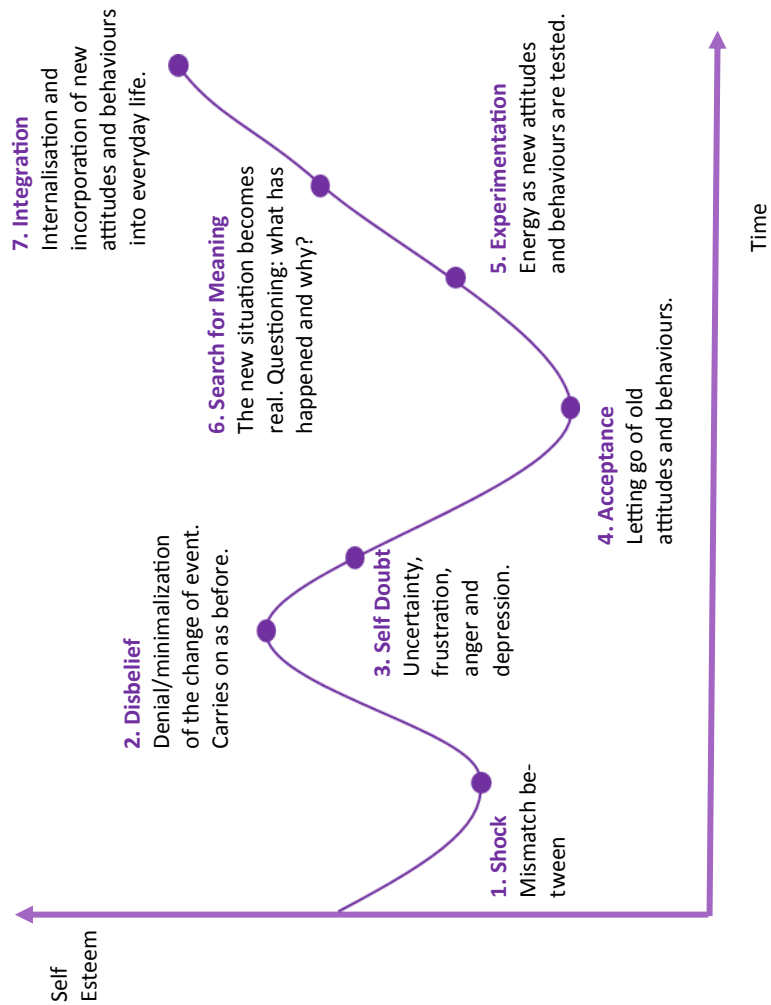


The Stages of Change



The Road Centre Ltd

Counselling Training Wellbeing

Coping with Change in the Workplace

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear,
and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the
unknown"

H.P. Lovecraft



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Many of us look forward to changes at work and we often have conversations with our colleagues about how things should be different, yet when things do change we are often terrified and feel uncomfortable. Change is inevitable and necessary these days in order for businesses and organisations to survive and thrive. Sometimes change can be imposed on us and with that may come changes to our immediate boss, team, work priorities and even changes to our role. So we must learn to overcome fear and embrace the changes ahead.

Why do we fear and resist change so much?

We fear change at work for a variety of reasons. These fears are often associated with fear of failure, fear of success, fear of rejection, fear of criticism and fear of the unknown. We like 'certainty'. Certainty brings with it clarity and predictability, ambiguity which can often come with change activates a threat circuitry in the brain. This can trigger powerful effects on our body and our emotions—which we sometimes refer to as 'stress'.

10 tips for overcoming your fear of 'Change at Work'

1. **Acknowledge the change.** The most important thing to do when change is happening in the workplace is to acknowledge it.
2. **Face your fears.** Writing down these fears in an objective form can stop you dwelling on them. Go through each fear and write down what you would do if that fear came to pass. Knowing you have a back up plan can really help to diffuse the emotional anxiety.
3. **Confront your feelings and seek support.** Face your feelings about fear and the transition you are going through, specially when change is beyond your control. Reach out and talk to people about what you are feeling.

4. **Stop the fearful thoughts and replace them with something positive.** The moment you become fearful and have negative thoughts, stop them in their tracks and turn them into something positive.
5. **Be flexible and embracing of change.** Instead of hiding from your fear and creating defences to keep it away from you, be open and flexible to taking on new challenges and tasks.
6. **Be part of the change.** Adopt an attitude of anticipation and excitement. Welcome change as an opportunity. Be an influencer and driver of change. See the positive in the way forward.
7. **Communication, communication and more communication.** Communication is always important and especially when you face change. Part of the fear of change is the unknown.
8. **Reduce stress and anxiety.** To be resilient you need to be calm and in control so that you are able to make good, clear and rational decisions.
9. **Have a sense of meaning.** Take time to take stock of how valuable you are to the organisation. Acknowledge your successes and the valuable skills and attributes you offer the organisation. This is perhaps the time to make yourself more valuable.
10. **Continue to do your work and see the big picture.** It is easy during times of reorganisation to sit back and see what will happen tomorrow. It is easy to have this attitude as in some cases the work you are doing might change. However, remember that till you have a new direction you need to focus on achieving your designated goals and tasks, remember that a great positive attitude should impress a future boss.

Look for the opportunities that change brings. When it comes to business, we can never get too comfortable or set in our ways. A willingness to notice change, prepare for it and ultimately adapt to it, is a valuable skill that will help propel your career forward. Change can be frightening and disruptive. However, with the right attitude and actions, you can find opportunity in change.