you talk through and process the change as well as helping you explore ways for moving forward. So they help you as you grieve, and they help you plan a new life for the future.

**3. Manage your health.** If you are in poor physical and mental health (or even just one of those categories) the change is going to impact you more negatively. Change is a stressor and stress increases your chances of manifesting physical or mental health problems. If you have dangerously high blood pressure and heart problems, and you get laid off work, the stress could be severe enough to bring on a heart attack or stroke. If you have an underlying depression or anxiety disorder that is not managed, the change can bring on a major episode of clinical depression or anxiety. If on the other hand you have anxiety or depression that is well managed, then the stress will have less of an impact and you will be able to ride out the change a lot more easily.

**4. Cultivate an exploratory attitude.** People who are curious, who like exploring new things, who like learning new things all the time, and who want to know more, find any type of change easier to deal with. This is something you can develop in yourself. Practice taking some time each week to explore new things and to try out new ways of doing what you have always done. Don't ever stop learning. Make it part of your plans to travel to new places and meet new people.

**5. Set and achieve goals.** People who get through change are people who are good at setting and achieving goals. The thing is, people who are goal orientated are active, not reactive to life. They don't sit there and wait for things to happen to them and then complain. They decide what they would like their life to be like and get up and make it happen. They act. And people with an active rather than passive approach to life fare much better, not only in times of change, but in all times.

If you battle with personal change, or you are terrified of change (as someone in one of my workshops told me), then take some action to build your resilience. You don't have to sit there desperately hoping that change won't come your way. Make the effort to know more about yourself, build your self-esteem and your personal and professional networks, keep yourself physically and mentally healthy, explore and learn, and make setting and achieving goals a habit. And then you will find that change is not something to be feared, but rather an adventure that can be embraced.

With best wishes

*Penny*