

Reaction to change is personal

How we react to change is personal. What exactly does that mean? Think about a change that has occurred in your life, such as when you bought a house, brought home your first child or switched jobs. How did you feel? Were you excited about your new dwelling, nervous about the responsibility of being a parent or wished you had stayed in your comfortable daily routine?

No matter which best describes you, the fact is that each person reacts differently to change. Some embrace it and look forward to something new. Many, while possibly a little hesitant, commit to doing their best. Others want everything to stay the same, no matter what.

Did you have all the answers to your questions at the time of the change? Probably not. How did everything turn out? I suspect everything worked out, and you're likely stronger as a result of having experienced some personal growth ... growth that emerged from change and uncertainty.

We will all go through some changes in the coming months when the merger between our Company

and Service Corporation International occurs. I've been through similar transitions in my professional life, and I did my best to stay committed, positive and flexible each time. It wasn't always easy to do, but I found a way to work through the change. As a result, I believe I'm stronger and a little wiser. I was able to face the challenge and take advantage of opportunities that came my way.

There is no formula or code for doing this, and it takes a huge amount of persistence and perseverance to stay committed to your goals and objectives. Looking back, I know it was the right course of action, but that was not evident while I was going through the process. You will always have some doubts while you are going through the experience.

Keep in mind that some of you or your colleagues joined the Stewart family as a result of an acquisition. While these employees faced periods of uneasiness, many benefited from the change and now have significantly better positions than they previously held. The same thing has happened at SCI. Many of its 20,000 employees were hired through acquisitions and have continued to succeed.

As we prepare for this transition, I ask you to realize — and understand — that everyone reacts differently to change, and this is perfectly acceptable. No one has all the answers. Be patient and support each other. While some things are out of our control, we can control how we act — and react.

For example, avoid jumping to conclusions or speculating about something you do not know for sure. This will help prevent inaccurate information from spreading. The best way to stay informed is to keep in touch with your manager and watch for communication from Corporate Headquarters. Continue to submit your questions to questions@stei.com. I am committed to letting you know any new information as soon as I possibly can.

Life is full of uncertainties, and it's natural to wonder "What does this

mean for me?" As time goes on, we will learn the answer to that question and many more. In the meantime, though, remember that how we react to change is very personal. Stay focused, remain positive and embrace the opportunity for personal growth. Continue to put your best foot forward. By providing the right leadership, the work we do now will serve us well in the future.

In summary, I offer one observation that all of us should adopt. I recently read an article about Authentic Leadership because I am always intrigued by seeing examples of excellent leadership. What I find intriguing is that the management styles and personalities of these leaders are very different.

The article reports that "authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads. They establish long-term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are."

And I know the quality leaders in our organization are committed to these same values during this transition.



Tom Kitchen

“The fact is each person reacts differently to change.”



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Submit all items for publication to: Stewart Enterprises, Inc.
1333 S. Clearview Parkway ♦ Jefferson, LA 70121

Attention: Christian Moises SEInside@stei.com

Editor
Connie P. Ernst

Graphic Design
Angela Palmer

Managing Editor
Christian Moises

Production
Karen P. Locantro