

LOCKDOWN

SECTION: 6 PAGE EXTRA



by Margaret Morris

'Life in Lockdown' Series 6

Managing change

“NOBODY likes change, we just want everything to stay the same!” said a friend in a recent conversation. However the reality is that right now, many people are facing some of the biggest changes of their lives. As if that isn't bad enough, at this stage in the pandemic we can hardly begin to imagine what the future might look like, let alone begin to plan for it.

We find ourselves in a unique situation where everybody's world has changed at the same time. We are all facing change at a personal and global level and we are asking questions that have no answers.

Like most people I am finding that during the day I'm pretty busy. There isn't much time to think about anything but the 'job in hand'. But when there is a quiet moment and my thoughts begin to wander into the realm of the unknown, I am able to frighten myself. So I force myself back to 'now', the present. The reality is that change is coming for all of us. We all feel it, except for our youngest who will know nothing different.

In her book 'Big Magic' Elizabeth Gilbert says:

"We need to be brave, look change in the eye say "I'm not afraid of you". You are coming my way and I'm getting ready for you".

When I worked with the 'National Remodelling Team' I was officially a 'Change Agent'. Together with eight others, we were tasked with making sure the staff in schools in England changed the way they worked together, they 'remodelled' their workforce. During that time I learnt a great deal about how to manage change and that has stayed with me. Like so many things it has gone way beyond a work skill and become a life skill.

If "change is the only constant in life" we need to be ready for it.

Whenever there is significant change, we always go through a 'change curve'. During this process emotions run high. We may initially be optimistic or pessimistic depending on what change we are facing.

There are two ways of getting through. The first way is to identify a problem and go straight to a 'solution'.

The right way is to understand what's

● 'Change is the only constant in life'
Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher



going on and what we need to do about it.

When a change is first introduced the process begins and we go through these stages:

- 1 Shock or denial – we can't believe it
- 2 Blame – ourselves, others or circumstances

- 3 Confusion or doubt – this is surprisingly the first stage of moving forwards
- 4 Rationalisation – we focus less on what's been lost and focus more on what might be gained
- 5 Problem-solving – we start looking at opportunities and potential solutions
- 6 Acceptance – we have options and a plan (this is the 'new normal')



It is important to understand that we move through the change process at our own speed. While we may be in problem-solving mode, others around us may still be full of doubt. We may be rational one day but in denial the next. During this natural process we need to be gentle with ourselves and with others.

If we were to follow the process above how might it work in a real situation? Here we go:

THE PROBLEM:

'My landlord is selling the apartment I'm renting and I have to move'

- 1 I've lost my home, I can't believe it, this is a disaster
- 2 It's not my fault, I blame him
- 3 I don't know what to do
- 4 What could I do? What can I do?
- 5 I have some ideas - there are possibilities.
- 6 This could be an opportunity for me, I have options

So, if we understand the change process where does this leave us?

I think we need to accept that change is constant, we need to recognise it when it arrives and embrace it.

As we consider the changes we need to make at a personal level, I believe we also have a duty to consider changes that need to be made at a global level.

"In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to." Dave Hollis

We have a chance to step back and consider our fundamental values, those we owned before COVID-19 and consider whether any of them need changing. Values are 'below the waterline stuff' they are hard to change but if we don't do it now then when?

Next week we are going to look at how we might help our youngsters become change capable'.

In the mean time, I hope you begin to recognise that some opportunities could well be waiting for you.

Keep well and stay safe.

If you want to explore this subject further a good place to start is www.insightsgroup.com

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