

## **Change & Growth**

It is a very cold winter's day in Dunedin. The leaves have turned golden and are being swept off the trees as the wind starts the winter clean up!

Winter seems such a tough time for many people.....then there is the threat of a pandemic 'flu as well as a recession to handle. Whether it is a seasonal change or changes in your circumstances the emotional response can be very strong, and very similar to experiencing the loss of someone special in your life.

In this newsletter, I want to explore the opportunity to grow and become more resilient from the experience of changes in our life – and changes in the seasons.

For those of you who are challenged by winter months I encourage you to compile a list of things that can be very positive and special about winter. Here are 20 ideas to get you started:

1. Sit in front of a fire and read a magazine or book
2. Have friends over for dinner and enjoy taking time to prepare it while it is cold outside
3. Wrap up in your thermal clothes and water proof over trousers and go for a walk
4. Take up a winter sport
5. Eat winter vegetables and make your own soup
6. Make your own bread
7. Go to the movies or a play
8. Have a hot bubble bath
9. Turn on the electric blanket for a warm bed
10. Sweep up leaves and use it as your work out
11. Get your photo albums and scrapbooks up-to-date
12. Email friends around the world
13. Listen to beautiful music
14. Play scrabble
15. Knit a new hat or scarf
16. Grab your camera and take pictures using the great winter light
17. Meet a friend for a coffee
18. Enjoy a glass of wine
19. Sit and pat your cat and listen to the purr
20. Put on some music and dance!

Once you have your list, refer to it and act on some of the ideas regularly.

## **Wellbeing Study**

An International Wellbeing Study ([www.wellbeingstudy.com](http://www.wellbeingstudy.com)) began in March 2009 with the first of five planned intakes. The next intake is June 2009). This is a study of wellbeing over time, and I encourage you to look at the website and be a participant. You may learn more about yourself – and more about happiness.

Warm wishes to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Diz'.

It is important to me that you **want** to receive this newsletter - so if you have read this far and want to hit the delete button – please take 20 seconds to hit the unsubscribe button at the bottom of the page, and your name will be immediately removed from this newsletter

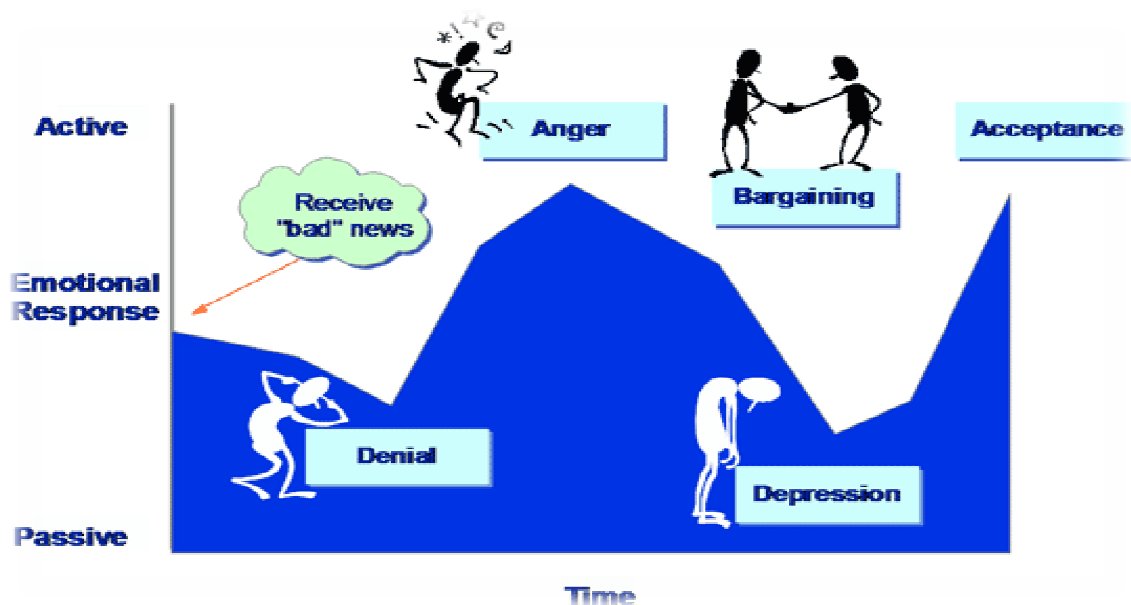
## Change – a time of fear or a time for growth?

Many people are challenged by change – and I am one of them...especially if the change is imposed on me!

In the last few months I have been with people who have lost their jobs; had someone close to them die as well as experiencing my own organisation undergoing change in structure and the way we deliver services . I have again experienced the fear of losing my job or doing something differently....in other words I may have to change!!

