

Mind and Matter

A publication of the University of Miami Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)

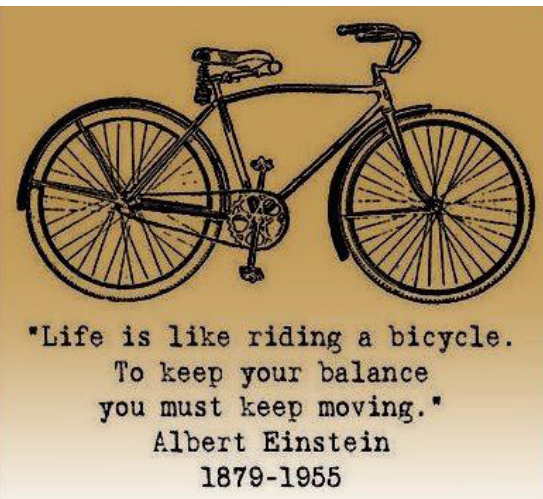
Fall 2014

Maintaining Balance in the Face of Unwanted or Unexpected Workplace Change

by Orlando Gonzalez, MSED, LMHC, CEAP

Each of us vary in our capacity to warm-up to, and welcome, the many changes life throws our way. The changes we initiate and feel greater control over, are likely to be met with less resistance, or stress, than those thrust upon us. Each day, in workplaces across America, employees are challenged to weather changes over which they have no control. These are the most stressful, because they usually are unexpected; occurring without warning or with little warm-up. Today's competitive markets and work environments make it a necessity for businesses and their workforce to develop a chameleon-like capacity for rapid re-positioning or, "changing their colors," in response to rapidly changing landscapes. Those of us who are equipped for re-positioning ourselves to embrace the changes we don't control become positive agents of change, experience less stress around change, and are more resilient (successful) throughout such processes.

In the article, "Top Tips for Dealing with Unexpected and Unwanted Change at Work," author Cath Duncan outlines 7 ways we can all remain resourceful during times of unexpected or unwanted change.



1. **Stop arguing with reality.** Be honest about what you might be resisting or saying "no" to and accept the new reality.
2. **Acknowledge the part of you that's been resisting the changes.** Ask that part of you that's been resisting the change what it's been trying to do for you (i.e., keeping you safe, protecting what's important to you, etc.) by resisting the changes.
3. **Affirm that you're willing to let reality be,** and that you're willing to adapt creatively and responsively; saying "yes" to reality and to your own resourcefulness.
4. **Express your disappointment, sadness, fear and anger – grieve.** Active grieving releases stress, which will improve the quality of your thinking, and expedite your moving through the grief.
5. **Get out of other people's business.** If you're thinking about the way you want other people in your workplace to change, so you can be happy, then you're in other people's business. Focus on what you can control (your own thoughts, feelings and behavior).

6. **Notice and cut out victim language and complaining.** When you're using victim language, like, "I couldn't help it when I..." or complaining about the things you can't change, then you're affirming disempowering ideas like the idea that you don't have a choice in how you respond in life, that you're not responsible for your actions or reactions, and that you're responsible for things you can't influence or change.
7. **Decide what's important to you.** Take some time to get clear on your needs and values at work. Realize that there are actually infinitely more different ways of satisfying what you need and creating what's important to you in your work – even if you can't see them right now.
8. **Start asking smart questions,** to uncover the flipside, and the hidden opportunities.

"Perhaps the most important thing to realize about the change process is that it takes at least as much energy to adapt and respond creatively to change as it does to resist change. Letting go, committing to the game and being willing to adapt and respond creatively is much, much easier, and much, much more likely to get you the results you want."

The FSAP is here to assist UM Faculty and Staff who are struggling to embrace change, or face concerns which affect their capacity to achieve and/or maintain balance. Please feel free to call our office 305-284-6604 to receive free confidential consultations to explore how you may thrive in the face of unexpected or unwanted change.

Mindfulness and Driving in Miami
by Rosario Zavala, MSW, LCSW

Driving in Miami is stressful and can often test your mental fortitude. Below are simple suggestions to integrate a loving kindness mindfulness practice to your daily commute:

- Avoid distractions such as the radio and your phone. While the silence initially may feel strange, it will provide you with the opportunity to fill your awareness with other perceptions, sounds and sights. Not listening to music, the news, or talk show will leave you feeling quieter, calmer and happier.
- Be aware of your attitude while driving. Rather than assume a competitive or aggressive stance, try shifting your attitude towards the other drivers. Allow others to enter your lane. Avoid tail gating the driver in front of you.
- As drivers pass you by, wish them well. Repeat to yourself “May you be well, may you be happy”.
- Use red lights or other necessary stops as reminders to be mindful of your breathing. Bring your awareness to your body. Take three deep breaths and scan your body for tension. Breathe into those areas and allow the tension to leave your body. Take this opportunity to notice your surroundings, the trees, the sky, and other people. Express your gratitude for this moment and wish them well.
- Slow down. Rather than push the speed limit, try driving right under it. This will take away a great deal of tension. Drive in the right lane, if needed.
- Once you arrive at your destination. Take a moment for yourself. Take three deep breaths before you leave your car. Repeat to yourself “May I be well, May I be happy”.
- Walk slowly to your place of work. Walk slower than usual. Try breathing in for three steps and breathing out for three steps. Notice your surroundings and the sensation of placing one foot in front of the other.

While mindfulness will not ease the traffic jams, or delays along the road, it will certainly help you to shift your perspective of your daily commute. Please join us at our monthly Mindful Living lunch time seminars to awaken your innate capacity to be *more present* in your daily activities.



Are you plagued with what ifs and worst case scenarios?

Do you often experience doom, dread, or panic?

Learn to diminish or eliminate chronic worry from your life.

Overcoming Worry Lunchtime Seminar

September 16-18, 2014

Please visit the seminars section of the FSAP website at miami.edu/FSAP for a full description, dates, locations and times.


Upcoming Lunchtime Seminars

Mindful Living (monthly)

Overcoming Worry

Relaxation Techniques for Coping With Stress

Embracing Your Feelings: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

 Visit miami.edu/fsap and click on “Schedule of Seminars” for details.

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Mind and Matter is a quarterly publication from the UM Faculty and Staff Assistance Program that provides helpful tips and articles regarding work-life balance, health and well-being.

If you would like to receive this newsletter directly in your inbox each quarter, as well as receive announcements of upcoming FSAP seminars, please send an email to cbottle@miami.edu.

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