

## WVNG Coffey Break

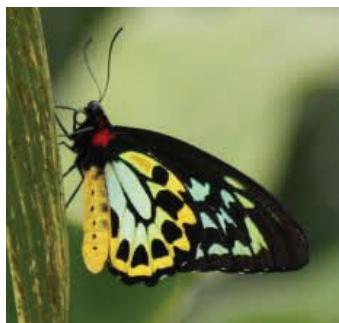
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# Changes Changes

Welcome to the December 2010 edition of the WVNG Coffey Break, a monthly Wellness publication for all WV National Guard members and their families. The objective is to promote wellness, readiness and resiliency by providing information and resources on topics relevant to daily living.

This month's topic is Changes, Changes. As we head into 2011, we reflect on the many changes of the past year and prepare for those in the upcoming one. It's good to be aware of the impact that change has on us. This article will provide basic facts about change, examples of signs you may not be effectively handling change as well as signs that you are, and tips for handling stress associated with change. As one quote states, "the only thing that is constant is change." So please, take a few minutes to read the following article before hitting "Delete" on your computer.



**If nothing ever changed,  
there'd be no butterflies.  
~Author Unknown**

The mission of the National Guard Psychological Health Program is to advocate, promote and guide National Guard members and their families by supporting psychological fitness for operational readiness. For contact information regarding the Director of Psychological Health in your state or territory or other resources, go to: [www.jointservicessupport.org/](http://www.jointservicessupport.org/)

### **Basic Facts About Change**

- Change is inevitable.
- The outcome of change cannot be known in advance.
- The unknown is not necessarily worse than the known.
- Change can lead to greater creativity.
- Some changes are for the better, some are for the worse.
- Stress is a natural side effect of change.
- There is an element of risk associated with change.
- Implementing change requires commitment.
- Change cannot be implemented correctly without action.
- Seeing a change through to fruition takes courage.

## Coffey Break



**Break (brāk)** definition  
**verb:** To interrupt or stop  
**break a habit;** **noun:** A respite or brief pause *taking a break.*



### Understanding Stress Associated with Change

The fact that change impacts everyone at one time or another does not mean that most people are comfortable or prepared to deal with it when it occurs. In the modern world, change - both professionally and personally -- seems to occur with an increasing rate of frequency. Many times, people don't feel like they've been able to adjust to one change before yet another one comes along. This often causes feelings of being out of control and overwhelmed, which leads to stress. To cope with the stress associated with change more effectively, it's important to understand that you do have control over how you allow change to affect you. One of the reasons that change is often viewed as a stressor is that people tend to view it negatively. People have a tendency to prefer stability and security. However, change can be extremely positive. Without it, we can become complacent when things stay the same for an extended period of time. Many times, change leads to improved outcomes and better decisions.

### 10 Signs You May Not Be Effectively Coping with Change

1. As you enter your house, the dog hides and you hear bedroom doors slamming shut.
2. You feel that a perfectly reasonable response to "Hi, how are you?" is "What business is it of yours?"
3. Your food pyramid, from top to bottom, becomes nicotine, caffeine, sugar and chocolate.
4. You notice your socks don't match and don't care.
5. You scan the TV guide to see what comes on at 3 a.m....one more time.
6. Your retail therapy has developed into a personal relationship with several sales clerks.
7. You cry at commercials, sitcoms, action/adventure movies because the house isn't quite as clean as you would like, the grass is too green, the grass is not green enough....in other words, everything.
8. You go to the grocery store and the employees draw lots to see who gets "lucky" enough to help you and collect the associated hazardous-duty pay
9. Deadlines come, deadlines go.....
10. Pizza for dinner...again?

### 5 Signs You Are Effectively Handling Change

1. You go to Coldstone and have a non-dairy Smoothie rather than a Gotta Have It size cup of Chocolate Devotion.
2. Asking "Can I do anything about this and if so, What?" rather than "Why did this have to happen to me?"
3. Looking in the mirror and being at peace with who you are...internally and externally.
4. Seeing the glass as half full rather than half empty
5. View change as an "opportunity for growth."

