Coping with Change: Understanding the benefits of change

Change is a natural part of life. Most of us are continually making adjustments that reflect our changing needs or interests—switching majors in school, moving to another city, or adjusting to a new job. Some changes are sudden and unexpected which can be a challenge to accept. This article series will help you find the best strategy for coping with change—whether planned, unexpected, difficult, or positive—and learn to focus on what you can control, while letting go of what you can’t.

This is the first in a three-part series of articles on coping with change.

Understanding the benefits of change

Many people have negative reactions when they first hear that they’ll be facing a big change. Some people cry or become angry. Others think “It isn’t fair,” “I’ll never be able to handle this,” or “I’m too old to learn a new way of doing things.” It may help to remember that a change—even if you don’t want it—can be beneficial.

Change can be rewarding because it...

Provides a chance to learn and grow. New experiences can bring greater knowledge and awareness if you allow them to.

Gives you a new perspective. Sometimes when you are forced to make choices and decisions, you realize what it is you really value.

Brings new opportunities. Change may be difficult but it may also bring about unexpected, new opportunities such as meeting new friends or developing new healthy habits.

Helps you stay flexible. It’s easy to fall into a rut or become “set in your ways.” A change in one area of life can help you stay flexible and may help you make other changes in your life.

Builds self-confidence. Staying in a comfortable situation can be fine for a while. But over time, it can become tedious or cause you to lose confidence in your ability to do well at other different tasks or in new settings.

Makes you grow and become stronger. When you accept and successfully cope with a tough change, it will help you become stronger for the next change.

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