

Dealing with Change

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” — John F. Kennedy

Change comes in many different forms: a new baby, changing careers, the loss of a loved one, moving to a new city, just to name a few. At times, change can be exciting and invigorating—other times it can be depressing or uncertain. Consider the following when navigating life’s ups and downs:

Be flexible: Life doesn’t always follow the plan you have laid out for yourself. However, opportunities often present themselves in unexpected ways—learn to recognize and take advantage of these opportunities even if they were not part of your initial plan.

Limit the ‘what ifs’: It is easy to start thinking of all the things that can go wrong—so easy, in fact, that it can be difficult to think of anything else. You may try writing down worries or thoughts that continue to circulate in your mind, put the list aside for a few days and then revisit it—sometimes when we give our mind a break from certain thoughts, we return with greater clarity. While it is important to prepare as much as possible for when things don’t go as planned, try to keep a positive outlook.

Maintain healthy habits: Change can lead to added stress, in which case it is very important to exercise regularly, eat healthy and get enough sleep. By caring for yourself mentally and physically, you will be better

equipped to handle life’s challenges. Studies have shown that exercising regularly promotes psychological well-being and reduces feelings of stress, depression and anxiety.

Look at the big picture: Sometimes certain aspects of your life may operate outside of your control. During these times, it is especially important to remember what is still within your control. For example, perhaps your spouse has recently been laid-off and you are concerned about your family’s finances while he/she is out of work. While you don’t have control over your spouse’s employment situation, you do have control over your family’s finances. Look at all your options and develop a plan or strategy such as cutting out entertainment expenses, working additional hours, calling creditors to find out about any payment options you may qualify for due to job loss or financial hardship, etc.

Develop positive relationships: It is very important that you have people to rely on for support. Most importantly, make sure that the people that you surround yourself with are generally a positive influence on your state of mind. If this isn’t necessarily the case, be proactive about seeking out other resources for support such as the EAP, support groups and clubs.

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