

Change challenge: Restructures

Anyone who's been subjected to any kind of restructure, transformation, downsizing, or right sizing will know that it's immensely unsettling. Whether you've seen it coming (and put your armour on) or it's hit you like a tonne of bricks with no warning, the experience can be less than joyful. Even if you agree wholeheartedly (or even half-heartedly) with the purpose of the change, the compelling reasons creating the disruption, it can still hurt. Even the hardest of people are likely to find a dent in their self-belief if they must work through processes like:

- Re-applying for the role they've been doing for years
- Competing against their colleagues (friends) for a limited number of roles
- Being put on a redeployment list and receiving notifications of roles that bear no resemblance to their strengths or ambitions
- Formal consultation processes with scripted conversations and stock answers to questions
- Working your notice period knowing that there's work to be done when you're gone that no one has the capacity or the skills to do
- Being put on gardening leave, stuck in-between the past and the future
- Accepting a new role in the organization and it's not as expected

Even if your organization runs restructuring processes in the best possible way, it's still tough. There is perhaps one exception: if you were going to leave anyway.

Change challenge: Redundancies

If your role is made redundant at any point in your career, the experience can take an emotional toll. Although what's happening is that the role you are in is being made redundant, it's almost impossible to avoid the feeling that it's personal, that you as a person are being made redundant. Redundancy sets internal alarm bells ringing. Being rejected by your workplace, losing your colleagues, and no longer being connected to how you often describe yourself is hard. The idea that you must go and search for a new role and face being rejected again can trigger your survival warning system. This is not a great place from which to put your best foot forward, to step into a job search, or to give your best performance at an interview.

Even if your role survived the process, you'll likely be losing colleagues, your role will be different, and you may find that the trust you once had of your organization is a little tarnished by the process.

Change challenge: Exhaustion

Due to the rate and regularity of change, many people are struggling with change exhaustion.¹ One change follows another, with multiple processes overlapping, people exiting the business and new people starting. It may seem like the only solution to being caught in a change storm is to leave and go somewhere with calmer winds. Yet there are very few places left that aren't experiencing enormous amounts of change. Every industry is being disrupted. It's not always about escaping from the storm, it's learning how to ride the winds and use their energy to propel you forward – inside or outside the organization.

Reframing to redirection

Dragging us back from the dark side of change, it's not all bad or always bad. Change brings about the opportunity for career moves, to build new skills and work in new ways. Perhaps it's that nudge to step out of your comfort zone, encouraging you to do something positive about your career? It's very difficult to see a redirection as it's happening, it's best seen via the rear-view mirror once the dust has settled. Looking back, you'll be able to put the pieces together and see the bigger picture. Working through it feels at best uncomfortably exciting and at worst totally terrifying. When you're facing a redirection, you may need an injection of courage to help you step out of your comfort zone and walk towards the new opportunity.

Never attempt to go through any change challenge alone. This is the time to assemble your Squad, openly ask for help, and utilize the ideas, connections, and contacts these wonderful humans offer. This is the moment when all that investment in those relationships pays off.