


Association Executives of North Carolina

# Success *Live*

BY ASSOCIATION

The below educational content of this edition of *Success by Association Live* is sponsored by Pinehurst Resort.



The image shows the Pinehurst Resort building, a large white structure with a red roof and a central tower. In the foreground, the word "PINEHURST" is spelled out in large, green, manicured bushes. Above the building, the Pinehurst logo is visible, featuring a golfer and the text "PINEHURST 1895".

MEETING AMONG  
THE PINES  
SINCE 1895

Tiffani Sheppard  
Director of National Accounts  
844.627.3347 | [pinehurst.com](http://pinehurst.com)

# Educational Article

## Change Strategies

Mike Collins

May 18, 2022

SHARE THIS CONTENT



MORE...

 Click [here](#) to listen to the article instead!

## Change Strategies

By Mike Collins

Aren't you glad you don't have changes going on all around you? That rock-solid, work/life thing you've got going is the envy of all the...wait...what? You say your life is the old-time pencil sharpener from the third grade and you're the pencil? But you grind it so well.

During one of the discussion groups at the AENC Spring Conference an attendee confessed, "I just feel like I'm carrying a weight ALL THE TIME! I'm tired from the moment I wake up, there are challenges everywhere I look at work and nothing in life seems like fun."

No kidding.

While this may not offer the quilt-at-grandma's kind of comfort you would like, please understand, you're not alone. Every society on Mother Earth, every organization of any and all sizes and every individual riding around the sun with you is also going through change.

Yet, there are strategies you can use to dial the stress back a bit, help you see a little further down the road and reward you for making the trip. Here are five guides that can help lead you through change. They can be used individually, but try them in order and they'll act like a leash on a big dog; a way to gently pull it back along the path you want to travel.

First, Drink More Water. I know, I know, without that bucket of Starbucks Mocha Grande/Coke/Mountain Dew/Bojangles Iced Tea to start the day you simply won't be human!

Fine. Start the day as you usually do, but during the day drink more water. Search, "water apps" online and you'll see a list of technological mama's voices that beep reminders on the hour. Don't dither; there isn't a best one. Do eenie-meenie-minee-moe and pick one.

Here's the point; water is the second-most important go-juice for your body, after air. If your hydration level drops by 2-3% it inhibits your ability to do simple math, it slows your reaction time when you're approaching intersections. Water keeps your energy level on an even keel.

And, let's take a few seconds and talk a little more about your body; it's the vehicle that carries you through change, through life. Be better/nicer/more attentive to your ride. During times of change plan on eating a little better, and sleeping and moving a little more. I know you're busy, but you're alive...respect that.

Next, See Change as a Challenge. The key is looking at the change as a positive challenge no matter what it is. This isn't a Pollyanna pledge in which you ignore the possible downsides and fictionalize the upsides. Research shows that asking, "What is the best outcome?" when facing

challenges encourages possibility thinking, prompts physical/energy boosts and lowers stress levels.

If you have the courage, try this: Ask a real friend (you know those folks who pull you aside to tell you you have toilet paper stuck on your belt instead of telling you, loudly, in front of a group of people?) to listen to you talk about life or whatever for a few days. Then, they report to you about which direction, positive or negative, most of your conversations roam.

This isn't a good or bad judgement contest, it's a positive or negative observation. Most people see life through one of two lenses, bright or dark. How you see life has a dramatic impact on your efforts, relationships and health. If the report you get has a darker hue you might want to find ways to smile more. Making a habit of asking, "What's the good here?" can turn your world around.

The third step is to create Short-Term Goals. In *The Dip*, Seth Godin's bestselling book about change, he labels the bottom of the dip The Dreaded Middle; I call it The Wilderness. The concept of a wilderness has been used throughout human storytelling history as a metaphor for being lost. Have you ever felt lost in the middle of change? Do you feel lost right now?

When you're in The Wilderness or The Dreaded Middle you don't worry about getting to the end of the journey, you focus on the next step...and then the next...and then the next.

Creating short-term goals breaks any iceberg into ice cubes which, at the end of the day, can be used to ice a beer or cocktail or cool off that extra-large cup of Bojangles iced tea; and don't poke yourself in the eye with the straw. Setting and achieving small goals keeps you moving.

Getting it all done in times of change has a better chance of happening if you follow through with the fourth step, Do a To-Do List.

Eric Abrahamson, professor of management at Columbia University and author of *Change Without Pain*, says times of change, especially repetitive change (one change after another), are characterized by Change Related Chaos. The chaos is created by the storm of emails/conversations/meetings/directives/phone calls and experienced as a type of too-loud, life noise. Our brains literally give up trying to figure out which is the most important message.

Creating and using a daily To-Do List cuts through the clamor and keeps in front of you the gotta-get-done things. However, too many things on your daily list can be counterproductive. Having more than 10 things on your daily To-Do List creates what psychologists (and Buddhist monks) call Monkey Mind; your eyes and brain jump from one item to another until they freeze up.

So, create a Master List with all the things you need/want to get done and then prioritize for your daily To-Do List to 10 items or less. As you mark an item Done on your daily To-Do List pull an item from your Master List. And remember, during times of change priorities may rearrange themselves so try to be flexible enough to choose the tasks/goals with the biggest payoff.

Finally, Create Rewards! In times of change you deserve small rewards to recognize your accomplishment of small goals/steps and Nobel/Pulitzer/Heisman prizes for corralling those big-time achievements.

Rewards, small to large, are more than recognition for making it to the finish line; no matter if it's a sprint or a marathon. They can be motivators that encourage/pull/entice us to keep moving, to pick up the pace. Also, and possibly most important, rewards are decorations awarded—most often by yourself—for surviving and winning the battles of life that matter to YOU.

When Tom Rosenfield, president of Hillstaffer, was asked at the AENC Spring Conference, "How do you deal with change?" he replied, "I'm easy with change. I look at it as opportunities, the positive things that can happen, and then I go about planning to make sure those things happen."

Exactly.

About the Author: Mike Collins is president of The Perfect Workday Company, an information company based in the Research Triangle region of North Carolina. He is a speaker, writer and AENC member who focuses on helping organizations move through times of change.

If you would like to have one of your articles featured in *Success by Association Live* or have interest in sponsoring please contact Madi today at [madi@aencnet.org](mailto:madi@aencnet.org).

### Association Executives of North Carolina

Mailing Address: 514 Daniels St., PMB #352, Raleigh NC 27605

Phone: 919.848.8255 | Fax: 919.848.8525



[Unsubscribe](#) from these messages.



514 Daniels St, PMB #352, Raleigh, NC 27605