

**What Would Mac Do?**

**Vol. 4.**

*Dear Mac, Everything seems to be changing! New teams, new systems, new hospital policies, and new leadership. I'm struggling to keep up, and my support staff and teams also struggle. How can we help each other, and how can we help ourselves?*

**Y**ou are not alone in facing change. Here are a few words of wisdom and some suggested resources to build your abilities and those of your staff to not only cope, but to flourish.

**“Managing Change at Work”**

Winston Churchill once said, “If you’re going through hell, keep going.” At times, life in the change lane can feel like being strapped to a run-away roller coaster — exciting and scary at the same time. So what are you supposed to do during times like these? Consider the ideas below, and believe in the power of human resiliency. It’s amazing to see how creative and resilient individuals can get when faced with a difficult set of circumstances.

**“Shift Happens!”**

Change — we love it, we hate it, and we always seem to want more or less of it in our lives. Everything changes — all the time! Oftentimes, though, people think that something is ‘wrong’ if they are required to change. Others prefer to avoid change, hoping it will go away. Hint to dealing with “shift” — ask yourself, ‘What is stopping me from moving forward?’

**“Heal your History”**

Past failures can loom over the future like a threatening cloud. Remember that looking back only gives you a stiff neck! Acknowledge that change has happened, and if it has been long and horrible, admit it and forgive it. Today is what counts. Hint: Talk about it — it imprints the learning and may produce other ideas for forward movement in the future.

**“Change Yourself”**

When I was young, I always wanted to change the world. I found it difficult, though, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn’t change my nation, I tried to change my town. I couldn’t change the town, so, as I got older, I tried to change my family. As I grow in wisdom, I realize the only thing I can change is myself. And I quickly realized that, a long time ago, had I only changed myself, I could have had an impact on my family, and my family and I could have had an impact on our town. That impact could have changed our nation. And together, we could have changed the world. Hint: Ask yourself ‘what changes can I make that might invite others to come along?’

**“Feel the Fear – and do it Anyway!”**

Pat Schroeder famously said that “You can’t wring your hands and roll up your shirt sleeves at the same time. Pick one.” When it comes to fear of change, the good news is that fear is normal. The bad news is also that fear is normal. No one is exempt. Everyone feels it, and everyone wishes they didn’t have to. Growth always necessitates that we take a walk through the “Land of Not Yet” — the land of unknowns, untried ideas, unfamiliar emotions, and tentative solutions. Facing fear diminishes fear — don’t let it conquer you.



**Meet Mac.**

Mac is a new Department recruit who’s here to help you with the many hard-to-answer questions that come with being a surgeon. From operating room specifics to admin duties and management, there’s no topic too tricky for our in-house surgical expert. The next time you’re feeling stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, or generally confused, ask yourself, “*What Would Mac Do?*”

**“Ride on the Horse in the Direction it’s going!”**

Did you know that 30 percent of the population resist change, 50 percent of people take the wait and see approach, and only 20 percent look for development and improvement opportunities, and actually welcome personal challenges? There are no doubt benefits to belonging to each group, but it’s important to know which group you belong to and to use this knowledge to develop your capacity for adjustment.

**“Find support”**

Most people find it helpful — if not necessary — to get assistance with the major changes in life. From self-help options to specialist services, here’s a short list of support options currently available to you...

Self Help: Books, blogs, podcasts, and peer support. Talk with colleagues and friends.

Professional Support: Employee Assistance programs available through McMaster University HR... [workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=healthy-workplace:homewoodhealth](http://workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=healthy-workplace:homewoodhealth)

Specialists: Talk to your family doctor if you think you could benefit from a consultation with a psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist, or social worker.

Coaching: Executive coaching, life coaching, again through McMaster HR... [workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=healthy-workplace:homewoodhealth](http://workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=healthy-workplace:homewoodhealth)

Self-Care: Value yourself, eat well, exercise, practice mindfulness, remove toxic people and situations from your life, and reconnect with the things that you draw power from.

#### **“Stay Informed and Offer Opinions”**

Vital information can come in many different forms. As such, it's important to develop the ability to chase it down. If you haven't seen or heard what's new, find it before it finds you. Think in terms of what is in the best interest of both yourself and of the greater good of what you believe in or are a part of. Putting your opinion forward is usually helpful to the whole group; many times people are thinking the same thing you are, but are not sure they want to share it aloud. Take charge and seek knowledge.

#### **“Depersonalize the Situation”**

An old, unattributed proverb quips that “Blessed are the flexible, for they won't be bent out of shape!” We have no control over many of the things that happen to us; that is true for every one of us. Oftentimes, even the leader of a change has had the mandate imposed upon them, and they simply must take charge of the situation. Hint: Don't allow yourself to dwell on why this happened to 'you.'

#### **“Take Charge of Your Own Morale”**

Putting anyone else in charge of keeping you positive disempowers you. We have the ability to respond to all events in our lives in a manner of our own choosing — we can control how we respond to what happens in our world.

#### **“Expect the Best”**

In *Waitin' For You*, Bob Dylan sang “Happiness is a state of mind, any time you want, you can cross the state line.” When you expect the best to happen... it usually does. Don't invite trouble — invite success instead! Holding a positive attitude will never stop you from making good choices, taking a risk when you need to, or getting you through a tough time. Viktor Frankl said, “The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances.”

#### **“Take a Chance”**

When we stop taking calculated risks, we treat life as a spectator sport — we may learn something by watching others play, but we are on the sidelines of life! Without struggling with issues, we get out of shape for the next change. Reach for new challenges and embrace course corrections. Risks are bold steps that have the potential to make a real difference.

#### **“Celebrate Your Success”**

Don't let the hard part of making change block out the successes along the way. Big change is hard, but celebrating at milestones helps refuel; you don't have to be completely finished to enjoy the sweet taste of small victories. This is good for you and good for your team.

*Source: Peggy Grall – The Change Coach (2006). 19 Hopeful Hints for Managing the Big Fat Changes at Work. Milton, Ontario. Peggy Grall & Associates, Inc.*

*Want your questions answered by Mac? Email your queries to Cathy Turner ([cturner@mcmaster.ca](mailto:cturner@mcmaster.ca)).*

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