When we are no longer able to change a situation,  
we are challenged to change ourselves.

~Victor Frankl

#### Article References:

[www.caringtoday.com](http://www.caringtoday.com)

<http://tpmonline.com>

<http://stess.lovetoknow.com>

**A Personal Note:**

As I contemplated this article, all I had to do was glance out the window to notice that the change in seasons had fully arrived. The mountain tops were white with snow, the trees barren of all leaves, and the temperature had dipped into the teens. And as much as I grumble about the cold weather and driving in the snow, I also anticipate that right behind this season, will be the grand entrance of spring, followed by the sweltering days of summer and then the beauty of fall. And so it goes. I reflected upon my own life; the changes in my career, the changes in my family, the changes in the military. Welcomed or not, change is inevitable. Charles R. Swindoll once said, "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it." So, the question is, will we fight against change, freezing us into indecision or moving us forward while kicking and screaming, or will we take charge of our destinies, guiding the changes in our lives by being proactive rather than reactive. I challenge each one of you to ask yourself the following questions as you are faced with changes or new opportunities in your life.

**If not me, then who? If not now, then when?**

Ponder on these questions and how they apply to the little things (mowing the lawn, doing the dishes) to the bigger things (listening to your child, helping a co-worker, loving others). How do they apply in your life to career, friends, service opportunities, personal growth? How does they apply to the decisions you make regarding your health?"

As powerful as words can be, words alone cannot build, repair, produce or discover. These require effort and action. Career change, completing college, getting fit, or just learning to say 'I'm sorry' are the kinds of things that lurk in our minds and whisper that we should be doing something.

**If not me, then who? If not now, then when?**

Avoiding the issues of growth because of the effort required or the riskiness involved is actually more wearing than just diving in and doing it. That little voice is what helps us decide to move, to reach our potential.

So, as we reflect on where we've been and where we'd like to be, consider these points:

- Believe in change. Change is inevitable, so don't think you can't because of your situation. Take charge and change. (And believe that others can change also).
- Take chances. Life is risky. If it feels right, jump, and trust that the inner voice comes equipped with a parachute. Learn to recognize options and opportunities. Change jobs, develop new friendships, get that checkup. If not now, then when?
- Believe in second chances. If your fitness routine has stalled – reignite it today. Does a relationship need to be repaired? Then be the one to take the first step forward.
- Pursue your dreams. Either reignite that flame for what you do, or try something new that you've hesitated in doing. Unhappiness is a signal to change, and it's you that generally needs to make the first move.
- Choose growth. What's the opposite of growth? Stagnation. Find a pace in life that's comfortable, and be consistent.

So, as one year closes and a new one begins, once again I challenge you to answer the following:

**If not me, then who? If not now, then when?**

Feedback on this article is welcomed. And...speaking of changes, we have additional behavioral health staff now serving the WV National Guard, and as such, expect changes to future editions of this newsletter. Donna Cooke is the new state Director of Psychological Health (DPH) for the WV National Guard. Dr. Daniela Lupu is the DPH for the 167<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and I am serving as DPH for the 130<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing. If you have a concern about yourself or a family member, feel free to contact any of us. Contact information is listed below. Services are free and confidential. We look forward to hearing from you.

**So.....Step back , take a Coffey Break, and Drink to Your Health!**

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**Tips for Handling Stress Associated with Change**

- Recognize the limitations you place on yourself. There's often a difference between what you think you can do and what you can actually do.
- Cultivate a support network of family, friends and colleagues and lean on them during times of change.
- Work on building and maintaining positive self esteem.
- Recognize that the way you do things now is likely to change multiple times in the future.
- Don't assume that a proposed change will be bad without giving it a fair chance.
- Make an effort to consider the possible positive consequences of doing things differently.
- Focus on the big picture.
- Seek to understand the reasons change may be needed.
- Be willing to be flexible.
- Don't engage in avoidance behavior when tasked with adapting to change.
- When change is inevitable, focus your energy on making the best of it rather than resisting.
- Take care of yourself. Your body and mind are better able to handle both stress and change when you are well rested and properly nourished.

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.  
~Author unknown