



## **How to deal with forced change**

### **Insights from the P.E.A.C.E. Academy**

**Purpose-Empowerment-Action-Care-emotional Energy**

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I am a visionary leader as the Director of Mustard Seed Associates CIC, and practice as a Consultant Systemic Psychotherapist and Supervisor. I also work as an Independent Social Worker, Leadership coach and trainer and I have worked within CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services) with children and families in the UK, for over 35 years.

As a Black Christian woman I am passionate about combining spirituality and mental health, particularly within the African Caribbean community and have created the **P.E.A.C.E. Academy** (Purpose, Empowerment, Action, Care, emotional Energy) to bring simple and effective ways of working with complex trauma, bereavement and relationship difficulties.

The name Mustard Seed comes from the bible (Matthew 17:20) and is linked to the origins of my faith. The idea of having a *possibility mind set* is something I feel is important on the journey of self acceptance and healing.

The approach I use is systemic. There are many descriptions of what systemic means and probably the best way to understand it is through its roots in family therapy, where therapists gain insight about how one part of the system affects another; taking the whole system into account to work effectively. I do this through the questions I ask, through the stories told and through working collaboratively with everyone involved. Systemic practice is relational and believes there are multiple ways to approach a situation; finding the right fit for the person, family, community or organization is what we focus on in our work.

Please do visit our website or join our Mustard Seed Facebook community for further information and we hope you find the insights from the PEACE Academy useful.



## **P.E.A.C.E of mind: How to effectively deal with forced changes**

### **Chapter 1: Purpose**

To find peace in our lives when we are going through a crises or experiencing forced change in our daily relationships it is important to focus on the things we *can* change and find the right strategy for doing so. Before the current global health crises became a reality, some were dreaming of potential opportunities and had visions of doing something different with their life based on what they thought their life purpose was. In a few cases (including mine) we might have held back on fully embracing these dreams for many reasons. As we use this time to pause, reflect and meditate on the opportunities that lie ahead we must fully embrace the acronym of P.E.A.C.E - Purpose, Empowerment, Action, Care and emotional Energy to effectively deal with change.

Purpose is something we all have and is uniquely and intricately woven into our DNA. It is the spirit in which we undertake tasks, live our lives and conduct our relationships; it is who we were divinely created to be. Whether you are on the journey of discovering your purpose or already living it out loud, we can use this opportunity to redesign our lives the way we choose to live it, without compromise. When we fight against *who* we are, walk in the opposite direction of what we *know* to be right or keep putting off starting our dreams and goals for fear of failure, finance or other reasons; forced and unexpected changes are harder to overcome. Being resistant to change, ignoring or denying change can be equally damaging.

When we embrace the fact that life has changed as we know it and decide not to fit into someone else's mould of who they think we are (or could be), we leave room for our new, content (with self and life) and purposeful identity to emerge. We are all created beings with creative minds and a great deal of potential yet to be realised, irrespective of our age, ethnicity, financial or personal circumstances. Change is therefore a part of growth, life and purpose. Discovering and living life on purpose is priceless!

It is my please to continue to encourage you in these troubled times. Please do visit our website and subscribe for further updates or let me know how we can support your emotional health, wellbeing or business. [www.mustardseedcic.co.uk](http://www.mustardseedcic.co.uk)



## **P.E.A.C.E. of mind**

### **Chapter 2: Empowerment**

“...my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”

(2 Corinthians 12:19 KJV 1997)

When changes are unexpected and forced upon us, this can bring a sense of helplessness and disempowerment in our daily lives. Remembering that we have the power, authority and control to undertake some (albeit small) decisions in our lives can impact our self esteem and confidence in positive ways. In such circumstances many will seek alternative solutions and look to others for wisdom and counsel, including our spiritual community.

For those of us with a faith in God, forced change is a signal to be reminded there is a greater reverential power, God, that guides us through each and every challenge we may have. Our divine spiritual GPS (God Positioning System (Taylor 2015) is always available to guide us irrespective of whether we feel confident or empowered; giving us living and moving maps as dreams and visions like life signposts. Remembering to lean on God’s wisdom, grace and power can bring us a renewed sense of confidence and assurance that we can use to navigate our current challenges and to dispel the notion that we are trapped.

Empowerment, whether it is physical, cultural, economic, spiritual or relational, lies outside of our comfort zone. Challenges are an invitation for us to move, take action and explore a territory that we have previously felt to be beyond our knowledge or capability. Empowerment is found in new environments, relationships and is discovered when we move from the position of fear to faith. It is accelerated when we courageously attempt to do something we have not previously undertaken, using the knowledge and expertise of those people that have already mastered that action.

