

10 Steps to Adaptability



You're adaptable, aren't you? You're flexible and open to change and challenges, of course you are. But you might be surprised by how resistant to change you actually are. Think about if you're asked to make a sudden change in your plans, your first gut reaction is very likely to be "no" rather than that big fat "yes".

Adaptability isn't just about being flexible – it means being really open to things, even those things that may feel a bit daunting or unknown. It's about developing more of what you are truly capable of and living to your fullest potential even amidst change and uncertainty.

Ok – so what?

Being adaptable is crucial to success and wellbeing today. You need resourcefulness, creativity and openness to respond well to challenges and grab new opportunities. Some reasons why – technology is evolving every single day – adapting to that is a necessity; your working life is changing – you're probably working remotely, virtually, internationally and maybe even 24/7; being crushed by change is not an option – you need to survive and thrive; life is about reinventing yourself – from your work to your relationships and where you live.

Ok – but how?

You're already hard-wired to be adaptable. You've been adapting throughout your life – school, work, relationships, learning – and you're probably quite good at it. The only thing that's holding you back is the mental scripts you've learned. You need to step out of your comfort zone by understanding and unlearning these so you can conquer your natural resistance to change. Don't worry, there are opportunities all around you to flex those adaptability muscles – some so obvious you may not even be aware of them. You can build your adaptability incrementally through 10 small, easy steps. Practice makes perfect!

1. Open your mind

An open mind allows fresh ideas to flow, breaks up limiting beliefs and finds new opportunities. Keep asking questions and challenge your own assumptions. Be curious and find out as much as you can about a topic or issue. Deliberately engage with diverse viewpoints and open yourself to other ways of thinking and looking at things.

2. Stick at things

Being able to stick at things is underpinned by a sense of self-direction or free will. This creates robustness and adaptability as you will be more able to deal with change. Don't give up! But DO vary your approach and try different things. Keep learning and growing.

3. Travel more

Travel broadens your horizons, opens you up to new ways of living and working. It doesn't necessarily have to be to exotic foreign climes either! Explore a different route to work, find out more about your surroundings or move to a different city.

4. Be willing to learn

Never stop learning, whether that be a new skill or learning a new way to do things that you are already comfortable with. Learning is one of the facets of wellbeing so you'll feel better too plus you'll build confidence, competence and flexibility.

5. Live with dis-comfort

Look for opportunities to try new things that will keep you learning: order something different in your favourite restaurant, start an initiative in your community, take on new challenges at work. Get yourself into the stretch zone which is where you grow and learn but also where it feels slightly scary.

6. Improvise

Practise being spontaneous – accept that last-minute invitation, change your weekend plans, don't over think or second-guess yourself. Improvising also means trusting yourself, your intuition and your ability to succeed.

7. Flex those muscles

This is about deliberately cognitive (using different thinking strategies), emotional (varying your approach to emotional situations) and choosing dispositional (optimistic yet realistic) flexibility. When you do this, you'll be challenging yourself to think and act differently.

8. Adopt a can-do attitude

Change your thinking from no to a yes. Do this today with the very next thing you're faced with. It's so easy to default to why something won't work or why we shouldn't do something. Get better at saying yes when you might say no

9. Get creative at problem solving

People who are able to come up with solutions to a problem are better able to cope with problems than those who can't. Get solutions-focused rather than thinking only of what isn't possible. Let go of perfect and look at lots of different ideas.

10. Adopt a survivor attitude

Refuse to see yourself as a victim in any situation. You aren't and you always have a choice of how to respond and act, no matter what the circumstances and no matter what the changes are that you may be facing.

**Want more from 7 Skills for the Future?
Click the photo links below:**



adaptability critical thinking empathy integrity
optimism being proactive resilience

**SEVEN SKILLS
FOR THE FUTURE**
THE AUDIO BOOK

Emma Sue Prince

UNI
MENTA

