

INTRODUCTION

This book is about dealing with **S**udden, **U**nwelcome **C**hanges. Such changes could be the loss or death of someone you love, redundancy, a serious illness or even a car accident. We have named such happenings 'SUCs', because this is how they can be experienced ('change sucks!') However, through using approaches introduced in this book, change can be experienced in a much more positive light.

Like it or not, throughout all of our lives change will occur. By the time we reach adulthood we have already responded to countless internal and external changes. Despite this however, most people still find change, particularly change that they have not personally initiated, to be daunting.

Both of the authors have had to deal with our share of SUCs, and through much of our lives each of us did this by 'being strong' – being the one who coped while everyone else was falling apart. This necessitated discovering many strategies for dealing with fear, and for keeping on going when the going was tough. While such strategies were originally adopted as survival mechanisms, over time we have each recognised that, through our experiences we have developed some very valuable skills for managing life changes. We have needed to learn, however, not to simply slip mindlessly into 'survival mode' when faced with a difficult life event. It has been important to balance 'being strong' with self-care, and with a willingness to seek help when necessary. As we began making conscious choices about how we responded to change, we found that we were able to move more quickly from a negative reaction to achieve a positive outcome. Some of our experiences are included in this book.

There is much evidence to suggest that change is necessary for growth and learning. Failing to embrace change comfortably can lead to a very restricted quality of life. Daunting as this might sound, there are many examples of people for whom unsought and even quite catastrophic life experiences have led to unexpectedly positive results. In short, it seems that people don't need to be victims of change; there are ways in which something positive can be created out of a seemingly hopeless experience. We call this, 'turning a SUC into SUCCESS'.

Several identifiable stages need to occur along the way to converting a SUC into Success. These stages form the Turning Points Model, which is described in detail in Section 1. Understanding the stages, and having a repertoire of strategies for dealing constructively with each stage, enables people to turn the corner from negative to positive more quickly. Section 2 therefore is a 'toolbox' of approaches for managing the various challenges of change

The next time life presents you with a significant unexpected event we trust that insights and strategies you will discover through reading this book will help you to realise your own inner strength, and help you turn your SUC into Success.