How to be an Adaptable Employee during Change and Uncertainty

1. To get more comfortable with change:
   a. Be clear on what can and cannot be controlled.
   b. Step back and consider the long-term effect.
   c. Think about change that was successfully dealt with in the past and the skills already possessed to deal with change.
   d. Focus on what is known, as well as what is staying the same.

2. Reframing change:
   a. Ask, “How can this change help?”
   b. Be curious rather than resentful. “Why is this change being made?”
   c. Find ways to be part of the solution. “What can be done to help with the change?”

3. Practice being adaptable.
   a. Embrace a “Yes, and…” mindset. “Yes, we can try that. And what might make it even better...”
   b. Be an early adopter of new initiatives and offer to be involved.
   c. Become cross-functional. “Let’s try that over here too.”

4. Embrace a proactive mindset.
   a. Be proactive.
      i. What could happen? Look for the warning lights. Think about what can be done now to prevent that problem from multiplying.
   b. Look for ways to make improvements.
      i. What could be done differently? If an area or project needs improvement, suggest that improvement.
   c. Be helpful.

5. Make sure to understand the request.
   a. “What’s the deadline?”
   b. “How does this impact my role or responsibilities?”
   c. Offer feedback and keep an open mind.
   d. Focus on the end result and try to understand the big picture.

6. Embrace the ideas of others.
   a. Think about other people.
   b. Separate ideas from self.
      i. Don’t take criticism of a shared idea personally.
      ii. Control emotions.
      iii. “Strong opinions, weakly held” – Paul Saffo, Stanford University, Professor. If a better idea is presented or new facts are learned, be willing to change and embrace another’s idea.
      iv. Be willing to adapt.
7. How to turn desire into action?
   a. Build systems.
      i. Put time on the calendar to review what is working and what is not.
      ii. Look for areas of growth.
         1. Get regular feedback. “Where can we get better at being more adaptable?”
      iii. It is easier to make small changes.
     iv. Keep the 80/20 principle in mind. 80% of results come from 20% percent of effort.

8. How to talk about change with supervisors?
   a. Listen.
      i. Ask questions.
      ii. Try to understand the big picture.
   b. Be receptive.
   c. Clarify strategy vs. tactics.
   d. Disagree and commit. Present the best case. Then get on board and help the initiative succeed.
   e. The goal is a productive exchange of ideas.

9. Being uncomfortable is part of change.

10. Make change less painful.
    a. Admit any uncertainty about how to do it.
       i. “I have a lot of experience, but I haven’t used this particular software before.”
       ii. “I plan to take a class this week.”
       iii. “In the meantime, can resources be recommended or is there someone who can provide training?”
    b. Ask for help.
    c. Harness existing strengths.

11. How to let go of a strong ego?
    a. Focus on the big picture. Focus on the mission, rather than self. “If that’s what they need, that’s what I’m going to do.”
    b. Be helpful. Think of ways to help others puts things in the right perspective.
    c. Adopt an apprentice mindset. “What can I learn from this?” “How will this help me in the long term?”
    d. Letting go of our ego helps us be more adaptable.

12. Be future ready by becoming more adaptable.

13. Take action today.

14. Try one new thing.