

Embracing Change

Adapted from: <http://caregiversos.org/embracing-change/>

For many years I would hear people say, “The only sure things are death and taxes.”

That may well be true, but it is my experience that the real sure thing is change.

Change happens. It can happen quickly, slowly, for good, for bad, suddenly, behind the scenes, or any other number of ways, but change will occur whether we like it or not. The thing about change is that we never really know how it will play out or what the future will be because of it. As change is an integral part of life, our best option is to learn how to roll with it and not be resistant or afraid of it.

The famous Greek philosopher Socrates said, “The secret to change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but building on the new.”

Family caregivers are not new to sudden changes being necessary or constantly evolving in our social, family, and professional lives. Once again, our personal attitudes toward change, relative to a variety of factors, will determine how well we are able to adapt to the changes that will continue to occur in our lives.

I recently listened to a TEDx Perth talk by Jason Clarke, an Australian motivational speaker. I found Clarke’s concept of ownership vs. authorship of change of tremendous interest. This idea allows us to adapt to change by “authoring” how we accept and best integrate the change into our lives with the least upheaval. In this way, we maintain responsibility for the effect the new circumstance will have on us. Uh oh, here come the feelings!

It’s OK; this is perfectly normal. Human feelings around change run the gamut from relief to utter panic. Foresight is rarely reliable when it comes to caregiving. Don’t worry about what you don’t know; find out what you need to know.

Learning to embrace change is an important life skill to have. 21st-century life moves at a faster pace, and it is not always easy to keep up. Regrettably, most of us are not taught that foresight is rarely reliable when it comes to change because our first reaction is many times driven by fear. We can drive ourselves crazy anticipating (i.e., projecting) a preconceived outcome that is not real.

Learning to navigate through changing times and circumstances can be our greatest teacher as caregivers. It demands that we honour our feelings and nurture our ability to be flexible and resilient, two excellent traits of effective caregiving.

As Charles Darwin wisely opined, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

*You viewed this article on the Caregivers Nova Scotia website www.CaregiversNS.org. For more information, contact us toll-free at 1.877.488.7338.