

The Social Times

HANDLING CHANGE - PLAN AHEAD

I Second That
Emotion!
Checking In

Ask Roger
Gets-It:
Homework

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HANDLING CHANGE - PLAN AHEAD

You arrive at school one morning only to find out that there is a change in the schedule for the day. You are annoyed because you had plans to finish your Spanish homework in the free period and now you are expected to attend a special program. You don't want to change your schedule or plans.

One afternoon you come home from school to find that your mother has rearranged the furniture in the living room. It looks all wrong, and is very upsetting to you. You can't stand it and don't understand why your mom would want to do a thing like that.

Handling change can be difficult.

Change can make you feel worried, afraid, and uncomfortable! Sometimes the stress you feel when someone makes changes in your life can even make you feel mad.

Believe it or not, change is not always bad! Think for a minute about all of the things that change every day.

Have you ever watched a sunrise or sunset, observing how the colors and light change? This change gives us a chance to experience another day. How about when the seasons change, from snow-covered trees to flowers blooming in a rainbow of colors? These changes remind us of new seasons and traditions we enjoy. They also remind us that nothing stays the same.

On a more personal level, sometimes you change the topic of a conversation so you can find out what another person likes to do, which gives you a chance to make new friends.



What about a change in the seating chart in class? Such a change would give you a chance to try sitting in a different place in the room. A change like that might turn out to be better for doing school work or seeing the teacher and information on the board. It might be scary at first, but it might end up being a good thing.

Once you accept the fact that **some** changes are positive, the next thing is to accept that change will happen in life – whether we like it or not.

Instead of getting startled and upset by each change that happens, **plan for change**.

Planning for Change

For example, you can use a simple rating scale like the one we talk about in *I Second That Emotion!* to quickly rate the change when it happens (not a problem, slight inconvenience, annoying, mad feelings, or a **big deal**).

Rating the change and truly seeing what it involves can help you handle the nervous feelings you can get when you first hear about a change.

Simple Rating Scale

- 5 = A really big deal!
- 4 = Mad feelings
- 3 = Annoying
- 2 = Slight inconvenience
- 1 = Not a problem

Make a plan so you know what to do about the change you decide is a “really big deal” (#5) on the scale. For example, you could close your eyes, take two slow and deep breaths, and then ask your parent or teacher to write down what the change is and why it has to happen. Reading about changes can make it easier to tolerate them, even if they are big deals.

Another plan might be to develop a Caution Sign that your teacher can hand you

in the morning if she thinks there will be a change in the schedule. Prior to handing you the caution sign, she can write the probable or possible change in a special journal. Again, reading about the change might be easier than hearing about it. You can rate the change right there (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5). This is also a good way to keep track of how many changes you have in a week or a month and whether they are little or big changes.

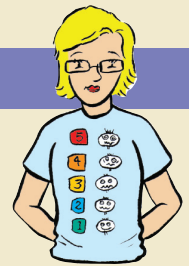


One thing is for sure:
Change will happen.
So make a plan!

TRY IT!

If you don't do this already, arrange a “check-in” time each morning with your teacher. This way you can find out if anything has changed for the day, write it down, and deal with it calmly.

Finally, you can make a note of how you handled the change. Was it really easier to read about it? Did you get mad or just a little irritated?



CHECKING IN . . .

Sometimes we are just not ready to work. It might be that we didn't get enough sleep the night before or that we are not feeling well. Or it might be that our mood is out of whack (we are grumpy). Hopefully, this doesn't happen too often, but we can pretty much bet it will happen sometimes. Well, life goes on.

Probably the hardest kind of work to do when we are feeling this way is participating in a group where we are expected to talk. This is where this month's 5-point scale can come in handy. It is a system for "checking in" – or letting your teacher know that it is not a very good day for you.

One way to use the scale is for everybody to "check in" (1) at the beginning of the group, (2) halfway through the group, and (3) again at the end of the group. Mood and alertness vary throughout the day and even throughout a social skills group.

Your group can make up your own check-in scale, one that works for you. Here is an example of a scale that has been used in another

school. This is a great communication tool for becoming aware of your own feelings, as well as those of others, and then to ultimately take them into consideration as you work together.

Group Check-In

5	I am really glad to be here. I will participate and I may even be able to help others. <i>This is a great day!</i>
4	I am glad to be here. I will participate. <i>This is a good day.</i>
3	I am here. I might participate, but I might not ... <i>This is a so-so day.</i>
2	I am here. I will probably not participate, but I won't disrupt the group or be rude to others. <i>This is a rough day.</i>
1	I will not participate, and I might not be able to control myself if I have to be in this group. I need to be somewhere else or doing a different activity where I don't have to talk to other people. <i>This is a terrible day!</i>



GETTING SOME SLEEP

You might not believe it, but getting enough sleep at night is one of the most important things you can do for your brain and your body. Your brain functions better and more flexibly when it is well rested.

