

Adaptability

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Adaptability: Learn, Flex, Grow

- Do you consider yourself to be adaptable?
- Are you flexible and willing to learn?
- Do you accept change at work with a positive attitude?
- Are you able to try new things and handle different workflows?

Adaptability: Learn, Flex, Grow

- Adaptability is a “soft skill” that refers to:
 - *the ability to rapidly learn new skills and behaviors*
in response to changing circumstances.
 - *It is the ability to remain open and flexible in your approach*
knowing that you may succeed or fail along the way.
- It’s more than just being flexible.
 - It’s about being open to things outside your comfort zone and...
 - Resisting the urge to say: “I could never do that” or “That will be too hard for me” or “That will never work.”

Adaptability: Learn, Flex, Grow

Learning Goals

1. Defining adaptability
2. The zones we live in & how we can increase our adaptability
3. Working adaptability from your past & into your future
4. Why it's important, some benefits, & how we can grow our adaptability

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In the Zone

- We all live in a few different “life” zones. Our favorite one is The Comfort Zone.
- Change is hard because we prefer to stay in our comfort zone.
- Many times we generally resist anything that requires us to step out of it.



Your ComfortZone

Comfort Zone (CZ)

- Where everything is either easy or familiar & nothing risky happens
- You may have some challenges in your comfort zone, but they're generally the same ones. You know what's coming.
- *Note: Comfortable but nothing great or exciting happens there either*
- Our CZ's are as small or as big as we make them.

“Cross Your Arms”

The Stretch Zone

- Just outside your CZ where learning & growth happen.
- Can feel a little uncomfortable but you're still able to manage
- Not easy but not impossibly hard either

How do we make our Z's bigger?



- By getting **outside of them**. Do more stuff you don't normally do.
- The bigger our comfort zone, the more adaptable we will be.
- We learn and grow in the Stretch Zone. New tools & new limits.
- The Stretch Zone causes you to learn new skills, behaviors, and how to deal & react in new situations.

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➤ Avoid the “Panic Zone”



➤ Increase your adaptability by spending more time in the Stretch Zone.

RiskManagement: It's YOUR risk.

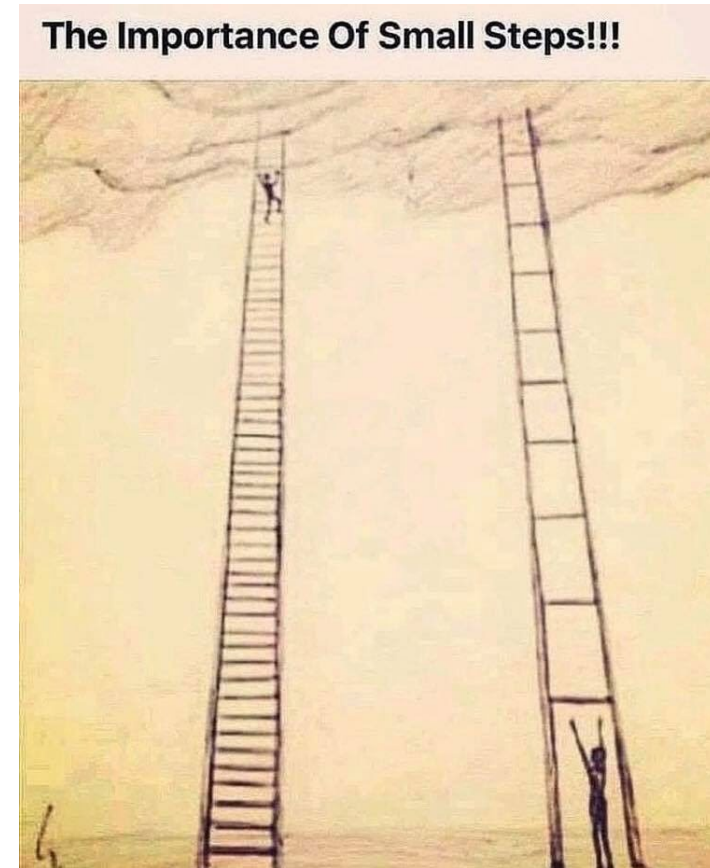
- Small steps. Small risks. You don't have to go "ALL IN".



- Where is Your Stretch Zone?

Thrive vs Stay Alive

How can you spend more time there?



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- Adaptability and The Past

- Drawing on past experience is very important to contributing to how we tackle the next unexpected challenge, but...
- It CANNOT come at the cost of creativity, competitiveness, and getting the job done (i.e we can't keep doing it like we've always done it.)

Adaptability and Your Future

➤ You need to be able to...

Respond effectively to your work conditions even...

- when the situation doesn't go as planned/ expected, or ...
- when the situation doesn't go the way you prefer

Adaptability:
Learn, Flex,
Grow



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The Cookout

- Bring friends together for food & fun: full bellies & smiling laughing faces
- The Guest List includes: Loves-veggies friend, Loves-pasta friend, well-done friends, Medium-rare squad.
- I'm deciding between what I personally prefer vs. what needs to happen based on my invitation.
- Changing circumstances: Who's invited, food allergies, are we celebrating someone in particular?
- All these factors will shape my trip to the grocery store!

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Getting it right

- The world will probably continue to throw new & unexpected situations at us (as leaders, workers, & individuals).
- Being adaptable means we must Learn & Unlearn some things.



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Why Adaptability is Important

- Competition: Don't get left behind
- As new technology evolves, can the established "old ways" compete with the newer major players in their industry?
- Further nurture your adaptability skills by trying new things and challenging your ability to problem solve in various circumstances.

