

EXERCISE: Can you recognize the emotional symptoms of change?

Step 1:

Think of a situation or a time period when you experienced some type of change such as:

- A new boss was announced
- Your project was given to someone else
- The new reporting system was put into place
- The company moved offices
- A new performance review program was installed

Step 2:

Think about what you said and the thoughts that were in your mind. At any time, did you ever say or think these things?

- This can't be happening.
- Let's get back to normal now.
- We'll wait until this blows over.
- Don't worry _ It's just the company's "program de jour."

Step 3:

If you can identify with these thoughts, can you recognize what stage in the classic Response to Change Cycle you may have been exhibiting? Which stage have you been living in with these statements?

- Freeze
- Deny
- Begin to Face Reality
- Surrender and Choose
- Explore
- Commit
- Lead

Answer: _____

There are eight stages in the classic Response to Change Cycle. The thoughts in Step 2 are common in the Denial stage.

Deny: _____

If the change is threatening to the individual's view of the world, it will be difficult to assimilate the change. People can protect themselves from being out of control or overwhelmed by denying reality. In denial, people typically focus on the way things were, and look for a way to get back to how it was yesterday.

Once you recognize the stage you are in, there are ways to move yourself and others quickly through the stages to acceptance.