

The G Force of Change

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Do you think of change as a situation to be managed, a disaster to be survived, an annoyance that diverts your attention from your goals? Instead, think of change as a force of nature—a natural resource—a power you can work with to create the future you desire.

Change is as constant and powerful as the force of gravity—known in scientific circles as the *G-Force*. Just like change, the *G-Force* works without our permission or understanding. We rely on the force of gravity, and we can rely on the fact that everything changes.

Although we can't predict the timing or the intensity of the changes that will affect our lives, we can expect to experience one or more "G's" each time we're in the *G-Force* of Change:

Groans...when change brings the loss of possessions, perks, freedom, time, and treasured relationships.

Gifts...when change resolves sticky situations in a split second, breaks down barriers, levels the playing field, rights a wrong.

Grins...when change is fun—and funny—bringing unlikely people together to deal with unusual situations.

Guilt...when change makes dreams come true for you, just as it dashes the dreams of your co-worker.

Growth...when change requires you to stretch beyond your comfort zone, to think differently, to take risks.

Here's how to work with, not against, the *G-Force* of Change:

Don't attempt to recapture what change has swept away. Focus your energy and attention on what change has delivered to your front door. Those new opportunities may not wait long to be

discovered...they'll ring somebody else's doorbell if you're unavailable.

Identify the problems resolved by change. Make a habit of asking, "What *won't* I have to deal with anymore because things are different?"

Be intelligent about your own emotions. You may not be able to manage change, but you can manage your behavior if you understand your emotional reaction to unexpected change. Does it energize you or drain you? Are you eager to start new things, or do you become resistant, restless, or disorganized? Get some coaching from a person who moves well with the force of change.

Try a little tenderness when others get a tough break. Strive to understand the emotions behind the bad behavior you may see from your co-workers. Change evokes fear in many people, although it feels more like anger, insensitivity, or resentment when you're the target. Cut them even more slack when unexpected change seems to be targeting them, and sparing you.

See change through the lens of your career goals. Successful executives report that challenging assignments and hardships they suffered as a result of change advanced their careers far more than participation in structured training or formal education. Look for ways to build your skills by serving your company's emerging needs in times of change.

Coping with change doesn't get easier as we get older and wiser. It gets easier when we think of change as a powerful, ever-present force—a resource that can accelerate our success.