

# The C&A Express

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## How Resilient Are You?

When life throws you a curve, how do you handle it?

**Some of us have a hard time dealing with the unexpected.** We like things to be predictable and calm. When our routine is disrupted, we have a hard time getting back on track.

**Others like change so much that they instigate it even when there's no real need to do so.** Life is too dull? They may spice things up by deliberately changing something just to see what happens. They may enjoy arguing just for the sake of arguing.

**But most of us are somewhere in between. We realize that change is a sign of life.** Change may bring gifts and opportunities that never were available to us in the past. It's the fear of not knowing exactly what those opportunities will be that makes us nervous.

**Let's face it: Sometimes the last thing we want is change.** Maybe things have finally started going well for you. You like your job, your family, your way of looking at the world. And then something happens to make it all new and unfamiliar again.

Maybe someone who made your life sweeter or more rewarding has moved or passed away. Or you find drugs in your teenager's room. Or your spouse loses his or her job.

**Changes that are imposed on us by other people or by circumstances beyond our control are especially hard to accept.** Our natural instinct may be to fight the change, to restore the status quo, to get things back to normal.

Certainly there are times when a proposed change is still in a formative state, and discussing its implications is a good thing to do. But we don't always have that opportunity; the decision may simply not be ours to make. We might just have to find a good way to adapt.

Not everyone handles change in the same way. There may be circumstances that make it especially difficult.

**If change has often been unpleasant for us in the past, we may find it harder to deal with now.**

Also, too many changes at once, even good ones, can make one more modification to our lives seem like too much to bear. This is especially true for people who are depressed or anxious to begin with. They may feel constantly off kilter, searching for something solid to grasp but finding nothing satisfactory. After all, change is such a constant that nobody ever stays the same, not even the most solid "anchors" in your world. Meanwhile, life just keeps throwing us those curves.

## What makes us good at coping with change?

- **Being able to stay focused can help.** Keep your eyes on the prize, don't lose sight of your goals and dreams, don't let a hairpin turn in the path of life distract you from your mission.
- **Having a positive attitude helps a great deal.** Be optimistic about yourself and your potential for handling difficult situations.
- **See change as an opportunity for growth.** All major world philosophies include references to destroying the old to make way for the new. A door may close, but then a window opens.
- **Show some initiative.** If a change is afoot, prepare for it. If it's a job change, work on your resume, reassess your finances, start networking. Get in shape mentally. Even if nothing happens, feeling prepared is comforting and empowering. Face change on both feet, looking it squarely in the eye, instead of waiting for it to sneak up and hit you from behind.
- **Keep an open mind and an open heart.** Being willing to see different options is a great asset in troubled times. And sometimes helping a friend survive a change will give you the insight to better deal with your own.

**If the change is very hard to handle right now, remember that you are not alone.** Others around you have probably "been there" and would be willing to offer advice and comfort. **And the EAP is always there for you, 24 hours a day, free and confidential. Just call (800) 742-2858 and speak to a counselor.** *We're only a phone call away!*

## Going the Extra Mile for Each Other – A Different Kind of Customer Service

When you hear the term “customer service”, the customers who first spring to mind are probably the buyers of your company’s product or service, or “the public” if you work for a government agency.

Many employees are directly involved with bringing a product or service to the public, your organization’s external customers. Depending upon what you’re “selling”, these employees might include the people who make a product, market it, ship it, process necessary paperwork, or otherwise help to get the product or service to the people who will use it. **Pleasing the public is what this kind of external customer service is all about.**

**But customer service can be internal, too.**

All of us need to be aware of the fact that we have internal customers, too – our coworkers. **In fact, some employees primarily serve their coworkers and may have very little direct contact with the public.** It’s hard to hold a successful sales meeting, for example, if the conference room is double-booked, the heat is off, and the tables are there but the chairs are missing.

**It’s not always easy to deliver excellent internal customer service.** Just like the folks on the outside, your coworkers can be terrific or they can be extremely difficult. Some of your coworkers may be very polite and respectful to their external clients and bosses but rude or demanding to the people who are trying to take care of them.

**Delivering excellent customer service can be a real challenge.** Even if it’s not your primary job, we all need to be aware of how we treat coworkers as well as how we interact with outside customers.

**To deliver excellent customer service, whether it’s internal or external, here are some techniques to keep in mind:**

- 1) Listen. Get all the information you need in order to help.** Don’t be afraid to ask questions, or to have the person repeat the request in another way. “Would you mind repeating that so I can jot it down, please?”
- 2) Take the time to try to see why the request is so important to this individual. This can help you do your job in a way that best meets your client’s needs.** It’s not easy to be patient and understanding, especially if the other person is not polite or clear. But ultimately they may appreciate your efforts all the more because you treated them with such personal consideration. Even saying something like, “I can see how important this is to you” will show that you take the customer seriously.
- 3) Keep an eye on your attitude. You know how much you dislike grumpy, rude people - try not to become one yourself!** Just because somebody else is having a bad day doesn’t mean you have to have one, too. Learn to let go and refuse to let someone else put a damper on your good mood.
- 4) Do a little extra.** When somebody goes the extra mile for you, doesn’t it bring a smile to your face? Chances are, they’re smiling, too. Kindness and generosity are good for the recipient and even better for the giver.
- 5) Follow up.** Especially if your job involved meeting a specific request, like coordinating an event or solving a heating or cooling problem, following up adds a nice personal touch. Whether it’s through E-mail, voice mail, a note or in person, following up shows that you want to be sure that your customer is satisfied with the job you’ve done.

**And if someone has taken the time to go the extra mile for you, please don’t forget to say thanks!** It will brighten that person’s day and make your workplace a more pleasant place to be.