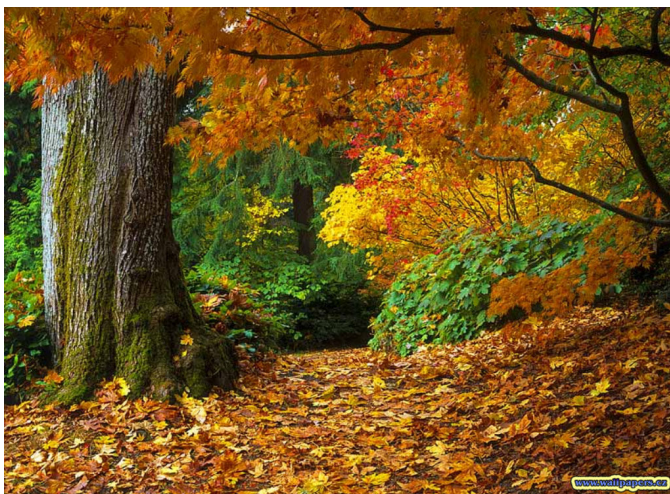


# Meeting the Challenges of Change

by

**Judith Albright**



### **Copyright Notice**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronics or mechanical. Any unauthorized sharing, reproduction or distribution is prohibited.

### **Legal Notice**

While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided in this publication, neither the author nor the publisher assume any responsibility for errors, omissions, or contradictory information.

This book is not intended as medical, legal, investment or accounting advice. The purchaser or reader of this book assumes all responsibility for these materials and information. The authors assume no responsibility or liability whatsoever on behalf of any purchaser or reader of these materials.

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

*A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

*A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

*A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

*A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

*A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

*A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

*A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*



Ecclesiastes, 3. 1  
King James Bible

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

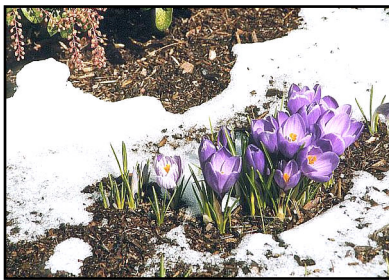
Just like the main character in the 1960s Broadway production of *Stop the World I Want to Get Off*, we may long for something better in our lives, but never realize that what we really wanted was right in front of us all along. Too often, it is not until someone or something we cherish is gone that we truly appreciate and recognize the value of what we have lost. This might be our freedom, a lifestyle, a loved one, our employment, or our health, but whatever it is, such a loss inevitably brings unwanted change and we have little choice but to deal with it the best we can.

### The Difference between Change and Transition

Throughout our lives we experience frequent changes, some of which are so subtle they come and go, often unnoticed in the distractions of daily living. A change is situational—like a change in the weather or a change in plans, and is associated with external situations and events, some of which we can control and some we cannot. In contrast, a transition is an internal psychological process that requires reflection and inner re-orientation to work through and resolve. Transitions are times of letting go of the past and crossing from the old and familiar to something new and unfamiliar. Major life changes and the disruptions they cause force us to re-examine our values, beliefs and lifestyles. They enable us to make fundamental changes to how we see the world and give us an opportunity to respond creatively to our new reality, good or bad. If navigated through and managed effectively, all major life transitions can lead to personal growth.

### The Natural Cycle of Beginnings and Endings

From the moment we are born we become part of a natural cycle of beginnings and endings. This is readily seen in nature with the changing of the seasons. After months of shorter days



and freezing temperatures, snow and ice melt, days grow longer and warmer, and suddenly a dazzling array of crocuses, tulips and daffodils emerge from the cold ground. In the fall, tree leaves that have been brilliantly green all summer, quickly turn red and gold, and within a short time are blown to the ground, leaving only bare branches behind.

So it is with our lives. Every transition begins with an ending. While we may experience long periods of time when little or nothing changes, inevitably something happens to interrupt the status quo and cause change to occur. It is estimated that there can be ten to twenty major events in an average person's lifetime that results in major life transitions.

A transition has been defined as a major life change characterized by a sharp disconnection with the past. Transitions are turning points that result in movements from one role to another. Some of these are predictable, some are not. Some are voluntary such as getting married, moving to a new home, changing careers, or a planned retirement. Others may be

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

thrust upon us dramatically and unexpectedly, such as a catastrophic illness, an unexpected job loss or the death of a loved one.

