

## Tip Sheet: Success During Uncertainty

Life is uncertain. No getting around it. If you wait to follow your dream “until things settle down” you’ll sit on the bench for your whole life. The world is constantly changing, and with change comes uncertainty. Sometimes, the changes are in the world around us, and sometimes, they’re in our own lives. But change and uncertainty are constant.

How do you find the nerve to follow your heart when everything seems to be changing? Here are 10 of my favorite tips.

1. Realize that change opens the door to growth. Seeds change when they grow. Caterpillars change when they become butterflies. Children change daily. Change is a natural part of being alive. Look for the opportunities.
2. Uncertainty can’t be avoided. Since no one knows the future, everyone has to deal with uncertainty. Whether or not the uncertainty appears overwhelming depends on your mental attitude and your skill set. You control both.
3. Focus on the reward instead of obsessing about the risk. Yes, the venture might fail. You might not win. Someone might laugh. So what? You might win big. You could succeed beyond your wildest dreams. Failing with style could lead to new opportunities. Winners recognize and prepare for risk, and then keep their eyes focused on the reward.
4. Reduce your risk by honing your skills. Gaining new skills not only teaches you how to do something; it also gives you confidence that you CAN do it. As you gain confidence in your skills, you become more comfortable with risk because you know you can handle it.
5. Monitor your inner dialogue. Do you have an inner voice that is constantly waiting for the sky to fall? Is there a little part of you that stands at the side of the stage wringing its hands, saying “oh dear, oh dear, oh dear?” Pretend your mind is a radio station and take control by changing the channel! Refuse to listen to your inner doomsayer.
6. Surround yourself with positive people. That doesn’t mean ‘yes men.’ Positive people give constructive advice and will tell you when they see a way to improve. Negative people only see the hundreds of ways things could go wrong. You don’t need naysayers. Banish them from your inner circle, or refuse to discuss your dreams with them.
7. Take things a day at a time. The bigger the timeframe, the more uncertainty. We can less accurately predict what is going to happen a year from now than what we’re doing tomorrow, or an hour from now. Break a big task into smaller steps with short timeframes. That decreases the uncertainty and makes it more manageable. A series of small steps still gets you where you’re going!
8. Find a mentor. Since uncertainty exists for everyone, people who are successful have developed a workable way to deal with it. Seek out people who succeed and ask them how they deal with uncertainty. Adapt their techniques and apply them yourself.

9. Use a guide. Unfamiliar territory is less scary when you're not alone. Find a success coach who is a good fit with your personality, and plan your route together. A good coach knows many techniques and tips to decrease stress while managing uncertainty and change.

10. Enjoy the ride. Few mistakes are fatal. Some of the best inventions happened by accident—because someone stopped to be present in the moment and realized that their 'mistake' had possibilities. Uncertainty loses its grip over us when we stop trying to control the universe and open ourselves to following the tide. Be willing to take the wrong exit. You can always turn around—but you might just discover something even better than your original destination!

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