

MINIMIZING WORK STRESS DURING TIMES OF CHANGE

THERE'S LOTS WE CAN DO TO HELP OURSELVES, WRITES MCGREGOR



MELANIE MCGREGOR
Column

"The more things change, the more they stay the same." Sometimes that seems true, but particularly at work, it can feel more like "the more things change, the more stressed I am."

Whether it's a reorganization, a shift in how things are done at work, or a new colleague, facing change can bring discomfort, anxiety, and full-on fear. What if we're not as happy, successful, or capable? It's the unknown, and navigating it can be a bumpy path.

A common default when it comes to handling a change we either don't want or we fear is resistance. We may be determined to stick to the familiar, complain, and be reluctant to try out the change. But, this approach does little to help us cope and adjust and can keep negative feelings and

stress swirling.

So, what can we do instead? Following are some tips to think about when it comes to adapting to change at work:

- **Accept it.** If the decision is made and the change is happening, you're better off thinking about the present and future rather than the past.

- **Get involved.** Can you do something to learn more and possibly help yourself and others cope? Maybe you could ask questions to clarify some doubts or offer to be part of a group that puts together a plan for the change. It may not make your anxiety magically disappear, but it can help you feel a bit more in control.

- **Keep an open mind.** Sure you may feel understandably unsure or uneasy, but, as they say, "fake it until you make it." Be flexible and give the change a try - you might be surprised at how things go. And if it doesn't go so well, at least you can talk about that from experience.

- **Be patient.** Allow yourself an adjustment period and don't be discouraged by some growing pains - it will take time to settle into a new way of doing things.

- **Communicate.** Talk to others about your needs and thoughts, whether it's connecting with colleagues or seeking out professional supports if you're really feeling overwhelmed and out of control. It's OK to need help with adjusting. Venting can be helpful to get negative feelings out, but make sure you also focus on moving forward and coping in positive ways.

- **Reflect.** During and after the change, take time to think about how things are going. You may have lost something due to the change, but have you also gained something? Taking time to reflect can help us identify what we need to cope or important conversations we need to have rather than having emotional reactions that may not be constructive.

Just think - if, as they say, "the only constant is change," then we'll have lots of practice.

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SUPPORT BEACH VOLLEYBALL IN GEORGETOWN

Congratulations to Steven Abrams and Josh Timukas, both from Georgetown, for their recent showing at an international event in Thailand.

Steven and Josh represented Canada in the beach volleyball event and are products of a very rich volleyball tradition in Georgetown. Countless boys and girls from Georgetown have excelled in this

sport, despite zero assistance from our town. The Milton Beach Volleyball facility, (six full courts) was built at the Milton Sportsplex. Our athletes are all familiar with it, because that's where they need to travel in order to practise.

Volleyball parents have lobbied for years to get beach facilities built in our town and nothing has been done. We continue to drive

past the Gellert Centre (and its numerous tennis courts) on our way to Milton or Toronto or Mississauga so our kids can play a sport that essentially takes sand and two poles to play.

Come on Georgetown, let's pay these kids back for their talent and dedication and give them a place in town to play and thrive.

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