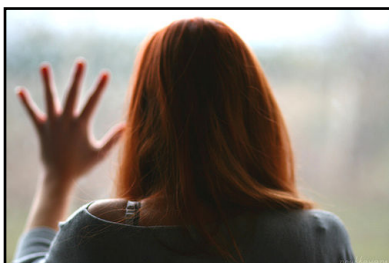
Sometimes transitions occur just because we have reached a level of maturity that fosters an increasing level of self awareness. At some point we may realize we have outgrown many of our friends; we become more aware that people cycle out of our lives when our purpose for being together is ended. For example, years after graduation we can find ourselves having little or nothing in common with old friends from high school or college. Friends who have been close to us at work may drift away when we find a new job and no longer share common issues, concerns and the latest office gossip. The same is true for those who move away and suddenly discover that they have little to talk to their former neighbors about.

Life changes can also be set into motion by an awareness that we have become stuck in a rut and our life is going nowhere. Even though the exact reasons may remain shadowy or elusive, we instinctively understand when it is time for a change. We start realizing that life is not turning out as we had expected and time is passing us by. Such feelings can happen at any time, but they are more common during what Gail Sheehy, author of *Passages*, called the “predictable crises of adult life,” which often accompany our decade changes (30s, 40s, 50s etc.). The urgency for change tends to become more pronounced as we near midlife when we wake up to the realization that “I have already lived half of my life and I have no idea what to do with the rest of it.”

Good or bad, life changing events cause us to leave something behind. They force us to adjust to a new way of living, whether or not we are prepared to do so. Transitions can be times of excitement, anticipation, curiosity and hope about the future, even when the present may be a time of sorrow and loss. Transitions offer us the opportunity to learn more about ourselves and use our inner coping skills. They enable us to make fundamental changes to how we see the world and ask ourselves what we really want from life. They are the equivalent of animals shedding their skins in order to grow.

### The Ending of the Old

Endings are both occasions to celebrate and to grieve. Even positive events can come with a sense of sadness and loss. Take, for example, the career woman who gives up her well



paying position in order to have a child before her biological clock runs out. While she may be ecstatically happy about the coming birth of the child she has long wanted, she also experiences the feelings of loss that come with giving up something that was so well deserved and hard to earn. Or, there is the family who moves to their dream home, miles from their old neighborhood or even in another community. While there is excitement and anticipation about the new

home, there is also a certain amount of sadness that comes from having to give up the close day to day association with old friends and neighbors who will now be far away. Retirement

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

is another example of mixed blessings. After years of identifying with work and living in the fast lane, the prospect of unlimited free time without pressures or schedules seems infinitely appealing. While the euphoric feelings of freedom may last quite a while, there may come a time when it dawns on us we have been “put out to pasture.” We are over the hill....history. No longer are we vital human beings directly involved in the wheels that turn the world, and we are no longer who or what we were. For anyone whose life has revolved primarily around work, the loss of identity can be profound and the ending bittersweet. In his book *Transitions, Making Sense of Life's Changes*, William Bridges points out that there are four distinct stages of endings:

**Disengagement:** Before we can see the world in a new way we must first distance ourselves from our old roles and activities. Without such a break, making a successful transition is difficult. Disengagement does not mean running away or moving; rather, it simply means that a psychological detachment is necessary before we can gain the perspective to view and assess the old situation more objectively.

**Disidentification:** At this point, our view of who we are has changed. It becomes necessary for us to give up our former definitions of self and find new ways to see ourselves and live our lives. To do otherwise simply postpones the inevitable and invites prolonged pain and inner conflict. A widow, for example, will at some point have to give up her identity as a married woman and redefine herself as a formerly married single woman. Men or women who lose a prestigious or high-paying position in a company must eventually relinquish their former corporate identity and acknowledge their new status as job seekers if they are to move successfully through what potentially could be a long transition period.

