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**How to Thrive with Change**

**By Susan Dunn**

**How to Thrive with Change by Susan Dunn, MA, Emotional Intelligence Coach**

There's nothing more disconcerting, nothing you can count on more, and nothing more valuable to learn how to prepare for than change.

I'm not talking about preparing for each individual change as it comes up. This is an inefficient and reactive way to operate.

I mean preparing your SELF proactively for the inevitable changes you will encounter throughout your lifetime so that you remain prepared as part of who you are. This is about emotional intelligence, or competency, and this is how you do it.

**CHANGES**

Just when you think everything's settled, and the way it's going to be, along comes a change.

Some of these changes will be good - you get a promotion out-of-the-blue, or suddenly find out you're pregnant after trying for some time, or the dream house you've been looking for comes on the market long before you expected it to or were prepared to move.

Some of these changes will be difficult - a transfer you didn't want, getting laid off, empty nest, or losing a lover, partner or loved one.

Whether anticipated or not, whether wanted or not, things change, and how we deal with this is a sign of our emotional intelligence (EQ), or competency.

**TIPS**

1.Label it immediately a transition.

## How to Thrive with Change

You are not lost in space (no longer a mother), nor at the end of the line (retirement), nor is it the end of the world (getting laid off). You are in the space between one thing and another; a transition. You are not going to create the future, and recreate yourself.

2. Keep constant what you can and take care of yourself.

The first thing most counselors will tell you is something like, "Eat breakfast at the same time every day," or "Take a warm bath."

It's comforting to recognize what in your life has NOT changed, and you always need to practice extreme self-care, but particularly at times when the earth seems to be moving beneath your feet.

3. To handle the emotions, lead with the body.

If your body is tense, you will feel tense. Work from the direction of your body - exercise, or get massages.

There is something healing in the human touch that exercise can't bring you. It is widely reported in the literature how important massages can be in times of strain.

4. Use your social support network.

I'm sure you've helped others; now it's their time to help you. We all go through difficult times, it's just your time now. Those friends are one of the constants in your life when other things have changed. Get with people who can sing your song when you've forgotten it.

5. If your change brings you time, enjoy it.

Try a new hobby or get in touch with an old one. How long since you last did needlework? Could you take the trip you've been wanting to take?

Use this time to improve yourself - study art, take a computer course, read great literature.

6. Don't worry.

Worry does no good. When you worry, you stress yourself physiologically, when you are already under stress to begin with.

7. Grieve.

No matter how good a change is, there will be something you're leaving behind. Retiring means not having to work any more, but you lose your professional persona. This ambivalence - feeling both good and bad at the same time, or simply confused - is part of any change or transition.

If you tamp down one emotion, you tamp them all down. It's an immutable law. Be willing to be sad, so you can be glad.

## How to Thrive with Change

### 8. Don't judge your emotions.

Just let them be. The more you consider it bad to feel sad, the more you'll fight it, and the more power it will have over you. We all prefer what's called the "positive" emotions, but there are others.

### 9. Hire a certified emotional intelligence coach.

A certified EQ coach is trained to help you at the meta-level, which is what you need. At times of change and transition, you need to deal with many things - relationships AND career AND money AND your emotions AND life balance AND your business AND your kids.

When one thing changes in your life, it will affect everything in your life, and the scope involves more than a Career Coach, or Life Balance Coach, or Relationship Coach or Small Business Coach has been trained for.

The most important thing to deal with will be the emotions. In order to function and move forward, you need to manage your emotions and those of those around you, who will also have been affected. This

falls within the wide scope of a certified EQ coach.

## TOOLS

The best tool you can have for handling transitions is a high EQ. Tips are tips, but a tool is something you need to get the job done. Why use a kitchen knife when you could be using a power screwdriver?

### Resilience, an EQ Competency

One of the EQ competencies, resilience is particularly important. Resilience means being able to bounce back from losses, rejections, and adversities while remaining hopeful.

The worse outcome of an adversity is to become bitter and cynical. Developing your EQ is a preventative measure, guarding your attitude and ability to enjoy your life in the future. You will learn how to weather storms on an as-needed basis!

Building your EQ means building your ability to keep "stress" from becoming "strain."

Think of an expansion bridge. It's built resilient (about to bounce) so when the wind blows, it won't snap.

If it were rigid, the "stress" might turn into "strain" and it would buckle under the pressure.

See the difference? You want, need, and will always have "stress" in your life, but "strain" can damage you.

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

## How to Thrive with Change

1. Take an EQ foundational course. ( <http://www.susandunn.cc/courses.htm> ).
2. Work with a certified EQ coach.

You must work with someone trained in the field. You can't "just" read about EQ. Taking a course is a necessary first step to acquaint you with terminology and to reframe what you already know, but then you must put these things into practice in real life. You will improve with feedback.

### TO PREVAIL

Last but not least, if you're going through a major change, prepare to be a stronger person when it's over - IF you have developed your resilience.

"Adversity is another way to measure the greatness of individuals," said Lou Holtz, American football coach. "I never had a crisis that didn't make me stronger."

In light of this, you might interview a potential coach to see what major crises and changes they have mastered. The "untested" are only talking theoretically, and you'll hear the difference.

This personal growth and triumph is the optimal result of going through change, but we all know people who cratered under strain.

Develop your emotional intelligence and your crises can make you stronger, not weaker. Get proactive.

Give emotional intelligence a try!

©Susan Dunn, MA, Emotional Intelligence Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . I teach individuals to master change and transform their lives through the power of emotional intelligence. Individual coaching, Internet courses, and ebooks (<http://www.webstrategies.cc/ebooklibrary.html>) .  
Mailto:[sdunn@susandunn.cc](mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc) for free EQ ezine.

### **The 10 Realities of Change**

**By Valarie A. Washington**

I've seen several articles that begin with lines like "the only constant today is change." I assert that change that is constant can't really be called change. It's simply a new reality. It's time that we accept that things simply don't stay the same and speed to change is the new reality of business. Like any other new reality it requires new responses.

There is not more change than there was in the past the change just comes more quickly. Compared to the "good old days" the impact of change today is like stepping into a tub of hot water – once you figure out that you're in it, it's difficult to react gracefully. Jumping out is the natural response and there you stand bare and exposed.

## How to Thrive with Change

Several months ago I was working with a group of clients and one gentleman began expressing his frustration with the impending changes in his organization. He said with a straight face (though I had trouble keeping one), "I can't believe what they are doing around here. They've been talking about this stuff for 10 years and now BAM out of no where they want to change things."

The impact of change can have severe consequences when people are not prepared. I find that people don't struggle as much with change itself but become frustrated with continued attempts at addressing the future with the outdated responses.

There are 10 things that you should know about change. Change will come. Change is necessary. Change is predictable. The sooner change is predicted the slower change appears. Change always provides opportunities. Change doesn't define goals, it expands options. Those who are ready will survive. Those who anticipate will thrive. Those who resist will lag behind. What is now old will be new again.

Change is inevitable. There is not one among us who is immune. It is non-discriminating and can be relentless. We don't chose how much or how often we are subjected to the shifts; however we DO chose how we are going to respond. Being prepared means keeping pace.

A focus on clearly identified goals provides a sense of continuity so that it doesn't feel like starting over every time you are confronted with some "sudden" change in direction.

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