Sand Creek
WORKPLACE WELLNESS

Sand Paper

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Is It Possible to View a Dramatically Changing World and Not Be Fearful?

The answer is yes; if you learn to faithfully walk through your worrisome thoughts.

There is a lot going on in our world right now and it impacts our sense of wellbeing. The shootings in Orlando, unusual politics, world markets impacted by a UK vote, animals harming children and local news add heavily to the mix of personal life events such as illness, relationship conflict, births, deaths and other life transitions we experience.

It is human nature to fear the unknown. But, in the face of quick and unpredictable changes happening daily, we cannot live in constant fear without paying a depleting price in physical, mental and/or spiritual wellness.

Next time you feel you are fearing possible future outcomes, walk through your fear with this exercise:

Begin by questioning the very fears you hold in thought.

Ask "What if (the thing I fear) came true? " Then ask, "What exactly would I do if that happened?" By taking your thoughts to this level you may quickly realize many resources and coping skills you have available to weather difficult storms and the fear factor will diminish. Oftentimes, the things we fear never come true. Realizing that you will have control of some things, even if your world spins out of control, creates comfort and confidence.

This edition of the Sand Paper offers thoughtful articles and tips to support the changes you face in your life. Change is the one thing we can always count on. As my faithful quoting mother-in-law always said in the face of unexpected changes, "This too shall pass."

Changing our thought can truly change our lives.

Wishing you and yours a relaxing, peaceful summer.

Gretchen M. Stein, Ph.D.
President and CEO of Sand Creek

You're Not Broken, It's Just Change

By: DJ Enga, CPFC

One of the most powerful laws in nature is change. It's part of every facet of life. The change of seasons, watching our kids grow, learning new perspectives or observing our friendships come and go over the years. Change can occur suddenly or slowly over time and before we know it, something is different. There is a velocity to the nature of change that can sometimes feel like we're in the spin cycle of life, leaving us confused and broken.

Change and transition in our lives can present itself in any number of ways more often than not we end up feeling emotions to start doing our best to accept the change, manipulate it, or sometimes even try and stop it altogether.

It is a natural part of being human to feel the need for control in our lives. It allows us a sense of safety and perhaps even confidence. When we know what's coming next we're not as fearful or insecure so we take steps that we believe are necessary to incite a particular outcome. This behavior is common and normal, albeit wrought with potential pitfalls.

When we act on behalf of fighting change, instead of inviting it, we rob ourselves of the ability for the gift of acceptance. Accepting change with open arms brings with it a personal freedom and contentment and administers it directly to the center of our attitude and life.

When we experience difficult changes, big or small, a tendency is to doubt ourselves, to marinate in fear of the future outcome. In that doubt, we further the cycle of any manner of dysfunctional behavior: Substance abuse, eating too much or too little, attitudes towards loved ones, resentments, expectations, and finally, disconnection. This happens to be the last thing we want when we're going through a difficult life transition. We can end up feeling broken and asking ourselves questions like, "What did I do to deserve this?" Or, "Great, what's going to happen next?" We become like closed fists, trying to protect ourselves or do things that divert our attention away from the inevitable, change.

Our lives are meant to experience all the delights that are given us, and yet there are so many missed opportunities to enjoy them. Accepting change for the natural and powerful law that it requires faith.

It is vital to recognize that part of being human is the idea that 'bad' things happen sometimes. We lose people we love, marriages end in divorce, we lose jobs or move to new ones, we file bankruptcy, or our kids get sick. When these things happen, to some degree or another, we tend to blame ourselves for the situation or circumstances we think we should've done better at, or behaved differently. All the while losing sight that it's not necessarily anything that we did or didn't do, but rather the idea of accepting change for simply what it is and that potential positive outcomes might actually result by keeping an optimistic and open attitude of acceptance and faith.

Change isn't meant to be met with a clenched fist, but rather with an open hand.

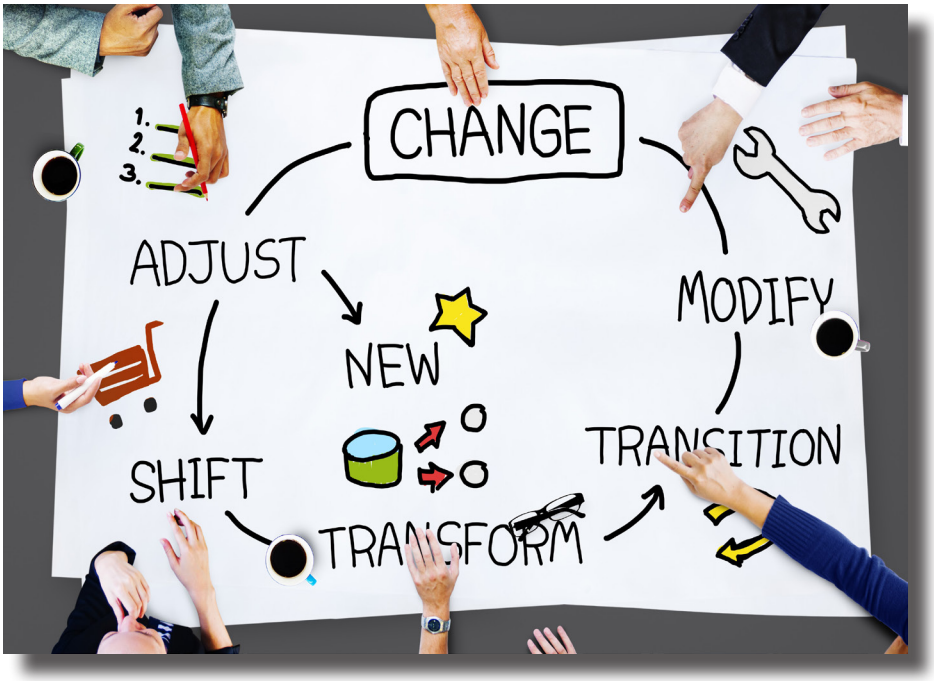
"ALL GREAT CHANGES ARE PRECEDED BY CHAOS."