**Disenchantment:** As our situation evolves, we may start questioning what is real and what is not. In our old lives we were accustomed to looking at reality in ways that no longer apply. While we may have believed that “This relationship is forever,” or “I’ll always be healthy,” we now must acknowledge an entirely different truth. Disenchantment occurs when we finally face this. When we are finally able to start seeing the world in new ways, the door to a different stage of life opens.

### **Disorientation, the “Limbo” Time:**

This in-between stage commonly referred to as the “neutral zone,” can be uncomfortable because we are disconnected from the past but not yet connected to the future. This is the time to allow ourselves a period of personal introspection. It is now that we have the opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with our own inner nature, examine our beliefs and determine what we will do with our future. This can be difficult because we are now living with altered views of reality. We may have difficulty finding ourselves. What we formerly believed was meaningful or important may no longer be so. We may feel that we have jumped head first into the void or are spinning our



## Meeting the Challenges of Change

wheels. We get from one hour and one day to the next, simply by moving slowly and taking one step at a time. This is a good time to be alone to think, pray or meditate. It is important to avoid “keeping busy” as a means of avoiding emotional pain. It is pain that points the way to what we need to do in order to grow. Eventually we come to the realization that it is necessary to empty our closets before we can start filling them up again.

### Who Am I Now?

But emptying our closets means giving up life as we have known it, and perhaps even part of our identity. We can no longer be the same person we were before, but the big question is now who you are now, what you can become and what you can achieve. This can be a frightening prospect. However, if we embrace change instead of resisting it or pretending it isn't happening, the energy spent on resisting can now be used more productively to pursue our own creative purposes.

Other societies are better prepared to handle such “dry spells” than we are in the western world. As part of their rituals, many cultures and peoples provide opportunities such as vision quests to allow individuals in transition to search alone for answers that may come intuitively. This is one of the ways that native tribes provide a transition between childhood and adulthood. Since we lack such rituals in our own society, we may not know what to do with ourselves during this time of confusion and disorientation.

This is your opportunity to find ways to honor the past and bring comfort to yourself. Creating your own ritual to acknowledge an ending can be quite healing. For example, throwing a divorce party or climbing a mountain to spread a loved one's ashes are ways to bring absolute closure to that phase of your life.

Martha Beck, in her book *Finding Your Own North Star*, describes the transition process as a cycle. The first phase is a time of shedding old roles and circumstances and getting in touch with your own internal guidance system. Next comes the exploration of all kinds of thoughts and ideas about your possible future. That is followed by a time when you start putting your plans into action. Finally you reach the point where you are actually living the life you have always dreamed about. Because life is a natural cycle of endings and beginnings, eventually you will revert back to phase one, but each time you cycle through, you become wiser, more confident and capable.

### Letting Go

Endings are difficult for many people even if they were unhappy in their old situation. Some tenaciously hang on to the past because it feels secure and familiar. Even when the changes in our lives are positive, navigating through transitions and letting go of the past is not always easy. Transitions are difficult because as humans we are basically uncomfortable with change. The old ways are known,



## Meeting the Challenges of Change

which is always more comforting than the unknown. For some people, letting go is frightening, even if there are painful consequences to hanging on. Consider clinging and controlling parents who are unable to let their children grow up and establish independent lives of their own. Not only does holding on inhibit and interfere with the psychological growth and maturity of the children, it can even lead to a complete break in the relationship if the power struggle or conflict becomes severe enough.

Still others attempt to avoid endings simply by dismissing them. Those who cope in this manner choose to concentrate only on the present and the future, completely ignoring or recognizing their need for closure. Refusing to acknowledge our own personal history and what we have learned from it is a guaranteed way to be haunted by the past and make moving on more difficult. However, in finding new pathways for our lives we can never be completely disconnected from the past because it is important for us to have both history and continuity. Our past and the lessons we have learned from it are both an anchor and a valuable resource that aids our journey into the future. While we cannot change circumstances or the past, what we can change is the way we view the world, what we believe, and the choices we make.

When faced with major changes in our lives, we have at least three options:

- We can do nothing and be miserable trying to keep things the way they were by hanging onto old but familiar ideas and feelings.
- We can face reality and find ways to work through unresolved needs and emotions.
- We can learn from the past and use that knowledge to guide our future direction.

