

Navigating Workplace Change

Many of us will be returning to a changed workplace, whether in the way we do work, the people we're working with or even our attitude about working. Changes in the workplace can leave us feeling vulnerable, anxious and even angry.

Whenever life throws us off course, it presents an opportunity to pause, reassess and reflect on what we truly want to create. Then we can move forward feeling more on course.

One's perspective about what's happening is critical. With a job transition – or any type of change – including a troubled relationship or unplanned life adjustment, one voice within us states, "Why is this happening to me?" while another voice may ask, "What's the lesson in this for me?" or "How do I use this experience to help me grow, and how might I take advantage of this chance for a fresh start?" While it is important to be realistic about all aspects of life transitions and to acknowledge feelings of sadness, anger, frustration and fear, your next move is a crucial choice. Do you want to remain stuck in pain and stress, or are you ready to focus your energy forward, looking at how best to learn from the experience?

Change can be scary and may leave you feeling overwhelmed. Follow the steps below to get started. It is dangerous to oversimplify the complex nature of any life transition, so tailor these suggestions to your own unique reality.

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** Let yourself feel what you feel, and find a way to release some of the emotion. Physical activity, writing down your thoughts or talking with others can help let this energy out and prevent the distraction of negative thoughts and self-defeating behaviors.
- **Reflect and refocus.** Take stock of what you still have, and express gratitude, such as "I still have my ability to think, my special talents and my aspirations. I'm grateful for relationships and for my family." Take a walk, a bike ride or a longer hot shower than usual, and ask yourself some powerful questions, such as "How do I want to feel three months from now? What will it take to get there? What does my ideal week look like? What could I do to realize that? Who could help with that?"
- **Choose.** Entertain the notion that everything is a choice. Decide what you want to choose as the next chapter of your life. Simply choosing doesn't guarantee you'll get it, however. The power of your intentions makes a huge difference. Feeling like you have a choice is certainly better than feeling like you have no influence, so why not adopt this philosophy? Choosing what matters most and what you'll honor as authentic priorities is absolutely up to you. It is about being resilient and truly empowered to choose your life's course rather than being a victim of circumstance and replaying old thought patterns.
- **Get into action.** Start by visualizing how you want to feel or where you want to be, perhaps three months from now. Work backwards from this goal until you find something small enough that you can do the next day or the next week. Picking first steps and finding the right people for encouragement and support will help you realize your goal.
- **Utilize your Employee Assistance Program.** Did you know that your Employee Assistance Program is a free, confidential service for you and your household family members that can take on your to-do list and provide you with the amount of time necessary to manage the changes around you? Examples of services include:
 - Personalized concierge resources including child-, elder- and pet-care solutions, transportation and local errand resources, low-cost home repair and utility assistance, etc.
 - Telephonic appointments with EAP attorneys and financial planners to assist with personal legal matters and financial issues that may have arisen during your time away from the workplace.
 - Confidential guidance from a local counselor to provide stress management assistance during the time of transition.

Here when you need us.

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