Empowerment is voice activated. From the creation of the earth God spoke His intention and created us as ambassadors in the earth, with the authority and autonomy to serve others in our community. There is a temptation in the current climate to join in with the unsolicited 'banter' of negativity and declare the *potential* catastrophes that might occur. This is a negative "me too" movement that has a disempowering effect. Even if we have similar thoughts, feelings and sentiments it is imperative that we speak positive sentences and affirmations into our lives and to others. Emotional expression, however, is still a valuable resource and in later discussions I will share how to make our feelings (energy) work for us not against us. A regularly spoken positive outcome, whether through prayer, training, reading, counselling or other conversational spaces can change our thoughts, behaviour and the corresponding outcome. These are scientifically proven and many professions are based on the model of consultation i.e. speaking. These include: counselling, psychotherapy, social work, training, sales etc. Nothing happens until somebody says something!

This time is an opportunity to speak and affirm the innate power we possess and to ensure we take supreme authority in what we can control i.e. our minds, our bodies and our spirits in challenging times.

It is my pleasure to continue to encourage you in this season and we have a number of professionals that offer free consultations and information to you and your loved ones via our community consortium group.

Please visit the website [www.mustardseedcic.co.uk](http://www.mustardseedcic.co.uk)



## **P.E.A.C.E. of mind**

### **Chapter 3: Action**

Insights from the P.E.A.C.E (Purpose, Empowerment, Action, Care, emotional Energy) Academy

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results"

(Albert Einstein)

Forced and unplanned changes can leave us feeling stuck in repeating patterns, as though there are no options for us to change our circumstances. However, when we trust in a connection and relationship with

God we know that he will navigate us as our divine GPS (God positioning system – Taylor 2015). With any form of navigation system there is an implication that we are in movement, taking action and re-positioning ourselves from where we are to where we want to get to. Taking action to move in the direction of our goals, dreams and vision is what helps us to maintain a sense of peace and find new resolutions for our challenges. Remaining where we are, no matter how difficult a place it might be, is not an option.

The current situation may have us being more cautious in many respects in relation to action we might wish to take. However, we have a prime opportunity to re-position ourselves and take action for what is around the corner. With wisdom that is derived from hindsight (what has already happened); insight (what we know about ourselves and how we might act in a given situation; and foresight (the possibilities that lie ahead) we can evaluate a new strategy for how we want to live our lives and conduct our business. As an example, part of my own response to this current pandemic was to repurpose my company website to offer services online; relocate some of my business to working from home (remaining at work as a key worker in a young person's mental health hospital); and to ensure I reach out to as many people as possible to encourage and bring hope to the hurting. The pandemic created *a sense of urgency* and the corresponding action to find a new strategy to accomplish what I am trained and passionate to do; consult and heal. Procrastination is no longer an option!

Taking action may need to be different than what we have already been used to doing such as re-budgeting, saving more, prioritizing our goals or letting some things end (including unhelpful or negative friendships). Our actions will determine a different outcome if we are consistent enough with our efforts that are built on wise counsel. Whilst fear may try to hold us back it is imperative that we “feel the fear and do it anyway” as advocated by Susan Jeffers (2006) in her book with the same name. Taking courageous action to step out and try something new will also help us to feel a sense of control and restores safety (amongst a great deal of uncertainty) as a foundation for building confidence and self-esteem.

Whether you are still in the mode of inaction or starting to consider the new opportunities that lie ahead for your family, business or relationships, there lies a critical opportunity to take action in a new direction. Success in any area of life lies outside the comfort zone and we will only find that new and more satisfying territory by moving outside of it. Take action to plan, pray, start the process, call someone, ask for help, learn something new; anything but remain where you are and expect a different result.

I encourage you to stay connected for more insights from the PEACE Academy and look forward to connecting with you online. [www.mustardseedcic.co.uk](http://www.mustardseedcic.co.uk)



## P.E.A.C.E. of mind

### Chapter 4: Care

“Don’t take your health for granted, don’t take your body for granted. Do something today that communicates to your body that you desire to care for it. Tomorrow is not promised”

(Jada Pinkett-Smith [www.Goodhousekeeping.com](http://www.Goodhousekeeping.com))

Caring for yourself is just as important as caring for others. This is emphasised when we fly on an aeroplane and the safety message encourages us to put our own mask on *first* before we attempt to help others. Self care can come in many forms: saying words of affirmation to ourselves, prayerful meditation, doing activities we enjoy, spending time learning a new skill, setting goals and self forgiveness. Accepting there are always going to be actions that we (in hindsight) may have avoided or that acting in careless ways toward ourselves or others requires us to practice the art of forgiveness, preserve our emotional health and wellbeing. In addition, when changes are forced upon us such as social distancing and restrictions to movement or loss of job role and finances the pressure and stress might cause us to be harsher, in word or behaviour, toward ourselves or our loved ones; seeking to preserve any rapidly diminishing resources.

