

Handout 10.1: Common Myths About Change

Myth 1: The most important changes come from the outside.

Although change is all around us, some of the most important changes we can make in our lives involve our own perceptions. To quote Wayne Dyer, “If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.” Most of us underestimate the power of attitude and the importance of changing the way we look at things. Happiness does not come mostly from outside of us. All too often, getting a nicer car, a newer and bigger house, or talented children does not give us the happiness we seek. Happiness is an inside job.

Myth 2: People need to change for us to be happier with ourselves and them.

Some people spend their lives looking to change things around them—including other people—when they really need to be focused on changing themselves and how they cope. It is okay to ask others for a change, but too often people put their happiness and well-being on hold as they wait for others to change. The problem is that we end up becoming aggressive if we try to change someone else, when really the only person we can change is ourselves.

Myth 3: Change is avoidable.

Whether we like it or not, things never stay the same. Life is in a constant state of evolution, and trying to keep things as they are will make you emotionally stagnant. Avoiding change is like fighting against the ocean tides—it is so much easier to flow with the tides of change, adapt to them, and be flexible than it is to try to alter the forces of nature.

Myth 4: Change is often a reaction to outside forces.

To the contrary, meaningful change comes more from our own self-motivation than from motivation from outside forces. People often resist change because they don't like to feel like they are *being* changed. But if we are involved in our changes and they are not imposed on us—whether they be personal or workplace change—we are more likely to adapt.

The Therapist's Ultimate Solution Book

For those in a position of leadership, it is important to keep in mind people's need to be part of the change they are going through rather than having it imposed on them. A sense of control is a key factor in overcoming change resistance.