-DEEPAK CHOPRA

HELPING TEAMMATES THROUGH CHANGE

By: Carol Nagele-Vitalis, M.A., Organizational Development Consultant

Change and transition is a constant in the working world today and as the work environment moves to more team-based projects a good question to ask is, "How can I be helpful to my teammates while change is causing unrest or anxious behavior?"



One of the most helpful behaviors is to act more like an explorer than an expert on this whole change process. To do this, try asking questions versus giving advice. Answering a question can often help teammates gain new awareness or think on a new level and can take the team work to a higher and more productive level.

Also, people like coming to their own understanding, so leave the advice giving at the door and adapt the explorer mindset to help you get started.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you start out:

1). What is hitting you hardest about all the news of changes?

2). How do you see this change affecting your life?

3). How can we support each other during this transition? What will it take?

4). Where are you seeing the good in these changes?

5). What advantages do you see in this transition?

In asking questions of our teammates we are working toward understanding each other and not focusing on trying to fix the problem.

Change brings about many levels of emotion so taking the opportunity to engage with our colleagues and make a supportive connection will help strengthen the level of trust within your team. Also, remember that when you try something new it initially feels uncomfortable. Be sure to give yourself a few chances at this explorer role, everything takes practice and adapt the questions to fit your style.

Good luck and give us a call if we can help while you try to navigate the wave of change.

Trauma and Tragedy Impacts Us All

By: Gretchen M. Stein, Ph.D., CEAP

So much sad, bad and tragic news. Many of us, even those not directly impacted by the devastating occurrences recently in our country are feeling the impact.

Are you feeling helpless, tired, deflated, anxious or sad? Are you having trouble sleeping or concentrating? Often times, we need help getting back into balance after such difficult times.

Here are a few self-care strategies that can also help bring back the positive side of life:

- Reduce your intake of tragic news. With your job, 24 hours news and easy technical access all the time to all things, it is important to turn it off for periods of peacefulness.
- Seek beauty. Take a walk, bring flowers into your home or workspace. Fill your environment with inspiring music. What is beautiful for you, seek it.
- View uplifting entertainment. Put the horror show and murder mysteries away for a while and choose comedies or entertainment with upbeat storylines.
- Connect with nature. Go barefoot on green grass. Fish, hike. Turn off the news and tune into nature.
- Focus on the good in your life. Think of things you are grateful for.
- Shift your focus. Help someone who could use a hand.
- Find support. Connect with a friend.
- Contact your EAP. Sand Creek is available to assist you with sorting out your feelings or offering a listening ear. We are only a phone call away.

DEAR SANDY,

I just graduated from high school and feel like there is no area in my life right now that isn't in total chaos. I'm supposed to leave for college in two months and I'm scared to death. I've never lived away from home. Also, my boyfriend has started making comments about how it's going to work with him staying in the town we live in and me being basically a full day's drive away at school. To top it off, my parents are now telling me that I'll need to work while going to school so that I can learn the value of helping provide for my education. I'm almost ready to just tell my parents that I am not going to college and that I'll work near home and pay them rent but I know they won't listen. I'm freaking out.

Signed,

Freaking Out in Iowa

DEAR FREAKING OUT IN IOWA,

First off, you should take a moment to pat yourself on the back for all the hard work that comes along with being formally accepted into college. Congratulations. That tells me that you are a young woman who is willing to work hard and doesn't necessarily back down from a challenge. With that said; the transition from home into a new and foreign living situation (college in your case) that requires you to be more self-sufficient is probably one of the scariest things a person can go through at your age. Keep in mind that you're not alone. My bet is there are just as many others that you'll come to meet that feel the exact same way. My suggestion to you is to start trying to look at the opportunities (not the what-if's) that this wonderful new experience will bring you: New friends, more freedom, new environment, different social activities and, if you need to find a job, take your time and find something that fits into your college schedule and that you have a passion for.

I've found in all my life experience that it's the fear of the unknown that usually trips us up. We want to know right now that college is going to be amazing. We want to know right now that our boyfriend will still love us even if we don't see each other every day. We want to know right now that we can handle the work/school balance. None of these things will be answered until we actually do them, and you know what? You need to give yourself that sacred gift of doing them. Give yourself the chance to experience the college experience. Trust me that whether it works out or not, you will thank yourself later for giving it your best shot. This will no doubt create a sense of confidence that you were able to overcome your fears rather than succumb to them. Talk to your parents, or if that's too weird, talk with others you might know that have been through this experience that might offer insight into these fears you have, chances are they remember how it feels. Sharing your fears about the unknown is a good way to gain perspective from those that have been there themselves and in doing so, change and transition become much less daunting.

Good luck and stay strong. It's worth it!

Sandy

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO DEAR SANDY BY EMAILING US AT INFO@SANDCREEKEAP.COM.