I recall a situation when I was a young child and we had an unexpected and sudden house move; ending up as a family of one parent (my mother) and four children living in a tiny room. At one point I asked for an extra slice of Jamaican bun as I was still hungry after the small family meal. However, my mother, who was conscious of preserving the little food we had left to survive, as at that time social benefits were not that accessible as a working parent, said no. I remember feeling devastated, I cried, we all cried; life as we knew it and access to regular income, food and resources would need to be reorganised. Being the responsible and caring parent she was, my mother gave me something to eat and knuckled down to ensure we all had enough food to fill our bellies and a safe roof over our heads. Care was taken over every future financial decision, reducing waste, prioritising and caring for not only our current needs but those to come. I do not recall ever being in a similar situation growing up again.

Working together to provide care and support for others that are vulnerable in our families and community is also an important strategy to adopt. We have heard wonderful stories through the media of individuals, groups and organisations coming together to use their skills to provide important equipment, feed the hungry, house the homeless or provide some other much needed service. Such acts of collaboration and care are now becoming commonplace and not going un-noticed. Care that comes from unexpected places is often the most valued as it may not be able to be reciprocated or compensated for. Irrespective of our individual beliefs or values we can all appreciate the loving, kind or considerate act of another human being in times of distress. Care brings people together. (1 Corinthians 12:25 Holy Bible KJV)

Care is an important aspect of maintaining our emotional health and well being. It promotes peace in ourselves and others, even if we have to maintain boundaries and discipline for unacceptable behaviour. Disciplining a child with care and compassion at the centre will have much more of a lasting impact than doing it with a harsh and indifferent tone or intent. The warmth we show toward each other in our actions will return to us and be multiplied as we invest in our social and family relationships.

I hope these insights act as words of encouragement to you and your family and that you stay physically and emotionally safe in this uncertain period. If you require further support, please visit our website for further service updates or contact us. [www.mustardseedcic.co.uk](http://www.mustardseedcic.co.uk)



## **P.E.A.C.E. of mind**

### **Chapter 5: emotional Energy**

“Everything is energy: your thought begins it, your emotions amplifies it, and you actions increase it’s momentum” [www.365greetings.com](http://www.365greetings.com)

Our emotions are a natural part of our mind as human beings, yet they sometimes appear to ‘run away with us’ as though we have little control over them once momentum (positive or negative) is built. The

energy of our emotion is derived from our thoughts and lead us to take associated action, creating habits in our daily lives. When there are unhelpful thought patters they lead to unhelpful feelings and associated unhelpful behaviours.

As a mental health specialist, I have seen many children, young people and adults struggling to control the unhelpful thought patterns derived from negative experiences, problematic relationships, developmental difficulties or lack of purpose linked with identity development and cultural influences. In supporting these individuals (or groups) I help them to focus on building more helpful patterns of interaction and supportive relationships (including a supportive relationship with themselves) to assist them to *reframe* negative energy into something more positive and hopeful. While this is sometimes a process that takes time and consistent effort, *it is possible to retrain your mind to 'think better thoughts'*. Like building muscle and achieving fitness in a physical gym, counselling and psychotherapy help to build emotional resilience and *mind muscle*.

Our feelings can work in our favour or against us. When we have the intention (will) to try something new, move from focusing past negative experiences or start to build better relationships, this can truly help us to focus on things that are possible and achievable in the moment. Working through emotions rather than resisting them will also bring a sense of self acceptance and accomplishment in times of distress.

Bereavement and loss of a loved one will trigger many conflicting and competing emotions of: denial, anger, frustration, depression, shock, pain, guilt, loneliness etc. These are a natural response to a tragic circumstance and accepting there will be a period (defined by the affected person/s) to mourn and grieve in whichever way they feel expresses their emotions is necessary. Though this energy may *feel* negative it is a healthy process that many will go through and need support to tolerate the powerful impact of it as they do so.

Acting in ways that produce positive responses or surrounding yourself with the voices of positive people that can speak encouragement and hope into your life in times of distress will help to reverse any negative trend of emotional apathy. Try putting on your favourite reflective or energetic song or watch a movie that speaks to your emotions. It can help you to feel validated and accepted; knowing there are others that may share similar experiences that have transformed their life circumstances for the better. Remember to reward yourself for any effort you put into transforming your identity or circumstances by making a simple change in your daily life. This will help you to build greater positive momentum and gain a greater sense of control of your thoughts and actions, leading to more positive feelings and positive energy.

I would love to hear your positive playlist, favourite motivational song or film please share on our Facebook page: Mustard Seed CCG.

If you know anyone that needs psychological support but afraid to ask for help please do give them our website details to find a community of supportive counsellors and therapists that can offer free and informal advice or assistance if preferred. [www.mustardseedcic.co.uk](http://www.mustardseedcic.co.uk)