### The Beginning of the New

To avoid the challenge of facing an ending, some people rush into a new beginning before they have processed the loss of the old. This can complicate matters: the old realities are still in place but there is no clear direction about what should come next. There has not been enough time to sort out what has happened and gain insight into what is wanted at this stage of life. This is like going on a car trip without a road map—you can find yourself on some pretty rough roads or even at a dead end.



Once we can truly say goodbye and let go, and once we have allowed ourselves to fully experience our feelings, we are ready to move on. A new beginning starts to occur when we are willing to realign our way of looking at and living in the world. In the beginning we may look outside ourselves for guidance, but it is our

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

---

own renewed self-knowledge and intuition that are our true guideposts. This is not a time to be swayed by other people's influence or expectations. Instead we must rely on our own inner voice to point the way.

Once we have achieved clarity on what choices are possible, it is time to take action and start making things happen. Our identity must now become that of a traveler embarking on a journey to unknown and exciting places. Just like a river that must be crossed if we are to reach the opposite shore, we must find our own best way to get across the rough water. There are ways to make this crossing easier.

### ***Give Yourself Enough Time***

When life is as it should be and we are standing on familiar ground, we know what to expect. We are able to predict outcomes and react accordingly. But when our world literally gets tilted on its axis because of a life transition, we have reached new territory. We no longer know how to react or what to expect. It is only after a long and sometimes treacherous process of adjustment that we are able to develop new skills and abilities that will help us achieve a new balance in our lives.

When this process is painful or prolonged, we naturally want to hurry it along. We live in an era of sound bites, fast food, instant communication and immediate gratification, and we are accustomed to quick fixes. We long to "fast forward" to a happier and more peaceful time when there are no worries and no pressure to make decisions we don't want to make. But when life forces us to make them anyway, we just want to minimize our pain and have everything over and done with as quickly as possible. However, there are few quick fixes; adjusting to a new reality takes time.

In an attempt to avoid discomfort, many people attempt to start a new beginning before they have finished processing the ending. The result is often another unhappy situation. Too often we plunge ourselves into something new only to find ourselves feeling lost, frustrated, lonely, tired, resentful, or preoccupied with our unfinished business from the past.

A common example of this is jumping into a new relationship immediately following a divorce or the breakup of a long-standing relationship. While it is natural to feel defenseless and needy following a breakup, a new relationship is neither healthy for you nor fair to the other person. Before you can be emotionally open and fully ready to be in a new relationship, you need time to grieve over the old one. It is important to have time alone, to think about what the old relationship meant and what went wrong with it. Otherwise you simply drag your old baggage with you because the old realities are still in place. A new partner may help dull your pain, but ultimately slow your healing. People rebounding into another relationship tend to seek out the same type of person as the one in the previous relationship, with predictably the same results. Not only does this further damage your self esteem, it can also leave you vulnerable to manipulation by unsavory types of people who actually prey on the broken hearted.

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

### *Find the Support You Need*

When a major change in your life forces you to let go, it is important to seek the help of those who are comforting, encouraging and supportive. Although you may feel embarrassed or ashamed over what has happened, this is not the time to hide or isolate yourself. This is a time when you need encouragement and acceptance without judgment. Even if you have moved to another city, state or country, stay in close touch by phone and e-mail. When you feel safe and supported, you are able to handle and move through a transition more productively.



Surround yourself with positive people and (as much as possible), avoid the energy-drainers, the advice givers and those who insist on being a devil's advocate. You do not need to hear how much worse someone else's crisis is or was when you are trying to cope with your own. Neither do you need to expend your energies defending your actions or trying to solve someone else's problems. At this point you need all your energy and inner strength for yourself.

### *Take Small Steps*

Although adjustments to the way you live may now be necessary, this is not the time to make other major life altering decisions. While we all like to think of ourselves as confident people who can handle anything, when faced with a crisis, even the strongest of us can be brought to the verge of a breakdown if the trauma is great enough. In the middle of a crisis we lose our ability to reason and think clearly. Therefore, it is important not to rush into anything or make important decisions while your brain is still in a fog. Just take one step at a time and address only your most immediate issues.



