

## Dealing With Change in Your Business

By Jennifer Myers, MBA | CBC

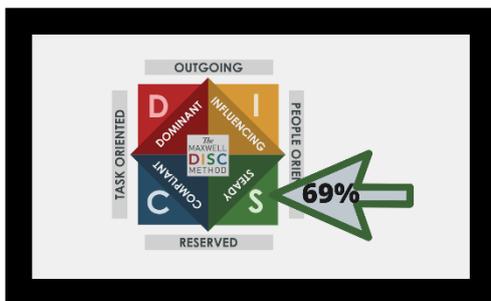
Running a great business or being great at your role within the business means that you invest a bit of time on a regular basis to *REFLECT*. Reflection time supports us to identify what's working so we can keep doing it, what opportunities we have so that we can put an action plan in place to leverage those, and it helps us take stock of our attitude and emotional state. This is SO important! Often as business owners we get so busy that we THINK we can't afford to set aside time to reflect. I would challenge that and say we can't afford NOT to set aside regular reflection time.

If we find our attitudes are healthy and intact, we can keep the MOJO going! If we get honest with ourselves and admit we're struggling with something, we can take corrective action or reach out for help. After all, having a healthy, sustainable business means we do all we can to look after our customers. But we can't look after our customers if we don't look after ourselves first! Kinda' like the advice we hear on EVERY flight we take: *'In case of an unexpected loss of cabin pressure, secure your own oxygen mask before helping others.'* Many times, the cause of stress or difficulty in our businesses is the need to deal with change.



So, in this article we'll look at 10 Strategies to help you manage YOURSELF and support OTHERS on your team through times of change.

Change is 'an act or process through which something becomes different.' Change is an unavoidable constant in our work lives. Sometimes those changes are driven by US, but often they're not. You're not alone if you feel some anxiety when something in your work environment changes.



As a DISC behavioural styles consultant, I know that a massive 69% of us are *especially* sensitive to change and sometimes find it difficult to maintain our business momentum through it. We ALL fear change in our work lives for a variety of reasons.

These fears are often associated with:

- fear of failure OR success
- fear of criticism and
- fear of the unknown

Tamar Chansky, author of “Freeing Yourself from Anxiety” says changes at work are among the top life stressors that one can experience; however, change often translates to opportunity for those who are willing to embrace it. YOUR opportunity may lie in learning something about yourself. Or in shoring up your processes and systems so they’re more robust and support your customers BETTER for the long haul. Or perhaps you can expand your knowledge base – always a good thing!

Stop reading for a moment and reflect on **the positives that have come and will continue to come from changes** that have occurred in your business over the last year. Once you’ve taken a moment to reflect on those, keep reading!



So, how do we manage ourselves (and our teams, if we have them) through changes? Let’s look at just a few strategies that we can employ:

1. **Take the focus away from your own situation** and direct it toward someone else. The process of helping others will help you to deal with the stress and adapt more quickly to change. Can you support a colleague or a team member to adapt? Have you discovered a specific tool or insight that has been especially helpful to YOU? Share that tool or insight with someone else.
2. **Over-communicate.** When things are changing at work, communication is critical. Any communication gaps can instantly be filled by rumours and speculation, which create even more fear and uncertainty around the change. If you can effectively communicate your concerns to people who can answer your questions within the organization, your anxiety can be better addressed and alleviated.
3. **Talk about problems more than feelings.** One of the most common myths of coping with unwanted changes is the idea that we can “work through” our anger, fears, and frustrations by talking about them a lot. This isn’t always the case. In fact, research shows that actively and repeatedly broadcasting negative emotions hinders our natural adaptation processes. By zeroing in on the problems you *can* solve, instead of lamenting the ones you *can’t*, you’ll feel more in control.
4. **Don’t stress out about stressing out.** Our beliefs about stress matter. As Stanford psychologist Kelly McGonigal argues in *The Upside of Stress*, your reaction to stress has a greater impact on your health and success than the stress itself. If you believe stress kills you, it will. If you believe stress is trying to carry you over a big obstacle or through a challenging situation, you’ll become more resilient and may even live longer. Stress can be a good thing — if you choose to see it that way.
5. **Vent, but only to a point.** Venting to your inner circle can be helpful—to a point. If you and your group are only venting, that feeling of frustration can be contagious. Try gearing the conversation toward action: What can you each do to make things better? When people brainstorm together, their creativity and hopefulness can be contagious as well.
6. **Back away from social media.** When you go through change, you may gravitate toward social media—maybe posting to your friends on Facebook what is going on in your life. First, make sure you are in a calm state when you post—and keep in mind that whatever you post never really disappears.

**7. Make it a point to incorporate more laughter and fun into your life.**



- 8. Focus on your values instead of your fears.** Reminding ourselves of what's important to us can create a surprisingly powerful buffer against whatever is troubling us. The technique works because reflecting on a personal value helps us rise above the immediate perceived threat and makes us realize that our personal identity can't be compromised by one challenging situation.
- 9. Reduce anxiety.** In times of change and stress, we may feel tired, and this is the time when we need to focus on being strong, fit, healthy and resilient. To be resilient you need to be calm and in control so that you are able to make good, clear and rational decisions. Focus on your exercise and nutrition, breathe deeply and smile. This doesn't have to be extensive; 20-30 minutes of meditation, yoga or even walking to clear your head is sufficient.
- 10. How we thrive is through routine and predictability.** It gives us a sense of control. Do whatever you can to maintain a routine each day and each week so that you create a 'new normal' for yourself. *\*\*And please remember, if you're feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope, please reach out to those around you for help and support.*

I'm going to leave you with an example from nature about the power in mutual support! The sequoia redwood trees, located in California, are some of the biggest trees in the world. We have some young ones right here in NZ in Rotorua! Well, the largest known living single stem tree on Earth is a redwood in CA, and it's 84 metres tall (325 feet), 7.5 metres in diameter (25 feet) and is approximately 2,500 years old.

Something that huge must have an incredible root system that goes down really deep in order to stand that tall, right? Well, that's not the case at all. Redwood trees have a unique root system that is relatively shallow. The roots actually only go down 2 to 3 metres, and yet these trees rarely fall over. They withstand strong winds, earthquakes, fires, storms, and prolonged flooding. How can something weighing up to 500 tons, standing over 30 stories tall and that lives for centuries remain standing with roots that only extend down about 3 metres?

The really unique thing about the redwood tree is that its root system is intertwined with the other redwood trees around it. They literally hold each other up. The trees grow very close together and are dependent on each other for nutrients, as well. So, beneath the surface of these enormous trees are roots like an army of people with their arms interlocked, standing and supporting each other. They are protecting each other from adversity AND supplying nutrients to each other to ensure they all continue to grow.

The people in YOUR inner circle are a lot like the redwood trees. So when the winds of change blow through your business, remember that you have a support system around you to help you weather the storm.

---

Jennifer Myers is a Certified Leadership and Business Coach and Certified DISC Communication Consultant. She owns a business called Gener8 Leadership Solutions, which means she helps develop leaders and helps build effective teams.

To find out more, get in touch: [jennifer@gener8leadership.solutions](mailto:jennifer@gener8leadership.solutions) | 027 612 3493