

Practically applying the character quality of

flexibility

vs. Resistance

"Willingness to change plans or ideas according to the direction of my authorities."

By Stephen Leckenby

A change should do you good

Change is not something we often look forward to, especially when the change is created by someone other than ourselves. If we have to change at all, we would much rather be the initiator of the change. However much of the change we have to face is often out of our control.

I used to really like the television show "MacGyver" starring Richard Dean Anderson. That guy got into more trouble than most of us combined. However, the attraction of the show was not the trouble, but how he got out of it. When circumstances changed for the worse (which happened in every episode), Mac didn't give up on his goal. He *flourished in the midst of change*. The more difficult the change, the more innovative the response.



Richard Dean Anderson as "MacGyver"

The only difference between you and me and MacGyver (other than the constant explosions) is that the change we deal with

usually comes from those closest to us (i.e. our employers, employees, and family members). Our goal must be to defeat the natural inclination to resist change, and instead,

Commitment to Flexibility

- I will not compromise what is right.
- I will not get upset when plans change.
- I will respect the decisions of my authorities.
- I will look for the good in changes.
- I will not be stubborn.

learn how to flourish in the midst of change. This happens when we adjust our focus away from our own agenda and learn how to support the agenda of our authority. An individual who understands and practices the concept of balanced flexibility is an asset to his or her organization. Once you begin to apply this concept, you may find yourself dealing more successfully with changing circumstances and still standing at the end of the day. That's how Mac did it.

Plan B

This month's Character First Bulletin on Flexibility makes an interesting observation on a commonly repeated phrase we have all heard: "Expect the unexpected." The bulletin points out that if we could do what this statement asked, then the "unexpected" would

not really be unexpected. A better way to say it might be, "Plan for the unexpected." This is something I am learning first hand.

My wife and I recently bought our first home. Before deciding to make the purchase, we did a very detailed study of our budget and made sure we had some cushion in several areas so we wouldn't end up in a situation where we would be unable to fulfill our obligation. This kind of planning is necessary in every position or set of circumstances because we really don't know what the future holds. If you and I incorporate flexibility into things like our budget, our schedule, and our goals, we are then able to focus on fulfilling our responsibilities instead of living life as if we were standing on a balance beam. When you and I have a solid "Plan B" for our lives, we can more easily address the challenge that Viktor Frankl spoke of when he said, "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves."

How FLEXIBLE are you?

- When plans are changed, do you get discouraged, or do you immediately look for reasons why the new plans are better?
- Do you quickly adjust to a change of direction, or does it require time for you to mentally and emotionally adjust?
- When others suggest a better way to do something, do you try it or do you keep doing it the way you had been doing it?