When undergoing a significant change, it helps to keep as much of your daily routine as consistent as you can, at least in the beginning. You may never completely accept or understand what has happened to you and you may be feeling confused and afraid. While this is uncomfortable, bear in mind that confusion will pass and clarity will return. In the meantime, make only temporary alterations in your life to accommodate your immediate situation. Buy yourself some time until you can become clearer about what available courses of action there are. If a job was lost, it may be necessary to seek temporary work to tide you over until you find what you truly want. If you move to another city, it may be advisable to rent for a while to determine where you really want to live before jumping in and buying property. If you have lost a relationship, give yourself a time-out from dating. Find other satisfying activities or seek the companionship of old friends and family.

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

### *Take Care of Yourself*

Good or bad, even small changes in life can create some degree of stress. Whether emotional, physical or both, stress affects our well being. Through our nervous system, brain cells communicate with the body by means of chemical messengers (neuro-transmitters). When a person is exposed to too much stress, chemical communication in the brain is disrupted. When that happens you are likely to experience sleep disturbances, aches and pains, depression and anxiety. If not addressed and resolved, stress can ultimately result in more serious physical conditions and even disease.

When you are in the midst of a painful or traumatic life change, you can become so distressed or preoccupied you fail to care for yourself properly. It may be easy to fall into a habit of skipping meals or grabbing fast food, skimping on sleep or exercise, or not allowing yourself to take time out. It is also easy to ignore what your body may be trying to tell you. If your body is telling you to slow down or that something is not right, pay attention to it. Too often we do not listen to our bodies no matter how loudly they may be shouting at us. It is a well known fact that there is a direct correlation between stress and physical illness. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to be kind to yourself. This means getting enough sleep, eating proper foods and limiting consumption of sugar, alcohol, prescription drugs and caffeine. It also means finding a healthy outlet for pent up emotions.

Suppressing your emotions and pretending that all is well to cover your own inner conflict is a guaranteed formula for stress overload which, if prolonged, can have a negative impact on your body. Stress overload not only elicits emotional disturbances and physical symptoms, it “short circuits” the body’s energy system. The cells of every bone, nerve and muscle have “cellular” memory where unresolved issues and emotions are stored and can become stuck. Therefore, it is of primary importance for negative emotional energy to have a healthy outlet to help maintain both physical and mental health. Explore options such as biofeedback, meditation, exercise or massage. Think about how you treat your child or pet after a traumatic event, and treat yourself the same way. You may want to learn to use a stress management technique such as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to keep yourself healthy and functioning efficiently throughout this demanding time. EFT is a highly effective stress management tool that is self-administered. It is easy to learn and can be used anywhere whenever you find your emotions spiraling out of control.



When you are overloaded by stress you are more susceptible to illness and disease than someone who is not. When you are experience high levels of stress you are more prone to colds and other minor illnesses, and you may find that pre-existing health conditions are becoming worse. The reason is that emotional disturbances cause your autonomic nervous system to respond by going into “fight or flight” mode. The body then produces steroids at higher levels which, in turn, increase the heart rate and blood pressure. While elevated steroids are a normal response to stress, excessive

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

---

steroid production over a period of time can disrupt your health. Prolonged stress to the nervous system also impacts your immune system, resulting in a major decrease in your body's ability to fight infection.

It is important to be able to recognize the warning signs of stress and take the necessary steps toward guarding your health and well being. How many of the symptoms listed in the chart on the following page have you had or are you experiencing?

## Symptoms of Stress

### Cognitive Symptoms

- Memory problems, forgetfulness
- Indecisiveness
- Inability to concentrate
- Confusion or difficulty thinking clearly
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying
- Loss of objectivity
- Fearful anticipation

### Physical Symptoms

- Headaches or backaches
- Muscle tension or stiffness
- Upset stomach or digestive problems
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness and nausea
- Dry mouth
- Frequent colds
- Heart palpitations
- Elevated blood pressure
- Insomnia or sleep disturbances
- Missed menstrual cycles
- Chronic fatigue or lethargy
- Food cravings
- Excessive sweating (even when calm)
- Muscle tension in the back or neck
- Skin breakouts or rashes
- Chest pain
- Loss of sex drive
- Heartburn
- Frequent need to urinate

