

Make “Never Normal” Your New Normal

By David Horning



At any given point in your day, someone somewhere is using "new normal" in a sentence - it might even be you - to which I challenge you, "Stay far away from normal."

What? Why?

Well, what do you think of when you think of "normal?"

Routine?

An everyday occurrence?

Predictable?

Consistent?

Comfortable?

Since the beginning of this pandemic, one refrain from other people that I haven't been able to escape is a pining for normalcy – and I've done it too:

"I can't wait until things get back to normal."

"Well, when things get back to normal..."

"This is what it's like in this new normal."

When I think of "normal," I think of very different words:

Complacent

Static

Stagnant

Predictable (with a negative connotation)

Comfortable (again, with a negative connotation)

I understand why you may want a sense of consistency - it offers peace of mind, confidence, and the feeling of control - but what happens when that consistency gets thrown out of wack?

As we've seen throughout human history, and especially during this pandemic, people don't react rationally to a sudden change in routine:

We start feeling stressed.

We lash out.

We panic.

We cry.

We withdraw.

We break down.

We argue.

We resort to violent behaviors.

Humans act irrational and rationalize it in hindsight – that's a habit we have to break.

We don't respond well to the unexpected and that's because we've created an unnatural expectation of consistency that doesn't match up to the randomness of the universe.

Then, instead of taking unexpected lumps in stride and leveraging them as growth opportunities, we often dig our heels in defiance, gripping tightly to what we know: something we call “normal.”

As we speak, A.I. is developing at unprecedented rates, so if your goal as a leader is to establish comfort in your workplace, the 2020s are going to be very unkind to you. Same with the 2030s, and 40s, and...

Beyond the pandemic, we need to be ready to get hit with new “new normals” regularly.

You have a choice:

- 1.) Develop the skills that will help you and your team respond positively to the inevitable constant state of flux of the 21st century.
- 2.) Continue waking up stressed out about what unexpected changes will happen today.

When you decide to not only take sudden changes in stride, but to look forward to the exciting prospect of growth that comes with change, you've developed the mindset of a 21st century leader.

You may think that humans aren't meant for uncertainty and unexpected change based on the stress that goes along with it, but in reality, stasis is our enemy. Clinging to the idea of normalcy when the world is in a constant state of flux *is* the reason why we stress. We've been conditioned to strive for specific outcomes instead of continually stretching our potential to achieve those outcomes. Either you shift your mindset to welcome change, challenge the limitations of your fixed beliefs, and embrace the inevitable growth that will come with it, or you can stay stuck in "normal."

If you choose growth, there is one skill that can help ease that transition by making you more resilient, creative, and collaborative. That skill is humor – and just like growth is a choice, so is humor.

WHO WROTE THIS THING?



David Horning is a keynote speaker, consultant, and comedian with 8 years of experience, including taking the stage for over 75 SHRM chapters. David helps leaders use humor as a skill to become more resilient, creative, and have more fun at work in order to successfully make their cultures more human-centric. He is the founder of Water Cooler Comedy, a company offering customized corporate comedy shows, keynotes, workshops, consulting, and more. He also produces and hosts “You Can’t Laugh At That,” a podcast that explores the ins and outs of what makes certain topics funny. He is currently procrastinating working on his first book.



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