2009 is a year of change for everyone world wide as we handle change in economic states and challenges we have not faced before. Unfamiliar territory is exhilarating for some – and scary for others. So, for those of us who are not change-seekers what can we do to handle change in a healthy way?

A model I have found most useful is an adaptation of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's stages of grief. Her model outlines the different emotional responses we may feel as a reaction to "bad news" ( bad news could be the death of someone close to us; someone we love leaving us; loss of a job; loss of money on the share market; death of a pet or a major health incident or a number of other negative life events). Many of you will know about these responses, which are summarised in the diagram below:



**Denial** – “ this can't be happening to me...this is not possible”

**Anger** – “who's fault is it that this happening” “ I blame.....”

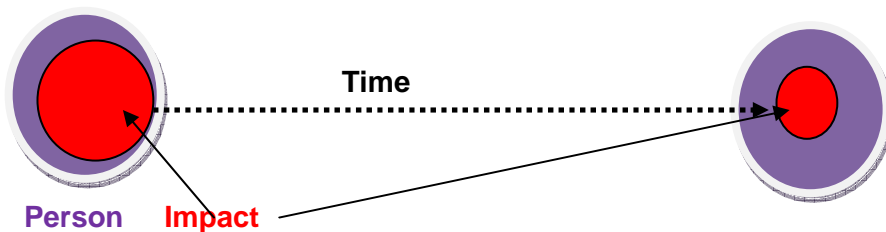
**Bargaining** – “if I promise to change, please give me another chance.....”

**Depression** – “I don't care.....” feelings of intense sadness and maybe hopelessness

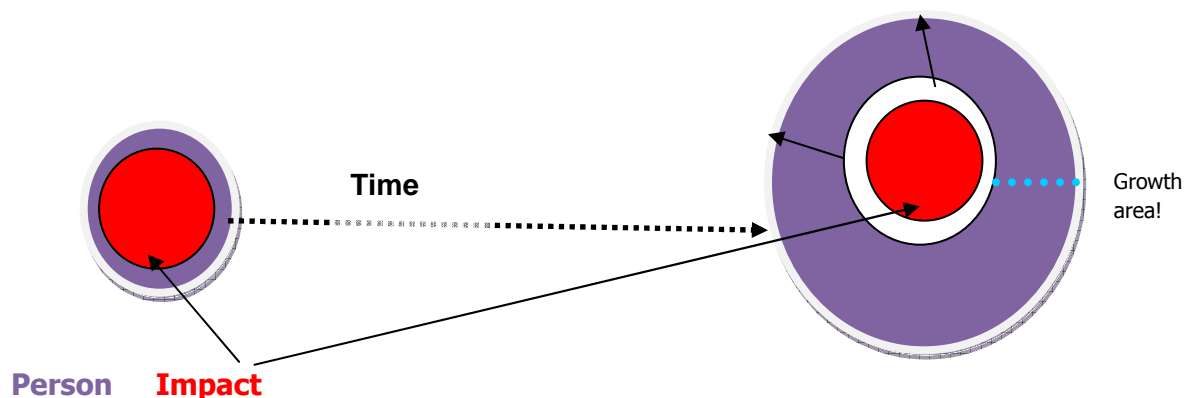
**Acceptance** – over time if we can come to terms with the reality of the situation, we can move beyond our suffering.

These emotional responses are not necessarily stages –as our emotions can go back and forth. It can be helpful to know that other people also experience a similar range of emotions to different situations and that we are “normal”.

The adaptation to this traditional model is what I call the “Growth Model”. This model still acknowledges the range of emotional responses we may experience to an unwanted event in our life, however instead of the message “time will heal”, this model demonstrates our ability to grow if we develop strategies to care for ourselves while handling the change in our situation. Having good strategies will increase our capacity to handle change and grief and therefore the opportunity to experience a growth in resilience. The difference in the two models is depicted in the drawings below:



1. In this “traditional model” the negative impact appears to shrink over time



2. In this Growth Model – a person still experiences a range of emotional responses, however, instead of the impact lessening over time, the person knows strategies to care for themselves, and learns to accept tough times. They know they will handle the changes and challenges – and over time they feel stronger and more resilient. They experience “emotional growth”.

I encourage you to find the opportunities in the tough times of change and tough times in life. Be aware of new possibilities and to learn more strategies about coping in tougher times, click on this link: [Strategies for the tougher times in life.](#)

*“When one door closes another one opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.”*

*Alexander Graham Bell  
1847-1922, Inventor and Teacher of the Deaf*