### Emotional Symptoms

- Moodiness
- Impatience
- Restlessness
- Short temper
- Irritability, frequent outbursts
- Inability to relax
- Feeling tense or “on edge”
- Feeling anxious or overwhelmed
- Feeling lonely or isolated
- Depression or hopelessness

### Behavioral Symptoms

- Compulsive eating or loss of appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Easily startled
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Procrastination
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Crying easily or uncontrollably
- Excessive use of alcohol or cigarettes
- Dependency on drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (i.e. nail biting, pacing, etc.)
- Talking too fast or too loud
- Frequent interruption of conversations
- Chronic lateness
- Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
- Overdoing activities (exercising, etc.)
- Overreaction to unexpected problems
- Picking fights with others
- Frequent yawning
- Irrationality
- Neglect of personal appearance

## Uncharted Waters



Such expanse of sea  
Water without end  
confronts me with myself  
in uncharted waters.

Without the maps to set my course,  
To drift or to sail  
Is a voyage of discovery;  
Young again?  
Am I free to respond to the  
Call of adventure?  
And yet, am I too old?

There was comfort in those patterns  
Daily played out on the high seas,  
Wherein I earned my stripes  
In recognition of duty;  
But what I learned  
Must be unlearned:  
And let go the patterns...  
So to be young again.

So be it.  
I can sail, I can swim,  
I can drift if I like.  
The water will carry me,  
Homewards.

©Philip Walton 2006  
(Reprinted with permission)

## Finding Your Way Out

### Acknowledge your Loss

The first step in handling a crisis is to admit you are in one. Only then can you start finding your way out of it. Recognizing and acknowledging what you are leaving behind helps heal your wounds and opens the door to new possibilities.

Honor your emotions, particularly the fear that inevitably surfaces, and then be willing to surrender into not knowing what will happen next.

Stop seeing yourself as a victim. Take responsibility for your actions and stop blaming others for unwanted changes that may have come without warning. Hard as it may be, if you can accept what has happened and see how you have contributed to it or the role you played in it, your progress will be much faster. Those who are able to see life's challenges as a normal part of living instead of major obstacles seem to adjust better and have an easier time getting through transition periods. An attitude that negative experiences must be avoided at all cost makes them far more difficult to navigate.



### Brainstorm Your Options

Even though you think you have already run out of options and there are absolutely none left, the truth is there are always possibilities. Are you absolutely certain you have thought of everything? Two heads are better than one, and several heads are even better at solving problems and generating ideas. Having information is empowering, so it is of primary importance for you to learn all you can. One of the best ways to gather information is to seek out someone else who has been through a similar situation and ask how they worked it out. They may offer solutions you have never considered or never even knew about. If you do not know such a person, consider hiring a professional life coach who specializes in life transitions to help empower you. There are also blogs, chat rooms, forums and teleclasses on the Internet where you might have an opportunity to connect with others. Depending on your situation, there are often local support groups you can join who can provide not only emotional support but different perspectives and possible solutions.

### Find Small Ways to Regain Control and Be Inspired

Anything you can do to increase your sense of control and to motivate you toward active problem solving will help you move forward faster. It is important to expand your perspective and explore new ideas. If what you have been doing is not working, doing more of it won't work either. How would you advise a friend who came to you with the same

## Meeting the Challenges of Change

problem or circumstance? Try to step outside your feelings and evaluate your situation from a clearer point of view. The following mental exercise is a good way to do this. Pretend you are sitting in a movie theater watching yourself and your current situation unfold on the big screen. What is the title of this movie? Who are the cast of characters? What role is each person playing, especially yourself? What is the story line? Is there something missing you have not been able to see before? Can you visualize and re-write a different ending? If so, what changes would you make in the script? Let your imagination run wild and be creative. Try to imagine yourself one year from now, smiling at yourself in the mirror, feeling happier than you've ever felt as you're getting ready to start your day. Where would you be going? Who would you be seeing? What would you be getting ready to do?

### Establish Priorities

Every task is not of equal importance and it is imperative to be able to distinguish the difference. Otherwise you can end up spinning your wheels and wasting a lot of time you could be spending on something more productive. If you have lost your job, for example, shopping for a new outfit to wear to a job interview is less important than sending out resumes and making phone calls.

