PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Working in an Ever-Changing Environment

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Imagine that starting right now you are living on an isolated island. On this island, every day will be exactly the same.

To prepare for your new life, you can pick out the following:

- One food you want to eat
- One book you want to read
- One song to listen to
- One set of clothes to wear

Use the space below to jot down your responses.
“Some changes look negative on the surface, but you will soon realize that space is being created in your life for something new to emerge.”

--Eckhart Tolle

Observations About Change; which one resonates with you the most?

- Discomfort with change is a normal reaction. Expect to progress through stages of disorientation and adaptation as you strive to reach a state of “new normal.”
- Acknowledge the fact that you have a choice over how you will react to change, both inwardly and outwardly.
- If you know change is coming, you can decide to be reactive or proactive.
- Change may feel like a loss of control, and depending on your temperament, this can affect you to a greater or lesser degree.
- Change affects everyone differently.
- Change is an essential element of the world and it must be accepted.
- Adapting to change is about our attitude toward change.
- We have to grieve for what we are letting go of.
- Change is an opportunity for self-motivation and innovation.
- We can identify strategies for accepting and implementing our changes.

Think of a change you have recently had to face or are facing.
MINDSETS TOWARD CHANGE

Critic: Vocal opponent of change; feels a lack of control, lack of autonomy

Bystander: Avoids involvement in change, feels a lack of control, overwhelmed by change

Victim: Change causes panic; feels overwhelmed, lack of control

Navigator: Resilient, adapts to new circumstances, able to reframe and recognize opportunities within situations of change

TYPES OF CHANGE:

Imposed: Change that happens to you. Not known in advance; can often bring about the most resistance.

Evolutionary / Grown: Change that is part of nature and society that is slow and gradual in nature.

Designed: Planned change.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHANGE:

Amount: The number of changes being faced.

Speed: Length of time to implement and adjust to change.

Complexity: Number of life factors impacted by change.
TRANSITIONS AND THE HUMAN RESPONSE TO CHANGE

William Bridges is a speaker and organizational consultant who developed the transition model to address change.

Bridges believes that **change** is the situation.

**Transition**, or the adjustment, is the psychological process humans go through in 3-parts:

- **Ending, Losing, Letting Go**—helping people deal with their tangible and intangible losses and mentally prepare to move on.

- **The Neutral Zone**—critical psychological realignments and re-patterning takes place. This is all about helping get people through it and capitalizing on all the confusion by encouraging them to be innovators.

- **The New Beginning**—develop new identity, experience new energy, and discover a new sense of purpose that make the change begin to work.
PREPARING FOR TRANSITION

1. **Identify that you have let go.** In the scenario above and in the instance of one particular change listed, what might you need to let go?

2. **Study the future.** In the face of the change you identified, what do you do now in anticipation of the future?

3. **Try to find some anchors.** In the scenario, what can remain the same for you?

4. **Be aware of how this change is affecting you physically, mentally, and emotionally.** What might you do for yourself in order to stay healthy in the face of all this change?
NAVIGATING WORKPLACE CHANGE

Below are tips for navigating changes in the workplace. What are you able to accomplish in your workplace culture? Why? Discuss and get some advice.

Tips for Navigating Workplace Change

- **A. Regulate your responses**—Be aware how we can be labeled and silenced because of our responses; be strategic and thoughtful.
- **B. Get involved**—don’t just let things happen to you. Make things happen. Get on committees, be a part of listening sessions; make sure you educate yourself as best as possible.
- **C. During the time of change, choose your battles wisely**—sometimes emotions run high during times of change; be self-reflective, stay focused.
- **D. Build rewarding and supportive relationships with co-workers**—together you can model inclusivity. Together you can speak up and speak out when necessary.
- **E. Seek clarification**—on new projects and new responsibilities; prioritize tasks.
- **F. Be a part of designing a better future**—similar to “ownership.” If change is inevitable, then make sure you voice your opinions, give feedback, and help develop the plan for implementation. You may have insights management may be overlooking.
- **G. Study the future**—learn as much as you can about likely upcoming events and get as much lead-time as you can to anticipate them. Plan proactively.
- **H. Stay healthy mentally, emotionally, and physically**—find time every day for detachment and relaxation. If you cannot take actual breaks, take a quick mental break for a breathing exercise or centering.
“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.”
--Jon Kabot Zinn

PERSONAL REFLECTION & PLANNING NEXT STEPS

Identify the workplace change you are currently navigating.

What might you perceive you are losing?  
What might you gain?

How are you feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically?

What will you do to help yourself navigate this change? What strategies can you use? What steps will you take?
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

STRESS OF CHANGE

Stress is, in part, a function of the way we interpret events around us. The way we choose to define and interpret our circumstances will have a strong influence on the amount of stress we feel. Fortunately, we have the ability to control our interpretation of situations.

Personal, professional, and organizational changes affect each of us differently. There are a variety of signals that tell us our body is under a lot of stress. Some stress can have a positive impact on us which causes us to switch into high gear. Accepting challenges in front of us can allow us to move ahead, or it can cause us to emotionally withdraw, become ill, or make poor, impulsive or ill-considered decisions.

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<th>Physical Signals</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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<td>Major pains</td>
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<td>Headaches</td>
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<td>Emotional Signals</td>
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**MANAGING STRESS**
While stress is a natural part of life, there are small things we can do to alleviate some of the symptoms of mental stress in our lives:

**Deep Breathing**
Relax your body, and take ten or more slow, deep breaths. Your goal is to breathe into the bottom of your lungs, where the oxygen is readily absorbed, not the usual upper lung breathing. Put your hand on your stomach and feel it move as you breathe. When people are experiencing anxiety, we often breathe into the upper area of our lungs rather than the bottom.

Each time you exhale, count silently: “one,” after the first breath, “two,” after the second breath, and so on until you reach 10. When you are finished, you should feel more calm and relaxed.

**Visualization**
Use positive imagery to boost your mood and enhance your visible performance. In your mind, picture a place that you love, something that brings you peace and joy. If you are getting ready for a presentation or an interview, visualize yourself performing it perfectly, so when you get to the event, your mind thinks you have done it before. This is a technique used by athletes and peak performance coaches.

**Music**
Music has the power to soothe or to give us energy. Find a type of music that relaxes you, and play it when you need to calm down. When you feel tired and listless, play music to get an energetic boost.

**Applying Gentle Pressure**
Holding a fingertip to the point of most pain or tension and pressing very hard for up to a minute can alleviate a headache or relieve tension.

**Laughter**
A good belly laugh can lower blood pressure, slow your adrenaline, and reverse the stomach acid that comes with negative responses. Resort to a book/show/movie, person, or memory/thought that always makes you smile. Laughter is truly good medicine.

**Replace Worry with Problem Solving**
Focus on what you can do, and then go ahead and do it. Chronic worriers tend to focus on what they cannot do, what should be happening, or how things are going wrong. Replace worry with problem solving so you identify where you can work toward solutions.

**Meditation**
The purpose of meditation is to free your mind from its normal busy activities. You can use several different techniques. Some people use a word as a focal point (a mantra), while others suggest you focus on a color, your breathing, an abstract concept, or an object.

Sit quietly with your eyes closed and relax all your muscles from head to toe. Become aware of your breathing. Breathe through your nose easily and naturally, in and out... Begin to silently repeat your mantra, focus on the color you have chosen, or simply continue to concentrate on your breathing. In and out. Acknowledge distracting thoughts but let them pass as quickly as possible.