

Embracing Change

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We are three weeks into autumn. The leaves are changing from green to gold, red and orange. The nights are cooler. The days are shorter. Anyone missing summer? We are, most of us, happy to leave the extreme heat behind.

I would like to read again the quote that April Hill read – it is one of my favorites:

“Nature will not let us stay in any one place too long. She will let us stay just long enough to gather the experience necessary to the unfolding and advancement of the soul. This is a wise provision, for should we stay too long, we would become too set, too rigid, too inflexible. Nature demands change in order that we may advance. When change comes, we should welcome it with a smile on the lips and a song in the heart.”

- Dr. Ernest Holmes

I am a person who does not like change! I always used to have the habit of staying too long in jobs, too long in relationships...I held on like there would be no tomorrow, resisting change will all my might. But, like the quote says, resisting change makes us too rigid, too inflexible. Anyone else ever have that issue? Just me?

Psychologists tell us that the four most traumatic changes a human being can face are: the loss of a loved one through divorce or death, getting fired or retiring, moving, or becoming seriously ill. I have gone through all of those big changes at one time or another. I believe it was Aeschylus who said, “We cannot step into the same river twice.” Why? Because by the time you take the second step, the water you first stepped into is already downstream. And so it is with life. We see all around us that change is the nature of life.

Observe the acorn. It must change its shape and grow and become the oak, and everything it needs to do so is already within it. This is equally true with the

caterpillar. It must climb into the cocoon and die to its old form; as it does so, “imaginal cells” begin to build the new form, and then it must leave the snug safety of the cocoon, emerge a wet and awkward creature and eventually take the next brave step and jump into the air in order to achieve its true nature and soar. If it will complete this transformation, it gets to sample the sweetness of many a blossom.

The seed must become the plant; the fetus must leave the womb and begin its journey to adulthood. Labor pains! I have two children, both of them I had by so-called natural childbirth. This was in the ‘60’s when such things just were not done. The family physician absolutely refused to allow me to give birth without the use of drugs. But I had read a book entitled *Childbirth Without Fear* and had done the physical exercises and I was determined to try it. The principle is to breathe during contractions and be as relaxed as possible, working *with* the body, not *against* it, not tightening up the muscles in fear and resistance. It worked. I had very quick and easy deliveries without the use of any drugs.

When life brings change – especially unanticipated or seemingly undesirable change – we tend to tighten our hold on what is -- in fear, in resistance. But when we and if we breathe, and trust in the natural progress of the soul -- when we release our attachments, we can simply flow into the next step of our personal unfoldment.

With each transition, each change -- even with each painful wrenching away, we grow, we mature, we transform, we “grow stronger at the broken places.” Buddha observed that all suffering comes from attachment. We have a concept of what we need to be happy. We have preferences. We have opinions.

However, just as a child must progress from a newborn to a 2-year-old who begins to experiment with the word “no!” and continues to grow into a 5-year-old, a 14-year-old, a 20-year-old, the spirit is the same, but grows in experience, develops talents, adds knowledge. We progress.

I kind of liked and was attached to my 16-year-old body, but...now I have a 71-year-old body. Where did all those other bodies go? The journey has upsets built right into it. I love spring, but try as I might to hold onto it, it always turns into summer!

A great spiritual teacher said, “Change is always taking place within That which is Changeless. Forms appear and disappear in a medium which of Itself is formless.”

As we relinquish our attachment to what is, and embrace the necessity and naturalness of change, life will carry us into greater wisdom, greater compassion, greater understanding. When will stop holding onto *things* so ardently; we become more generous because every *thing* is actually in the process of flowing away anyway. We gain in courage to stand for what is right for we see that we are all in this flow called life together. We can buoy each other up.

As we do so, we become willing to be flexible in our attitudes, in our beliefs about each other, about the innate meaning and nature of life. In closing, we must see that “the answer to what we shall be is contained in our thinking, for we can change our thinking!” We can become powerful like the oak tree. *We can soar* like the butterfly. The power and love of Spirit will carry us on the winds of change so that we may taste the true sweetness of life, available to one and all, *as we are willing to embrace change*.