Why It's Important

Adaptable leaders must be able to:

1. Resolve conflicts/ problems in a fast-paced environment
2. Trust their judgment when making tough decisions
 - a) Company policy
 - b) Past successes & failures
 - c) What worked before...
3. Work through unusual circumstances with no explicit instructions
4. Be a perpetual optimist* & exhibit extraordinary resilience
5. Attitude AND Action

Benefits of Being Adaptable

- You'll embrace challenges better
 - Open to finding diverse & unexpected solutions to problems & challenges
 - Not something to dread but something to seize & enjoy working through
- You'll become a better leader
 - Remain positive in the face of adversity
 - Change is inevitable so don't shy away from it
 - Open-minded & considered knowing solutions can be found anywhere
- You'll always be relevant
 - You're comfortable experimenting & shaking things up as needed
 - Willing to try different tools & techniques to achieve the best outcome

Ways to Work on Your Adaptability



FOCUS on Learning

- Failure is just part of learning.
- As long as you're learning, even from mistakes, you are developing & improving.
- Risks taken always provide some positive personal or professional benefit. i.e. *"If I try to do this, at the very least it will benefit me to ..."*
 1. Gain experience
 2. Learn something new
 3. Expose a weakness
 4. Reveal a tendency

Ways to Work on Your Adaptability



✓ Persistence

- Firm or obstinate continuance in a course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition.
- Start with a good "WHY".
- If you think about giving up, think about why you started in the first place.
- Count your WINS. Small wins add up to big victories. Stay aware of your progress to keep moving forward.
- People who adapt well rarely feel the pressure to quit.



Ways to Work on Your Adaptability

- ✓ Resourcefulness: the ability to find quick and/ or clever ways to overcome difficulties.
 - Resourcefulness is a mindset.
 - Often the goal is clear but the path to get there is not.
 - You are driven to find a way.
 - Think about it: "The Mall Trap"

- ✓ Curiosity
 - If you know how to adapt well to a variety of circumstances, then “different” doesn’t scare you as it often does others.
 - You want to know “how” & “why”, not just “what”.
 - Good ideas are often generated when we **think about how to do it better**.
 - You are not afraid of ideas, suggestions, or constructive criticism.

Adapting to change is a skill that takes practice & commitment.

- Begin by practicing it in 'low stake' situations.
- Do small incremental things each day.
- Change your thought process.
- Embrace learning.
- Learn from others around you.
- Practice finding the silver lining.
- Be willing to make mistakes (i.e. take risks).
- Get a mentor & ask questions.

How to Develop your Adaptability Skills



Change Your Thought Process

Let go of the "Well, that's the way we've always done it" or "There's no way we can do this" mentality.

- Adaptable literally means "ABLE to adjust to NEW conditions."
- Decide from the beginning that you CAN do it, you WILL figure it out, or you WILL FIND OUT how to make it work.
- There is a path to the success you're looking for. You just haven't FOUND it YET.

- Think about a complicated puzzle with lots of pieces. **If all you think about is how challenging the task is, your puzzle remains undone.**
- Ask for some assistance & think about how cool it's going to be when you get it finished.

Embrace Learning

- Look for opportunities to try new things that will keep you learning.
 1. Learn a new skill.
 2. Try a new type of food that's outside your comfort zone.
 3. Take the initiative to start something new in your community or neighborhood.

- Practicing these skills outside the office train your brain to do the same thing in the workplace.
- Start embracing change.
- Read up on new developments in your industry.
- Connect with the adaptors in your office and learn from them.

Learn from Others Around You

- Learning to better navigate change and become adaptable is best done from others.
 1. Do you admire how Fiona from finance consistently delivers fiscal results with a positive message for the future, even if targets are missed?
 2. Do you admire how Sean brings in members of different teams to brainstorm solutions to the IT team's challenges?
- Take notes when these people exhibit the adaptability skills you're hoping to learn and ASK them for guidance.
- People like to talk about their stuff. They won't mind that you ask for advice. It's a compliment & show of respect.

Practice Finding the Silver Lining

- Silver linings are about focus & optimism that lead to resilience.
- If I keep my focus on everything that went "wrong", that's mainly what I will get out of that situation.
- But if I take a different focus and ask:
 - Why didn't this work?
 - Why didn't I enjoy this?
 - What went wrong?
- Answers to these questions allows you to learn several things. About you. About your team. About circumstances. About preparation. Learning is a strength. You're getting better.
- Learning leads to optimism. Optimism leads to resilience.
 - "Next time, we'll..."

Develop Your Adaptability as a Leader

- Remain confident but open to improvement
 - Be aware of difference between actual performance & desired performance levels
 - Self awareness must be balanced with self belief
- Focus on improving not proving
 - Goal orientation: whether your focus in approaching a task is on what can be learned to perform well or on avoiding failure to impress others
 - See challenges as an opportunity to improve
- Think about your thinking
- Practice deliberately, not mindlessly
 - Adopt specific goals about HOW you will improve performance in addition to WHAT performance improvement you're aiming for.

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Develop Your Adaptability as a Leader

- Practice deliberately, not mindlessly
 - Adopt specific goals about HOW you will improve performance in addition to WHAT performance improvement you're aiming for.
 - Consider not just the goal but focus on the steps required to reach the goal
 - Example: saving money, improve your fitness, reading more books, etc.
 - Things you're **unfamiliar with** may require a new strategy and will probably make you think and problem-solve to figure them out.

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➤ Final Thoughts

- **Stay Open—Change Happens**
- Significant pressure can make you “rigid”—old ingrained habits & ways for new challenges (the way you’ve always handled, seen it, thought about it, etc.)
- As quickly as our world is changing, habitual responses may no longer be appropriate for new situations. This makes adaptability (& your diligence in developing it) increasingly important.