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Coping with Change – Moving On

Accept Your Emotions: You are experiencing a significant change along with a period of uncertainty. Be honest with yourself about how it has affected you.

Control Your Attitude: Your attitude is one of the few things that are totally under your control. You may not have much influence over what happens at work, but you are completely in charge of how you react to it. You can brood over what has been lost, or what might go wrong...you can worry yourself sick. Or, you can search out opportunities, embrace the challenge, and keep a positive view.

Try To See The Big Picture: Although you may now feel the world has come to an end, it hasn't. Instead of trying to solve everything at once, break down each problem into easily managed pieces, then take one step at a time.

Expect Some Mood Swings: Be aware that ups and downs are normal during a transition and usually diminish as you begin to master the challenges posed by the change.

Avoid Withdrawal From Others: You may feel alone in this situation, but in reality many people have had similar experiences. Sharing thoughts and feelings have a stabilizing effect.

Beware Of Traps: Traps such as self-pity, self-blame, holding onto the past, listening to rumors and speculation, or blaming others are common. Try to view this as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Use The Changes As An Opportunity To Make Things Better: This is an opportunity for creative problem solving, to seek out new opportunities for yourself. Look forward, not backward. Set new personal and professional goals and strive to meet them.

Avoid Making Sweeping Changes: You are experiencing a significant change. Don't initiate other major changes if you don't have to. Keep your life steady for a while.

Expect Change, And Be A Change Agent: Changes are and will continue to take place. The new corporate culture calls for consistent and rapid change. Accept change and be flexible with it. Be a change agent by showing initiative, and being resourceful.

Keep Your Sense Of Humor: Look for humor in those situations that go wrong. Laughter goes a long way toward reducing tension.

Take Care Of Yourself: Take time to rest, relax, exercise and eat well. Avoid abusing drugs and alcohol as a means of handling the stress. Staying active and taking care of yourself will help you deal with the situation more effectively.

Know Your Resources And Take Advantage Of Them: Think about friends and family who might be of some support.

Common Reactions to Change

Shock: Stunned surprise about the news. "I didn't believe this would really happen." "I had no idea it would be this bad."

Denial: Disbelief or unreality about the news, ignoring the situation. "I can't believe this is really happening."

Anger: Outrage, resentment, blame. "We've worked hard but that doesn't seem to matter." "How could we be treated as so expendable?"

Anxiety/Bargaining: Worry about the future; a search for ways to gain some control over the situation. "What's next?" "Maybe we can figure out a strategy so this won't happen to us."

Mistrust: The belief that top decision-makers know more than they are telling. "I wonder what bombshell will get dropped next." "Why aren't they telling us exactly what they are going to do?"

Reliving The Past: Looking back on what could have been. "If only we had..." "We were doing fine until this happened."

Productivity Problems: Preoccupation with impending change or changes that occurred, how they were handled, and what's still to come. "I'm having a hard time concentrating...I'm not sure where to put my energy." "I'm tired and I can't give as much."

Resolution/Acceptance: Putting things in perspective. A desire to learn from the turn of events and "get on with it." "I may not have a say in things that are changing, but I can control how I handle the situation."

Guidelines For Implementing Change

1. Change one thing at a time.
2. Do it faithfully for three weeks, then decide to continue or not.
3. Expect to succeed.
4. Do easier changes first.
5. Don't beat your head against the wall. Recognize what you can and cannot change.
6. Be good to yourself. (Does that still mean giving yourself a hot fudge sundae or does it mean giving yourself a relaxation break?)
7. Recognize that stress management is not a "one shot" proposition. It is an ongoing process.
8. Accept responsibility for your own choices. You are not "stuck" unless you choose to be.
9. Let others know what's going on in you.
10. Take action on your own behalf - be proactive not just reactive.
11. Build and use support networks.
12. Let yourself be amused more often.
13. When in doubt, laugh and then choose what, if anything, to do about it.
14. Learn to recognize your own stress signals and know what stress management techniques work for you.

****Choose** Plan** Exercise** Relax ** Laugh**