



EXECUTIVE VITALITY™: BEND, DON'T BREAK

From National Institutes of Health:

... a healthy person is someone who can manage themselves in the uncertain, unpredictable world around them, where novelty and change are the norm rather than the exception.

Uncertain. Unpredictable. Constant change is the norm. Don't those words nicely sum up the challenges of 2020? What is being described as a "healthy person" in that quote is one with psychological flexibility.

First, a brief primer on psychological flexibility. According to NIH:

Psychological flexibility spans a wide range of human abilities to: recognize and adapt to various situational demands; shift mindsets or behavioral repertoires when these strategies compromise personal or social functioning; maintain balance among important life domains; and be aware, open, and committed to behaviors that are congruent with deeply held values.

Experts agree that psychological flexibility is related to mental health and the lack of it is related to psychopathology. Everyone needs to ensure they can build their psychological flexibility.

We need to have the ability to modify how we see things, how we manage. Imagine if leaders had been unable to see the need for wholesale changes in how business was going to have to be conducted in 2020. If they had not level-set expectations ... if they could not face what was happening. If they operated outside of their framework of values. The result would be that, instead of what now in 2021 is a bit of a messy situation, we would find ourselves in complete chaos. 2020 demanded a lot of psychological flexibility.

So, we must:

1. Accept that change is inevitable.
2. Be present.
3. Modify our approach to what is going on as the situation/environment changes. Try something new.
4. Go outside our comfort zone.
5. Always act within our values.

Conceptually, psychological/emotional flexibility is very similar to resilience. If you cannot bend, you might break.

Did you learn anything new today? Try to solve a problem differently from how you would have in the past. How can you ensure you stay within your values even as you face unprecedented and traumatic times?

Further reading:

- ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Psychological Flexibility as a Fundamental Aspect of Health
- [sciencedirect.com/Psychological flexibility is the ability to stay in contact with the situation and personal values.](https://sciencedirect.com/Psychological flexibility is the ability to stay in contact with the situation and personal values)