



Change Doesn't
Create Uncertainty.

It Reveals It



People often say that change creates uncertainty.

I understand why we use that language. A restructure, redundancy, new leadership team, health diagnosis, relationship ending or unexpected opportunity can make it feel as though the ground beneath us has shifted.

Over the years, however, I have come to see uncertainty differently. I do not believe change creates it. I believe change reveals the uncertainty that was already present.

Life has never come with guarantees. We simply become very good at mistaking familiarity for certainty.

We assume tomorrow will look much like today because that is what we have experienced for weeks, months or years. We create routines, establish plans and form expectations that give us a reassuring sense of predictability.

Then something changes.



We become acutely aware that the future was never as certain as we imagined. What we thought was certainty was often familiarity.

That distinction matters because it changes how we respond.

When we believe change has taken certainty away from us, we naturally direct our energy towards recreating the past. We wait for life to feel normal again and assume that once circumstances settle, our confidence will return.

But what if there was never certainty to return to? What if the greater capability lies in learning to make thoughtful decisions without needing every answer in advance?

The people who navigate change well are not necessarily those with the best plans or the greatest confidence. They are often those who can remain flexible while the future is still unfolding.



They understand that clarity does not always arrive before action. Sometimes it develops because we take a considered step, observe what follows and adjust our thinking as new information becomes available.

I have seen this repeatedly within organisations. During periods of apparent stability, weaknesses in communication, leadership or culture can remain hidden for years. When change arrives, those weaknesses become difficult to ignore.

The change did not create them. It revealed what was already present. The same is true for individuals.

Change has an extraordinary way of revealing our beliefs, assumptions and habitual ways of thinking. It shows us where we feel capable and where we rely heavily on external certainty.

It exposes what we value, also what we fear and what we may have avoided while life felt familiar.



That can be uncomfortable, but it can also be deeply useful. We cannot strengthen what we cannot yet see.

Change invites us to ask questions that comfortable seasons rarely require.

What am I really afraid of?

What assumptions have I been making?

What remains within my control?

What capabilities have I developed through previous experiences?

What would it mean to trust my own judgement here?

These questions do not remove uncertainty. They help us develop the capability to navigate it.

That is where genuine confidence begins. Not in believing that life will become predictable. In knowing that we can continue thinking, adapting and leading ourselves even when it does not.



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The Anne McDowell Perspective™
Navigating Change

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