

VUCA Tools™ for a VUCA World: How to Thrive in Change

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All of us are dealing with the ongoing challenge of change and striving to discover the necessary tools to thrive, and not just survive. The current change context has become known by an acronym: **VUCA-Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous**. This term was coined in the 1990's at the US Army War College to describe the changing terrain of warfare. VUCA is now used as a label to capture the rapidly changing landscape in all our lives and organizations, i.e., we live in a VUCA world. Change is constant. Sometimes it's all we can do to survive another day.

We experience the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of VUCA as a **threat** to our well-being and success. Perceiving change as risky and VUCA as dangerous, we default to our most primitive capabilities, limiting our actions to survival responses:

- **Fight:** We try to fight change, or deny it, blaming those we hold responsible.
- **Flight:** We attempt to escape or avoid change, to flee its inexorable path.
- **Freeze:** We freeze in place, unsure what to do and unable to move in any direction.
- **Appease:** In addition to the familiar Fight/Flight/Freeze reactions, we try to survive the threat of VUCA through appeasing the powers that be, simply complying and bending to what others want without considering if it's the right or best thing to do.

Faced with VUCA, when we most need to access our brain's amazingly rich capabilities, we simply react.

Is there a better way? VUCA Tools™ are four approaches that enable us to access the strategic and planful parts of our brains and respond thoughtfully, instead of just reacting. During our time together, we'll be exploring these VUCA Tools™--Values, Us, Curiosity, and Aspirations. Recognizing VUCA as our new reality enables us to consciously engage with changing circumstances. This key set of tools can enable us to respond effectively to a VUCA world.