

Adapting to Change Playbook

Change is occurring at a truly exponential rate. Just look at the rise of AI and the massive implications it will have on how you live, work and even play.

Think of some of the categories, whether we expected those changes to occur or not, that demand we adapt to new rules and behaviors. These include: technological improvements, our competition in the work we do, the economy, the demand/lack for our products & services in the field we work in, environmental changes, biological threats, and even organizational growth or contraction.

Even if these events are temporary in how long they last (e.g., Covid-19, a recession) they have a tendency to impact our lives at all levels. I call these events “disruptions” because even when the implications are positive the events require us to adapt to change.

The brain resists changes in how we behave because it perceives change as a threat. But the reality is that if we refuse to adapt, or are not quick to change, we’ll struggle. The following are some beliefs we can adopt and a starting set of questions that will help us navigate stormy waters.

9 Rules for Confronting Change

1. Changes will happen no matter what.
2. Pay attention to the world around you. Monitor changes.
3. Expect things to change.
4. Don’t resist change. Accept that some things are out of our control.
5. Trust your intuition when the warning signs come up that changes are afoot.
6. Though we can’t control the event(s), we can control our response.
7. If we fail to anticipate, we anticipate to fail.
8. Get ready to adapt and take action!
9. Think cyclically. Everything does, and will, change.

Some Questions to Ask When Confronted with Change

- Is this change within my control of influence?
- Is there anything I can possibly do to fully eliminate the event requiring me to adapt?
- What specifically is different now?

- What will I need to do to accept the reality of the situation?
- What about these changes impact me the most?
- What are the new beliefs, expectations and/or behaviors that I am going to have to adopt to succeed in this new reality?
- What previous beliefs, expectations and/or behaviors that worked in the past are no longer useful in this new reality?
- How can I adapt as soon as possible?
- What will it potentially cost me if I don't adapt?
- What will successfully managing this change mean for me?

The Red Queen Hypothesis:

A species must constantly adapt & evolve in a community in order to survive while pitted against ever-evolving opposing species. – Leigh Van Valen

Better than responding to change is foreseeing the change in the horizon because we can prepare for it and its implications.

Some Questions to Ask to Anticipate Change

- Am I paying attention to the world around me? To my professional sector? To where I live?
- Who are the leaders, rule breakers and influencers in my field and in society that are anticipating change?
- What insights can I gain from them?
- What problems might be in the horizon? What solutions have recently been implemented and what new set of problems will those solutions create?
- What are some of the paradigms, behaviors and beliefs that used to be accepted that are now being questioned?
- If I don't change what, if anything, could happen to me?
- What's replacing the old paradigms, behaviors and beliefs?