

EMBRACING CHANGE



By **HYMA PILLAY**

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“THE only people who like change are babies in wet diapers,” a friend of mine said to me a few weeks ago, while we were having a conversation about change over coffee and cakes.

It is true, to some extent. No one likes change. I personally don't. Change is difficult, it's messy, and it's troublesome. It involves risks and uncertainty.

However, as we all know, and as it has been talked about countless times in various articles, change is good.

Change pushes us forward, takes us out of our comfort zones, and helps us achieve things we never knew we could achieve. It brings out the potential we never knew we had.

Like every other big step, the one thing that stops us from embracing change is fear. Fear of uncertainty, the fear of failing.

Whether it is a move to a new department at work, taking on a new leadership role, moving to a new organisation, or even to an entirely new industry, these steps can be very scary because of the uncertainties of what it may bring.

So, how do we overcome this fear?

Here are three steps to help overcome the fear of change:

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE CHANGE

The first step to embracing change is to understand, acknowledge, and accept the change that you're going through.

List down the benefits you get from this change, and how it can help you in your career acceleration and future growth.

List down your fears as well. Once you have written your fears down, you would be able to go through each fear and rationalise it. You can also craft a backup plan for some of the fears.

This way, instead of just being afraid and worrying, you will have an action plan so you are prepared in case the worst of your fears come true.

Once you have a clearer understanding of the benefits and your fears, it will be easier to accept the change.

STEP 2: SET SMART GOALS

Setting goals enables you to keep track and consciously guide changes, which also helps you to recognise your success. You can try using the **SMART** technique to set your goal:

- **Specific**

Create goals that are specific. For example, 'I want to increase the sales income of my new division by 40%', instead of 'I want to increase the sales income'.

TAKING ONE STEP AT A TIME



- **Measurable**

Make sure there is a way for you to measure the goal to know that you are successful in achieving it.

- **Actionable**

Create goals that have clear action plans which you can take to achieve it. For example, 'I will dedicate two hours a day to research new clients I can approach for sales'.

- **Realistic**

Your goal has to be something that is achievable. Although it is good to dream big, there's no point in setting a goal which is unrealistic.

- **Timely**

Give yourself realistic timelines to achieve your goal. This keeps you on track with your goal, e.g. 'By May 2015, I will increase the sales income by 40%'.

By setting goals, you are also setting a good perception towards the change. Your goals would give you certain positive things to look forward to and keep you excited.

STEP 3: KEEP A POSITIVE MINDSET

Fear can create a lot of negative energy. It is important to keep a strong focus on the positive aspects of the change.

If the change you are going through is

really big, have a strong support system. Speak to experienced people from work and outside of work to help you through it. They can probably help you see the positives.

Approach this change with a positive outlook. Change is progress. Most times, the beginning stages of the change can be a very painful one. It sometimes involves letting go of things we have grown very comfortable with.

Keep in mind that although it may seem very difficult in the beginning, it is up to you to make it better. If you're afraid of not doing well in your new department, work harder and show them that you deserve to be there.

If it's the fear of not having close relationships with your colleagues in your old job, step up and make new friends. Even the greatest relationships started with a simple "hello".

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Early last year, I went for a job interview, and I was asked if I wanted to join the editorial team. I said I would prefer not to, because I was not used to writing and was not very comfortable with it. In short, I didn't think I would be good at it.

I'm grateful that my interviewer didn't listen to me and decided to put me in the

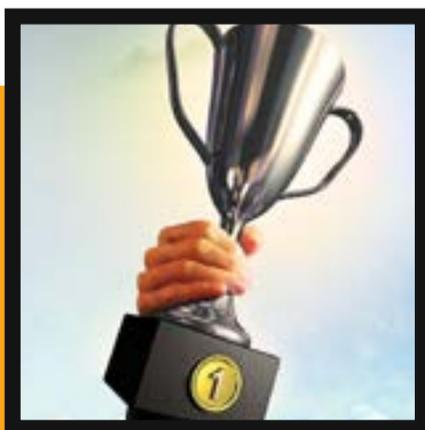
Leaderonomics editorial team.

More than a year later, here I am, writing so frequently for this career guide. By embracing and accepting that change, I was pushed out of my comfort zone, and I found joy in something I never knew I could enjoy – writing.

"Without change, something sleeps inside us, and seldom awakens. The sleeper must awaken." – Frank Herbert

■ *Hyma Pillay is operations leader for the Leaderonomics.com editorial team. She is still learning to cope and accept things that change around her, but has never regretted any of the big steps she has taken in her life. You can email her at editor@leaderonomics.com. Read more of her articles at www.leaderonomics.com*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Having faith in Hyma's abilities and 'can-do' attitude, she was recently entrusted with a monumental project – way out of her comfort zone – through which she has proven yet again that she can accomplish great things when she sets her mind to it.



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champs**
in our camp



When
quitters
are
winners



The **math**
formula for
talent



Crashing
in on
creativity

Also next week

