

# The First 90 Days – Sign Up here to begin this free course

#THRIVEASYOULEAD  
The First 90 Days

Personal agility means being able to adjust quickly to changing priorities, ideas or methods

**TIP #6**  
TRY OUT NEW IDEAS AND BE WILLING TO QUESTION LONG-HELD ASSUMPTIONS.



“Make sure those ‘Ideas whose time has come,’ get launched today”

Let’s be honest. Maintaining a flexible attitude in the face of change is hard. I know change is inevitable and that change is all around us. Yet the process of change causes me to feel uneasy at times because the outcome is hazy. For some, the mere mention of change and beads of sweat appear on their upper brow. We instinctively look for patterns, develop routines, and implement systems because they simplify our lives. Routines work because they increase speed and efficiency. Systems work because structures are put into place, making work more manageable by enabling a natural flow. Therefore, it makes sense we might find ourselves resisting change, perhaps because of the perceived risk or fear associated with it. But given the growing complexity and rapid acceleration of change in healthcare, adjusting one’s approach to meet the demands of ever-changing situations is vital for any physician interested in developing as a person and becoming more effective as a leader. Personal agility isn’t just another instrument that the scrub tech hands you in the operating room; it’s a master competency needed for sustained success.

**Agility is the ability to anticipate and respond rapidly to changing conditions.**

Agile individuals strategically and proactively embrace change. They can examine situations from many perspectives and anticipate the need for change before it is imposed. The agile physician leader is willing to question long-held assumptions. Should your system – a well-planned process consisting of a collection of objects and actions that function as a whole – be scrutinized or threatened, what thoughts come to mind? My clients state, “I don’t have time to do it differently” or “This is the way I always do it and it’s always been successful” as immediate thoughts when challenges arise because denial and resistance are the normal initial responses (phases) of change. But getting stuck in “the way we’ve always done it” is the enemy of agility. The other stages of change – exploration and new beginnings – encourage you to learn from your experience to brainstorm possible approaches in dealing with change.

**Agile individuals are willing to detach from past beliefs to instead explore or be open to the new possibilities that change may bring.**

Because personal agility is becoming an increasingly more critical self-management skill, how comfortable are you with change and ambiguity, or readily shifting gears? How would you rate yourself at being able to make decisions and take action even when all the information is not yet available, or the total picture is fuzzy at best? To assess your personal agility, complete a brief agility assessment. Read each statement and determine how frequently you perform the action or demonstrate the behaviors that make for an agile physician leader. Rate your actions and behavior on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Always; 5 = Never). [CLICK HERE](#) to download.

Action/Behavior	1 Always	2 Almost Always	3 Occasionally	4 Almost Never	5 Never
1. I find it easy to operate out of my comfort zone.					
2. I am comfortable with change.					
3. It's okay when things are "up in the air."					
4. I readily embrace new ideas and concepts.					
5. I quickly make decisions and solve problems even when there's not enough information.					
6. I shift gears quickly when things change.					
7. I don't go around cursing change or let change put me in a bad mood.					
8. I like to learn new skills and new ways of doing things.					
9. I can take action without having the complete picture.					
10. I readily embrace shifting priorities.					
11. I am comfortable if I have to do things differently than they've always been done.					

Whatever your personal agility score, be willing to rethink existing assumptions. You can improve your agility by trying out new ideas with an intentional, proactive stance to step out of your comfort zone. Remember, nobody cares if you can’t dance well. They remember if you don’t dance at all. So just get up and dance.

**Tip #6** – Try out a new idea and be willing to question a long-held assumption.

Strategy – Operate out of your comfort zone.

**Related Articles**

- [First 90 Days Introduction](#)
- [First 90 Days Lesson 1](#)
- [First 90 Days Lesson 2](#)
- [First 90 Days Lesson 3](#)
- [First 90 Days Lesson 4](#)
- [First 90 Days Lesson 5](#)
- [Sign up!](#)

*Teresa Dean Malcolm, MD, FACOG, MBA, CPE, CPXP, is zealous in her belief that an exceptional experience in clinical care, the human(e) experience, is achievable through meaningful and authentic relationships with others. She has served in executive positions, integrating people with process and purpose, and successfully aligning the ideas of the team with a compelling vision. Her coaching philosophy, **The Malcolm Method**, is rooted in trust and supportive accountability. Through thought-provoking conversations, she strives to deepen the awareness of her physician clients and further their actions, thereby helping them to thrive as they lead. Dr. Malcolm (known to her friends and family as Terri) is a loving wife to her husband, Nate. Together they have three charming and athletic boys, Nathaniel, and twins, Roman and Colton.*

*The materials and information in Dr. Malcolm’s course, “The First 90 Days Course – Boost Your Social and Emotional Intelligence,” is derived from the training she received to become a certified coach from the Institute of Social and Emotional Intelligence.*

**ACCESS MORE CONTENT FROM DR. MALCOLM**

Post a Comment

Start the discussion...

Subscribe



Stay Connected With Dr. Malcolm. Get FREE Updates, Content and Information Delivered to You Inbox.

First Last

YourEmail@example.com

**SIGN UP**



Trending Now

Recommended: Order your copy of *Compassionomics*, by Stephen Trzeciak and Anthony Mazzaelli

