Top 10 Tips for Managing Change

This may be a repeat for some of you, but it’s a topic well worth addressing at this time in the year.

The end of an academic year can cause feelings of sadness, elation, relief, and apprehension. Whether you’re taking a week off before starting summer classes, studying abroad, celebrating your graduation, moving out on your own or even back home, change is likely to occur for you within a few weeks. Try these tips for better managing the change on your horizon:

1. **Acknowledge and accept change** - You can fight change (causing yourself distress and anxiety!), or you can welcome it as a new learning experience and opportunity for growth. Monitor your self talk around a change to recognize and minimize its impact on your feelings.

2. **Plan for change when possible** - Are you uncertain about what you want to do after graduation? Plan your plan! For example, you could plan to: “I will interview people that have jobs I think I might like, I will try and get a job as a waitress to make money while I’m looking for work, I will work on my resume, etc…”

3. **Create a source of centeredness** - Unexpected change can throw one into turmoil! Having something that provides you with a sense of stability and centeredness can be helpful in difficult times. This something could be meditation, exercise, spirituality or religion, family, and/or friends. Lean on this source of centeredness when you feel unstable.

4. **Recognize that it’s okay to make mistakes** - Albert Einstein said, "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new." Recognize that complete and total success is not the norm, and that successful people are successful, in part, because they are not afraid of making mistakes and - *gulp* - failing. Successful people learn from their mistakes and don’t allow a few blunders to stop them from trying new things.

5. **Look at change as a learning experience** - Whether the outcome of a change is positive or negative, there is almost always something to be learned from it. Often, one is not able to see the lesson in a difficult experience because s/he is so consumed by dealing with it. Once the change passes, s/he can look back on it and understand more about the self or the world.

6. **Mourn your losses** - When you face the loss of something important, you are actually giving up a part of yourself. Mourning that loss through reflection, sadness, or crying can help you come to terms with it.
7. **Say what’s on your mind**---Change often brings along with it a shift in relationships with friends, family and colleagues. Juggling new and existing relationships can often cause added stress and impact your ability to express your “true” feelings. Remember— you CAN get that monkey off of your back by having open communication with others; the Communication Format is an excellent technique for doing so:
   1. **State the situation**
   2. **State how you feel about the situation**
   3. **State what you would like to see done**

8. **Focus on the present**--- Although change may require one to starting thinking about future plans, constantly focusing on things down the road can be a source of added stress. The house with the white picket fence can materialize; but in the meantime focus your energy on activities in the present that will help you to achieve your ultimate life goals.

9. **“Failing to launch” is not truly a failure** -- For some of us, change may also require someone to move back home for the summer or post graduation. If moving back home is on the horizon for you, try to view it as if you’re moving forward versus stepping backwards. Use this time as an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends and possibly save money while looking for that new job!

10. **Have a sense of humor** - Be prepared to laugh at yourself and the absurdity of life. This can provide relief from stress and allow for a bigger perspective on a problem or change. It releases physical and mental tension too!