



If you started investigating your career prospects while still in high school, odds are you're a Reasoner. Likewise, when you buy something or end a relationship, you probably list the pros and cons on a piece of paper before you decide.

Reasoners are usually well prepared for change and can handle it with equanimity. However, when they're facing a change that has a high-emotional impact, they'll often involve themselves in something we call pseudochange: a period of introspection prior to actual change which sometimes keeps them from changing.

When Reasoners are uneasy about an impending change, for example, they'll analyze, quantify and theorize endlessly, never having enough information to make a move.

Refocusers are task- and goal-oriented. They tend to focus on the projects at hand and on short-term benefits. When involved in a change, Refocusers concentrate on achieving tangible results. They'll persevere through all kinds of distractions and are unshakeable under pressure. Their downfall is they usually fail to see broader implications. In fact, this is how Refocusers experience pseudochange: the more unrelenting a problem is, the more

fixed Refocusers become in their approach to solving it.

Noelan Lewis was an economics major who got caught up in pseudo-change during her sophomore year at the University of Colorado. She panicked and decided that her skills were too general to find a good job when graduation rolled around. She decided to specialize in her field, whizzing through every required course for her economics degree, then using all of her electives on economics as well. By the time she graduated last fall, her knowledge and interests were so narrow that her job prospects were terrible. She's finding it difficult to schedule job interviews and establish a rapport with interviewers. She has since enrolled in a job search program to learn how to widen her approach.

Relaters love to take polls. They dislike research and details, so they seek the opinions of professionals, friends, family members and the man-on-the-street. These personable changemakers are always interested in the emotional, human relations aspects of change, and they get comfortable by making as many contacts as possible.

Relaters and Reasoners avoid change in the same way: Both gather lots of data. But the Relaters' methodology consists of asking endless questions of others without acting on the opinions they hear.

At the beginning of the semester last spring, Pam Hansen asked everyone in her political science class at the University of Georgia if they thought she'd do better in another professor's class. Even though most of them said yes, she didn't get around to dropping the class in time. She spent the entire semester in a hassle, and ended with three hours of C.

Riskers are decisive and action-oriented. They like to jump in and attack a problem head-on, and are therefore impatient with details. They often take physical or mental risks, sometimes both, and make great leaps forward when big changes are needed. Their energy and intuition often help them handle change easily but, when they err, it can be a whopper.

Riskers' pseudochange appears extremely flexible. They regularly charge head-long into one scheme after another, often missing the moment when a project might come to fruition. When job hunting, Riskers schedule

so many appointments that they're late for the appointment that mattered most.

While it's important to understand the risks of change, focusing on the positives is much more productive. The following strategies for change can increase your chances of finding opportunity as you shift from student status to the professional ranks.

1. Look at your change from school to career as a gradual transition.

As you make your move, you'll find that you've changed a lot since high school, and so has the career you had in mind when you entered college four years ago. Furthermore, you and your career field will continue to change at an increasing rate. Remember that change is both normal and good for you. The stimulation keeps your mind flexible, and the sensation is exhilarating.

2. Recognize that your resistance to change is normal.

How would you feel if you walked into your room and found that every piece of furniture and all your personal belongings had been moved? Angry, shocked, worried, confused, happy?

It's the rare person who would say happy—even if the new arrangement looked better and was more convenient. We all resist change when we fear the unknown. Sometimes we resist because we're afraid we'll fail if we try something new. Other times we settle for what works, even if change would make things better.

As a new grad, you're about to experience a change that's often wrenching, even though graduation marks your achievement of a significant life goal. Sometimes students are so disturbed by the prospect of this change that they erect subconscious barriers. They fail an easy course in the last semester, they change majors mid-year, they sign up for graduate school, and sometimes they even develop an illness that prevents class attendance.

Analyze how and why you might be resisting change, and you'll find the going becomes much easier.

3. Don't minimize your feelings of loss.

You have a right to feel that you're losing something. Your comfortable way of life, social milieu, routines, daily tasks and structure will all disappear. Even if you can't wait to get out of school, the finality of graduation

Continued on page 27