

CHANGING LIVES

1. **Acknowledge the change.** The most important thing to do when change is happening in the workplace is to acknowledge it. Recognizing and accepting change is one of the first steps towards managing it.
2. **Face your fears.** When you fear change take some time out for yourself. Writing down these fears in an objective form can stop you dwelling on them. Go through each fear and write down what you would do if that fear came to pass. Knowing you have a backup plan can really help to defuse the emotional anxiety.
3. **Confront your feelings and seek support.** Face your feelings about fear and the transition you are going through, especially when the change is imposed and beyond your control. *Change could mean that you have to cope with a loss of co-workers, team, and a project that you really care about. You don't have to act as a victim, even when you are not in control. The best thing to do is to accept your feelings and then reach out to close colleagues, partner, loved ones and talk to them about what you are feeling.*
4. **Stop the fearful thoughts and replace them with something positive.** Fear can come from creating negative thoughts and scenarios in your head about what the future holds. How you are describing the change to yourself? What you see to be the negative aspects of the change? What impact it has on you and your life? The moment you become fearful and have negative thoughts, stop them in their tracks and turn them into something positive. *Ask yourself questions. In the past when I handled change really well what did I do? How did I handle it? What actions did I take that really worked for me? How did I deal with the change in my communication with others? How did I manage my mental health? Which personal attributes did I use to turn things into positive? Was I patient? Rational? Etc*
5. **Be flexible and embracing of change.** Instead of hiding from your fear and creating defenses to keep it away from you, be open and flexible to taking on new challenges and tasks. Chansky says to approach change with an open attitude of learning. "Even if you don't like something new in the system, if you are flexible, people will want to work with you, and there is a greater chance of change. If you "rage against the machine, so to speak, no one is going to rush to have your back."
6. **Be part of the change.** Adopt an attitude of anticipation and excitement. Welcome change as an opportunity. Get involved in new committees and work teams. Be an influencer and driver of change. That way you will feel empowered and less fearful. See the positive in the way forward.

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7. **Communication, communication and more communication.** Communication is always important and especially when you face change. Part of the fear of change is the unknown. If the organisation is not communicating change effectively, make it your business to be proactive in finding out more about what the change involves. Don't sit back. Talk to your boss, your boss's boss and your co-workers to get their understanding. Don't make these sessions negative. Instead ask constructive questions to find out meaningful information to help you understand better. Be aware that sometimes when talking to co-workers news can be distorted and can be mixed with rumor.
8. **Reduce Stress and anxiety.** In times of stress caused by change we may feel tired and un-energised. This is the time we need to focus on being strong, fit, healthy and resilient. To be resilient you need to be calm and in control so that you are able to make good, clear and rational decisions. Focus on your exercise and nutrition, breathe deeply and smile. This doesn't have to be extensive; 20-30 minutes of meditation; yoga or even walking to clear your head is sufficient.
9. **Have a sense of meaning.** Take time to take stock of how valuable you are to the organisation. Acknowledge your successes and the valuable skills and attributes you offer the organisation. This is perhaps the time to make yourself more valuable. Research tells us that valuable employees typically get through changes unscathed, or even better than before.
10. **Continue to do your work and see the big picture.** It is easy during times of reorganisation to sit back and see what will happen tomorrow. It is easy to have that attitude as in some cases the work you are doing might change. However, remember that till you have a new direction you need to focus on achieving your designated goals and tasks. Remember that a great positive attitude should impress a future boss.