

Are You Resistant to Change?

Objective

To increase your comfort with changing circumstances.

What to Know

It is natural to resist change. Yet change is a constant in life. As much as you may want comfortable circumstances to remain the same, you cannot stop the flow of events, situations, or circumstances that create change. This is especially true in today's rapidly evolving world. New technologies and trends present new opportunities. Although the unknown possibilities that come with change can be frightening, living a fulfilling life often means learning to quickly adapt to and embrace change – instead of meeting it with resistance.

No matter how resistant to change you are, there are ways you can learn to embrace change and move forward with minimal suffering.

1. Evaluate your current situation. Take a step back and objectively assess your life to gain clarity and insight into what works and what needs to change for you to move forward. Begin by asking yourself the following questions.

- *What do I want to achieve in life?* This question helps you define your goals and create a roadmap for the future. Reflect on your long- and short-term goals and make sure they align with your values and passions.
- *What did I used to love doing that I no longer do?* List the activities or hobbies you used to enjoy but stopped doing to rediscover your passions and interests. Consider including those activities back into your life and exploring new opportunities that align with them.
- *What are my strengths and weaknesses?* Identifying strengths and weaknesses allows you to build on and actualize your strengths while improving areas of weaknesses. This can help you develop new skills and pursue new opportunities.
- *What are my core values?* Core values guide decisions and actions. Having clarity around your values allows you to define your identity, make choices that align with your beliefs and life purpose, and strengthen your foundation for the future.
- *What is holding me back?* Identifying the obstacles and challenges that are preventing you from embracing change helps you recognize areas that need improvement and develop strategies to overcome them.

2. Realize you may not fear change – you may actually fear loss. Change is a situational event, like losing your job or relocating to a new home. Resistance to change occurs during the transition. To better manage the transition, do the following.

- acknowledge what is ending
- navigate the uncertainty with support
- offer yourself compassion and grace
- embrace what is possible in the new beginning

3. Define what you are resisting. Begin to overcome your resistance by exploring what you are resisting. Be specific and honest with yourself. Sometimes what you resist is something you cannot control. Focus on what you can control – including your gradual acceptance of change – and try to let go of what you cannot control.

4. Consider the benefits. Resistance often stems from fear – and fear is often the result of change. Perhaps you fear the unknown or repeating negative or unpleasant experiences. You may use resistance to protect yourself, but it limits you and potentially positive experiences. Instead of focusing on the limitations and risks associated with change, view it as the catalyst that opens the door to new opportunities.

5. Challenge yourself. It is easy to stay in your comfort zone, but by pushing yourself beyond it, you can start living a life filled with growth and expansion. Try something new, take on a challenge, or set a goal that seems intimidating but achievable. Once you are in the habit of challenging yourself, you will build resilience and more easily adapt to change.

6. Shift your perspective. Choose to believe that change serves you. All beliefs are choices and thoughts you create. If you think change is scary, hard, or difficult, it will be. Choose to believe change is something that serves you in positive ways. You can start to think that change is easy, fun, or brings you amazing opportunities. When you change your perspective, you can rewire your brain around change!

7. Change your environment. Think about ways you could change your environment and give yourself the opportunity to see things from a different angle. Here are some examples:

- Travel – visit a new city, country, or simply take a road trip to explore nearby areas. Traveling can help you to gain new perspectives, learn about different cultures, and meet new people.
- Join a new group or club – meet new people who share similar interests, like a sports team, fitness group, book club, or hobby group.
- Work remotely in a public place – change your work routine and take your laptop to a coffee shop or shared work space.

7. Take action. Start small by taking one step at a time and build up to bigger changes.

These strategies for increasing your comfort with changing circumstances are just the beginning of what can be a transformative journey. This worksheet will help you reduce your resistance to change.

What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

What do you want to achieve in life?

What did you used to love doing that you no longer do?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What are your core values?

What is holding you back?

Do you think you resist change because you fear loss? Why or why not?

What change are you currently resisting? Be specific and honest.

What are the benefits of this change? Be specific.

How can change actually serve you? Be creative!

What can you do to challenge yourself? Write down at least five ideas.

What would you do or believe if you *wanted* this change?

Are you willing to change your environment? Where will you go?

To increase your comfort with change, do at least one activity each week for two months that you might be resisting. It might be doing an activity that pushes you out of your comfort zone, or making a change that feels uncomfortable. Note the date and the planned activity or action. Check off when you complete it and write down how you felt after completing the action or activity.

| Date | Planned activity or action | Check off when complete | How did you feel after? |
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Reflections on This Exercise

Did this exercise increase your comfort with changing circumstances? Why or why not?

Fill in the blank: "If I could change one thing about the way I handle change, it would be . . ."

Did this exercise reduce your resistance to change? Explain.

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What can you do differently to make progress in this area?
