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## Salt Lake Tribune, The (UT)

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## Business Insight: Face change with focus, real outlook

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

**John Baker**, author of *Ready Thinking: Primed for Change*, and founder of READY Thinking LLC, a leadership development firm, offers suggestions on effectively handling change. Why do some people remain strong during times of inconsistency?

Durable people practice the art of perspective: looking at tough situations through the lens of experience. If our first question is "What will this change do to me?" we are defeated before we start. Durable people ask, "What can I do with this change?" We hear that our economy is headed for another Depression. To gain perspective, spend time with someone from the generation who actually did go through the Depression. You'll learn from these great Americans what true sacrifice is all about, and how they survived to raise children, build communities and live prosperous lives.

What are some barriers in effectively dealing with uncertainties?

The biggest barrier is defining reality in uncompromisingly clear and concise terms. I consider it the most difficult and most essential step in leading yourself and others through change and upheaval. The philosopher Santayana said it best, "One real world is enough." Yet, time and time again, we see people adding unreasonable and unnecessary levels of stress to an already troubling situation by churning through needless emotion. The first step in defining reality: Stop playing the "what if" game. You're wasting time and emotion on things that aren't real.

How can people deal more rapidly and effectively with change?

When faced with what appears to be a daunting task or major setback, focus on one small action that moves you forward. Then focus on the next small action. Small steps allow you to surmount what initially appears to be insurmountable. Focus means having greater impact on fewer things. You cannot execute without focus.

What are other principles help in uncertain times?

Uncertainty causes stress, and humans are genetically wired to confront stress with a fight-or-flight response. Like our ancestors, we benefit from taking action and committing to movement when confronting change and anxiety. Studies indicate our bodies require action when confronted by stress, and react negatively when we sit idle and stay sedentary. During uncertain times, even the smallest of exercise pays dividends.

- Dawn House

**Caption:**
[Photo:](#)
[John Baker, author](#)

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