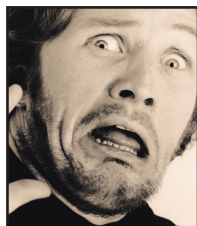
But sometimes your body might feel “revved up,” making it hard to calm yourself down enough to fall asleep. If you have trouble relaxing and falling asleep at night, try some of these great sleep tips:

1. Turn the TV off at least one hour before bedtime.
2. Build something with clay or resistive putty before bedtime.
3. Take a warm bath.
4. Talk to your parents about getting different sheets for your bed. Try a different thread count or jersey sheets.
5. Use a heavy quilt on your bed.
6. Do some yoga or gentle stretching exercises before bed.
7. Listen to a relaxation CD.

Good luck and good night!

Face to Face

Study these faces very carefully. Each face is expressing an emotion. Three of the faces are expressing the same emotion. Can you find the face that's different? Can you name the emotions? How did you figure out which faces are expressing the same emotion?



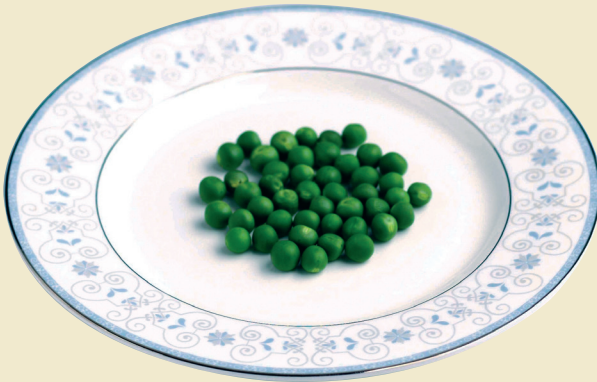
Gets-It Knows!



Dear Roger,

I just got invited to my friend's house for dinner. I really want to go, but I am afraid that his mother might serve peas. I hate peas. I actually gag at the mere sight of peas. I have been thinking about not going because I don't know what they are having for dinner.

– Nervous About Eating



Dear Nervous,

Got it! This is a pretty typical fear, especially if this is your first invitation to eat at somebody's house. As I see it, you have two options. The easiest is to just ask your friend what he thinks they are going to have for dinner. You can also let your friend know that you don't like peas.

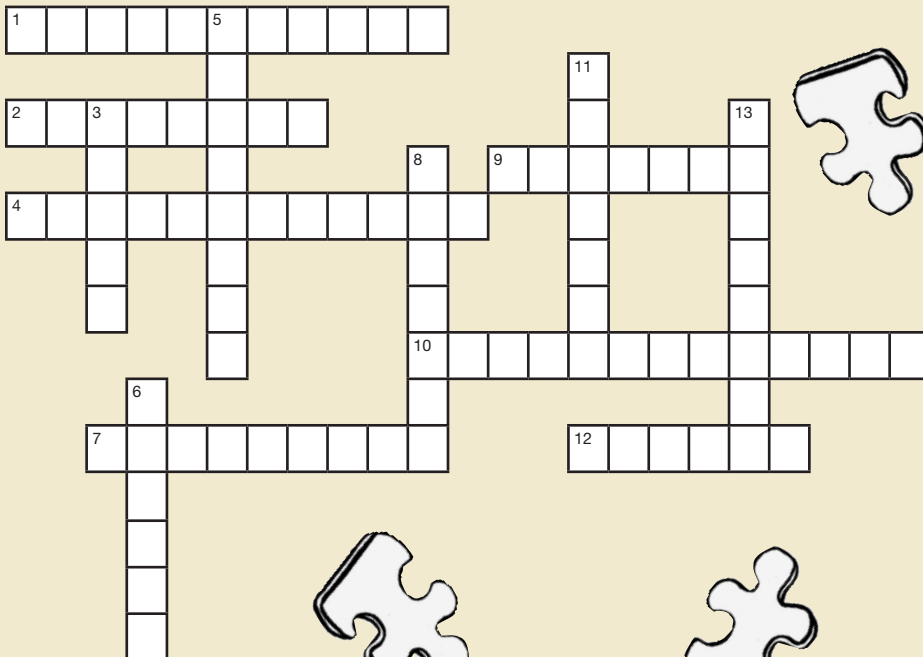
If you are not comfortable with that solution, or if you find yourself at someone's house and they serve peas, just say, "no thank you" when the peas are being passed. You do not need to share that peas make you sick to your stomach.

Finally, remember to always tell the host that you enjoyed the meal, even if it wasn't your favorite dish.

– Roger Gets-It



Puzzle Time



ACROSS

- 1) something you are counting on
- 2) shocked; feeling surprised
- 4) a two-way verbal communication
- 7) annoyed
- 9) a book to write your thoughts in
- 10) something that gets in your way or makes it harder to do what you want
- 12) something different

DOWN

- 3) bug or irritate
- 5) handle; accept
- 6) someone who likes you and who you like back
- 8) having anxious thoughts
- 11) being careful; going slowly
- 13) like flowers unfolding



