

MANAGING TODAY'S CHANGES: Part 2, Need an Attitude Adjustment?

This can probably stand alone, but do read my first blog on 2/17(same title) for a little more background and the set up for Part 2. So how is it that for some of us, our cup is half full, and for others it's half empty? Why are some of us laser focused on the opportunities or the silver lining of change, while others more often than not, can't see past the dangers and losses associated with a career change, job loss, end of a relationship, marriage (yes, even the "good" changes have associated losses, i.e. family relationships, finances, lifestyle shifts).

The real challenge for all of us, regardless of the kind of change, is: "How can I look at adversity, challenges, fear and loss associated with changes in my work and life, and find the opportunity, the silver lining?" "How can I learn to accept changes, especially the ones that really test my perseverance, inner strength, faith and confidence?" "How can I shift my perspective, and move from resisting change to embracing it?"

Recognizing that we're all wired differently, optimists, pessimists and everything in between, and are a product of our unique upbringing, experiences, successes and failures; what I love about this change stuff, is that **we can learn to be more aware of how we're wired, how we most often respond to changes around us, and we can move from viewing a change as a loss, to that of an opportunity.** Now I'm not suggesting in any way that this is a cake walk. But we've all done it before, though we tend to lose sight of difficult challenges and changes in our life that we've successfully overcome.

So, how do we shift our perspective? In one word it's ATTITUDE. Now I can see you rolling your eyes. It sounds like a bit of a cop out. That's the answer we hear for almost everything that's ailing us; and truly, in my own world I believe it really is. But let's be more specific, and let me share some ATTITUDE strategies that have worked for me, my clients, and in my classes. I'm giving you the skinny version since I'm running short of space, but if you want the entire story, I have a chapter in my book, *"The 10 Success Strategies to Finding the Right Work"*, that lays this out in its entirety.

Various studies have shown that there are five attitudes that play important roles in the psychology of change, our health and personal well being, and in our ability to embrace change and minimize the stress in our work and life. By focusing on the **5 C's: Challenge, Commitment, Control, Confidence, and Connection**, we can fill the void left by the losses we experience (i.e. finances, security, skills, responsibilities, relationships) and work through the emotional rollercoaster associated with change (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and ACCEPTANCE – this is huge, but I couldn't get into it here).

Challenge – Be open to change, look at it as an opportunity (not a threat), a test of our inner strength, perseverance, faith and determination. It's ACCEPTING the change, whether we like it or not and rising to the challenge. Literally, make a list of the specific losses and gains. Accept, reconcile and process the losses (and the emotions) even wallow in them for a bit, to be able to move past and even bless them, so as to refocus on the challenge, the opportunity.

Commitment – Be an active participant in your work and life, versus standing on the sidelines, as an observer. Take action even when you're not quite up for it; set daily and weekly goals (particularly in the case of a job search). Know what's happening around you.

Control – Recognize that we do have an impact on external change and what happens in our life. **We have control over how we view and react to change** and its affect on our lives.

One research study at the University of Chicago indicated that people who demonstrate Challenge, Commitment, and Control, have one-half the incidence of illness as those who don't incorporate them into their lives.

Confidence – This provides the foundation for the other attitudes. If we are comfortable with who we are, strengths, faults, and with others, we're less likely to put our personal worth on the line for any situation. **We need to be able to separate our personal worth from any given situation, success, failure, and change. This is confidence in the truest sense.**

Connection – Focus on our interactions with ourselves, others, our surroundings; all of our networks and relationships. We have to want to keep learning, get involved, meet people and extend ourselves. For many of us this can be a stretch, so we have to use our personal power to reach beyond our comfort zone, and recognize we have the control!

Our challenge is to realize that all five attitudes are natural, our minds and bodies are programmed to grow and succeed; we're wired for change. However, we sometimes become victims of our circumstances, experiences, routines and problems. I know it's easier said than done and I've broken all of the rules, but in the end **we can move from resisting to embracing, managing and accepting the changes we're faced with, and one way to make that shift in perspective is through the 5 C's, our ATTITUDES.** Go for it!