Organizing tasks into lists is a great way to help you identify what needs to be done first and what can wait until another day. It also helps you regain your sense of control. On the following page is an action plan worksheet with labeled columns grouping tasks according to what can be done today, tomorrow, next week or within a month. If you have more than one goal, fill out a sheet for each one of them. Don't dump all your goals together—it's too easy to get lost.

### Create an Action Plan

Take a hard look at anything and everything you can do to move yourself forward out of your current situation. Even if the only action you can think of taking today is playing a round of golf, polishing your toenails or soaking in a hot bath, write it down and then do it. It will make you feel better and less helpless when you realize you are not at a dead end and there are things you can do. Each entry may even stimulate an idea for another. One by one, keep adding ideas and action items to your columns, no matter how small or inconsequential you think them to be. You can even write down outrageous silly things, just as you would do if you were participating in a discussion group or think tank where every idea, regardless of how ludicrous it is, is recorded as a possibility and then accepted or eliminated later after further evaluation. Even small deeds and actions will eventually add up, and when there are multiple entries in each of your columns you will soon start seeing a bigger picture. As you cross



## Meeting the Challenges of Change

---



things off as done, impractical or unworkable, you will be able to see your progress—what you have done and what still needs to be done. Having items down in black and white not only boosts your confidence, it provides your own personal compass to guide you where you need to go.

If you faithfully use the action plan worksheet (print off as many as you need) and keep adding to your columns, your entire plan of action unfolds right there in front of you, to be changed or adjusted as needed. Adding items incrementally over a period of time helps keep you from feeling pressured about having to think of everything at once or on short notice. With your entire plan in front of you, all you need to do is stay motivated and keep following through. Focusing on where you want to go instead of where you are or have been will help you along this path.

**Action Plan Worksheet**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal:**

<b>What I Can Do Today</b>	<b>What I Can Do Tomorrow</b>	<b>What I Can Do Next Week</b>	<b>What I Can Do Within a Month</b>

## De-cluttering

We put up with, accept, take on, and are dragged down by people and situations we may have come to ignore. Now is the time to identify who and what drains your energy. As you think of them, keep adding items to your list. You may or may not choose to take action immediately, but just becoming aware of the negatives in your life will bring them to the forefront of your mind where you'll naturally start finding ways to eliminate, fix or resolve them.

### ENERGY DRAINERS AT WORK

### ENERGY DRAINERS AT HOME

1)	1)
2)	2)
3)	3)
4)	4)
5)	5)
6)	6)
7)	7)
8)	8)
9)	9)
10)	10)
11)	11)
12)	12)
13)	13)
14)	14)
15)	15)

## Meet the Author



Change and Challenge might well have been good middle names for me since I have gone through so many changes in my own life and have spent a great deal of time seeking both. Some changes and challenges were involuntarily thrust upon me, while others I sought out for myself. I have always been one of those people who wanted to see what was over the next hill and what the next adventure might be. So it is not too surprising that what I do today is entirely different from my earlier career and what I was doing even a few years ago.

My formal education includes a BFA from the University of Denver, an MA from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and additional graduate work at the University of Phoenix. My work experience includes both teaching at the community college level, professional writing, and a long career in Corporate America where the focus of my life was quite different. Back then it would never have occurred to me that one day I would be able to help people with techniques and methods that were not even known about at that time.

I have always had a keen interest in alternative means of physical and emotional healing, and today I am a stress management specialist in Fort Collins, Colorado. Several years ago I was introduced to Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), and after seeing and experiencing sometimes spectacular results for myself and others, I became a dedicated practitioner. It was through my EFT practice that I first learned about and became trained in PSYCH-K® and The Emotion Code®. I have found that these three powerful approaches to emotional and physical healing are keys that can open the door to living a life free of self imposed limitations.

During my years of working with clients I have seen first hand the results of living with self-imposed limitations, and discovered that living an unhappy unfulfilled life is one of our greatest sources of stress. Countless people feel stuck and dissatisfied with their lives, often with little or no idea about what they truly want or how to get it. I am grateful to have tools that can help others make the necessary changes in their own lives to address their discontent, awaken to their true potential, and move past their mental roadblocks into a happier and more fulfilling life.