

# THE PANDEMIC WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING

**America 2.0: Ready or not, here it comes.  
Five cognitive strategies to help us be ready.**



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Mark Cuban, the billionaire owner of the Dallas Mavericks basketball team, recently called the post-pandemic change we will experience, "America 2.0." As the pandemic will change all of us, it will also change the world.

But even positive change doesn't automatically happen in the wake of adversity. Adversity can cripple and destroy. Just how adversity changes us depends more upon ourselves than one might think. Cognitive psychologists have shown that how we think about the changes ahead can have a profound effect on the ultimate impact these changes will have.

As we look to the changes the pandemic may bring, many of us look from a vantage point of fear and trepidation. Others embrace the change and see an opportunity to pay homage to the past as well as an opportunity for growth in the future. But the late futurist Alvin Toffler reminds us it may be more than an opportunity: "Our moral responsibility is not to stop [the] future, but to shape it... to channel our destiny in humane directions and to ease the trauma..."



How we think about an event or a situation greatly affects the ultimate impact we experience. Here are **five cognitive perspectives on change** that may not only mitigate adversity, but may help turn crisis into possibility.

1

**Make a plan.** It has been said that hope is not a plan and that if you don't have a plan you will become part of someone else's. Failing to plan is planning to fail Benjamin Franklin once wrote.

2

Never forget that the single best predictor of human resilience is the **support of others**. But that support must usually be earned. So, to start, go out of your way to help others without any expectation of a return. Don't expect anyone to say "thank you," but be glad if they do. Don't treat people the way you want to be treated; treat people as you believe they want to be treated. And always start with respect.

3

Remember the **pain that does not destroy you will be your teacher**. It will be a stepping stone to later success. The hardest part is often taking that first step to recovery and growth. Once you have taken that first step, understand that where strength of mind and tenacity exist, destiny usually follows.

4

When fatigue and loneliness descend, as they inevitably will, resist the temptation to question whether or not you are making a difference. **Everything you do makes a difference** and will echo for eternity. It is what makes you immortal. You simply may not be fortunate enough to see the differences you have made.

5

Keep in mind that **life is a journey, not a destination**, as it will protect you from disappointment and failure. Draw strength from the fact that wherever you are and whatever you do, you are part of something greater than yourself. To paraphrase Christopher Robin, speaking to Pooh: "Promise me you'll always remember: We are braver than we believe, stronger than we seem, and smarter than we think." *Carpe diem, carpe futurum.*

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