Puzzle Time

M	S	U	V	F	W	O	P	R	E	U	B	R	P	G	P	S	N	B	J	B	Z	H	Y	Z	F	A	R	E	Y
A	T	F	F	K	A	G	J	H	S	R	S	P	E	S	R	G	A	K	S	Y	Y	A	Z	E	N	Z	H	S	G
F	O	J	H	D	W	J	R	Z	W	S	Z	B	T	L	H	V	E	K	T	O	G	V	A	H	J	Y	W	L	N
E	Q	V	P	J	A	E	H	C	J	D	Q	G	S	E	L	A	C	S	E	L	Y	B	U	G	C	J	N	Y	U
P	W	Z	J	N	P	K	E	G	N	A	H	C	B	B	J	M	E	L	I	V	M	U	B	Y	L	F	T	T	C
H	W	K	X	S	U	I	Y	D	I	F	F	I	C	U	L	T	I	L	W	R	I	S	B	S	M	T	A	G	M
M	D	O	B	F	N	D	M	R	S	N	L	M	E	Y	M	B	T	X	U	P	N	T	B	R	C	D	G	S	E
V	D	N	K	I	D	O	T	D	V	F	E	G	N	Z	M	M	R	Z	C	D	Z	U	I	F	Y	K	E	X	X
E	R	A	Z	C	E	M	J	B	G	Q	J	A	D	K	K	M	A	M	H	H	E	D	S	S	G	J	O	D	P
G	W	P	I	L	R	F	D	L	N	T	U	H	D	H	U	X	D	M	X	Y	L	H	M	S	O	E	T	L	E
I	W	B	N	O	S	B	N	R	I	Z	I	K	N	P	W	Y	I	D	Y	W	T	I	C	G	N	P	C	P	C
X	Q	O	T	Z	T	K	D	C	T	R	E	E	H	X	L	Y	T	O	I	Q	H	H	W	S	O	T	K	N	T
W	I	R	G	E	A	F	D	N	T	C	C	F	V	T	C	Y	I	S	M	M	G	T	W	U	L	B	L	W	A
K	Q	U	M	U	N	B	S	E	E	V	H	Y	Z	J	P	M	O	Q	D	I	Q	S	E	U	V	E	K	J	T
B	V	L	H	Q	D	X	I	N	S	L	Z	T	T	Z	P	Y	N	Z	G	Q	G	F	S	Z	W	D	Q	L	I
E	F	I	M	D	I	S	L	R	P	N	H	J	I	F	P	U	S	X	C	F	R	Q	X	W	I	Q	R	L	O
G	V	D	B	J	N	R	R	P	U	N	I	E	Z	J	O	W	T	T	G	G	J	C	T	Y	E	K	Z	Y	N
Y	L	B	P	V	G	O	I	Q	I	W	X	J	I	Y	C	W	A	D	Y	F	S	C	I	C	Y	W	S	R	I
B	U	O	A	K	G	V	P	I	R	P	C	Q	T	O	B	Q	C	X	V	S	Z	D	U	Q	V	E	U	P	L
K	C	K	K	A	S	H	B	D	Z	U	A	I	W	M	J	S	N	O	S	A	E	S	B	L	I	B	U	Z	G

Word Bank: CHANGE, DIFFICULT, EXPECTATION, POSITIVE, SCALES, SCHEDULE, SEASONS, SUNRISE, TRADITIONS, UNDERSTANDING, UPSETTING

Camels have three eyelids to protect them from blowing sand.



WEATHER FACTOID

How far away is lightning? During a storm, count the number of seconds between the flash of lightning and the sound of thunder, then divide by two. The answer reveals how many miles away the lightning is.

I have always had a hard time losing.

When I was really young, I used to love visiting my grandparents. My grandpa is a great chess player, and I couldn't wait to get to his house and play a game with him. The only thing is, he always won. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't beat him, and he never let me win on purpose. When I lost a game, I just exploded! I cried, and sometimes I even threw the chess pieces on the floor. My grandpa just looked at me and shook his head.

My cousin also beat me at games often, and one time he told me that I was fun to beat because I got so upset when I lost. I didn't like that, and it made me

think about how I could change the way I acted when I lost at a game. I decided to try really hard to relax when I lost. I didn't want to be a "bad loser," but I guess that is what I was.

The next time I went to visit my grandpa, I said to myself, "Grandpa is probably going to win, no matter what." During the chess game, I saw that I was losing, and I immediately told myself, "You're right; grandpa is going to win." I didn't say anything out loud, just in my head. This is called "self-talk," and it helped me stay calm when I lost the game. Since I had already told myself I was going to lose, it didn't bother me as much when I actually did.

I also practiced self-talk on my cousin and found out that it worked with him, too. Whatever game we were playing, I would try to notice when either he was close to winning or I was. Once it seemed obvious that one of us was going to win, I could get myself ready for the inevitable. It helped me stay calm when I lost, and it also helped me stay calm when I won.

About a year ago, I beat my grandpa in a game of chess and he wasn't upset at all. I tried really hard to be a good winner, but I must admit that I did celebrate a little after all those years of losing.



Lou Wisniewski

"Excuse me, but 'more slower' is a double superlative."

Created by Kari Dunn Buron. Her writings include *The Incredible 5-Point Scale*, *A "5" Could Make Me Lose Control!*, *A 5 Is Against the Law!* and *When My Worries Get Too Big*.

www.5pointscale.com