

Putting a Different Spin on It

We are often told that life is in a continual state of change, but let's face it, most of us don't crave or seek it out. We tend to shy away from waking up in the morning and exclaiming, "I can't wait to impose a change in my life today!"

Choosing to make a change, through well planned intention and personal control of the situation can be hard enough. But we can all likely relate to what it feels like when change is imposed on us by other people or circumstances. Along with the reality of change in our lives, are all the ways we may try to avoid, sidetrack, put off or even sabotage that change (sometimes without realizing it). I came across information by Steve Davis, a coach, educator and consultant. Here are a few of his tips for coping with change, along with some of my own perceptions.

Need for Control?

For some, the need for order in our life is strong, making change even more difficult. We may tend to want to control things and are reluctant to ask for help because we don't want to put our fate in someone else's hands. But in fact that may be just the time when we need it most. Asking for help doesn't mean we have to give up our personal power and could provide us with extra energy and information to better cope with the change.

Putting a Different Spin on It.

Could we re-frame the change we are facing as an opportunity? What we think does affect what we ultimately feel about a situation. It is a cliché to be sure, but so true...we may not be able to control what is happening around us, the only thing we can control how we choose to respond to it. Viewing change differently, can inspire us to change our behaviour, with outcomes that might even surprise us. Now don't get me wrong, re-framing doesn't mean putting our head in the sand and ignoring how hard it is. It is more about trying to think differently so we can feel more in charge of how we are responding.

Taking Stock.

Sometimes if we are highly open to change, unhappy with routine and even frequently seeking change, we may be using it to avoid dealing with our own issues. Take time to sit still, to experience and digest our feelings, journal our thoughts, take stock and ask yourself "Are my current behaviours getting me what I want in life?"

Take Extra Good Care of Yourself.

If everything in our life seems to be in flux, it can help to create safe spaces and structures that don't change. We need to pay attention to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs. It may be our best defense to ride the waves of change!

Name Your Frustration.

Stress can feel like it is coming at us from everywhere. Putting words to what is really bothering us about a particular change can provide more awareness, and perhaps clarity to the situation.

Asking for Help.

When we are going through major changes, creating and maintaining a support system for ourselves is important. Remember, others may also be trying to manage the impact of changes and we could be a real help to one another. We don't have to have the perfect response all figured out.

If change is our constant companion, then building skills to manage it becomes our best defense for surviving and thriving!

This article was written by Sandra Parkinson, with Canadian Mental Health Association.

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