

Managing Change in Everyday Living

The Perfectionist Guide, by Cheryl Marks-Young, August 18, 2004

Change is something we experience every day, whether we are aware of it or not. Our favorite brand of something is sold out, and we have to choose a replacement. Or our internet connection is down for maintenance, and we have to find another way to communicate this week.

How we handle change can have a massive impact on our health and our relationships. While these tips may not help you LOVE change, they will help ease the ride by reminding you to take care of your most important asset along the way: YOU!

1. Go slow and get your bearings.

Have you ever found yourself lost while on the way to someplace? Maybe you have stepped off a subway or a bus or come to your exit on the highway and wonder if you should turn left or right. The best thing to do is to slow down and take a look at your surroundings. Step to the side or stop on the shoulder of the road if you have to, so that others can pass from behind you. Once you have a pretty good idea of where you are, it will be much easier to see what direction you need to go in next.

2. Allow room for mistakes.

So you chose the wrong direction, now what? You can be angry with yourself, but that might not get you back on track. The best thing to do is acknowledge your mistake, turn around, and try something else. Beating yourself up may only slow you down and make you feel bad about yourself. Most of the time we allow room for children to make mistakes as they grow and learn, so why not do this with ourselves.

3. Be grateful for the new opportunities and possibilities that change brings.

Change can sometimes bring new lessons and new connections that can help us down the road.

4. Take time for yourself to re-establish your personal foundations.

Reconnect with yourself and with your goals and desires. Sometimes activities that take the focus off the everyday, like taking a walk in nature, reading a book, or listening to music help us reconnect with what is important to us and give us a certain inner peace and strength that help us keep going.

5. Keep a notebook with you, and make lists of things you need to do as you think of them.

One of the reasons change sends us into a tailspin is that we lose control of our regular schedule. We can be afraid of not being able to do everything we want to do. While being organized is not always the best method of dealing with change, it can help you remember what is essential that needs to be done, like paying the bills or doing the laundry.

6. Work with a coach to help ease the journey.

An objective observer is sometimes the best assistance in dealing with change. A coach can help you focus on what you want to accomplish and help you find ways to achieve your goals.

7. Stop and breathe when you feel overwhelmed, nervous, or scared, and know that these feelings are absolutely normal.

We're all afraid of change and the unknown, so it is normal to have feelings of fear and uncertainty when experiencing change.

8. Give yourself several weeks or months to get used to your new situation.

Getting fully acquainted with new surroundings usually takes about three months. In a new town, begin by driving around and trying out new stores and restaurants. In a new job, use the first three months to learn all there is to know about how to do your job. If you see that you need to make changes after the first three months, then you will have the information you need.

9. Ask for help or advice from others who have gone through similar change.

In a new neighborhood, your neighbors will know the best stores, restaurants, recycling laws, etc. In a new job, the other people on your team will know who handles each area, what the policies and procedures are, etc. Compare notes with others who have experienced what you are going through to get a sanity check for yourself.

10. Keep a positive attitude, and find something to be joyful about every day: a new experience or discovery, even something as simple as the color of a wall or a leaf on a tree.

Being joyful or stopping to smell the roses helps us to slow down. In the slowing down, we can see that we are where we are supposed to be in the process of change.