



How to Respond to Change

Let's assume that you read my blog last week on Tuesday and that you followed my example as suggested in the post. You made a list of all of the new experiences in your life over the past few years.

- A list of changes that came into your life without your invitation.
- A list including new things that happened to you.
- Including changes in your health or the health of a family member.
- Changes at work that required that you take on new roles or tasks or responsibilities.
- Changes in your spouse's life – because those impact you, too.
- Changes in your children's lives: sports, school or church clubs, music lessons, health.
- Pets that have been added or subtracted.
- Close friends that have experienced drama or trauma and you became a supporter.
- Changes at church or work or school.

You get the idea.

I don't want you to be overwhelmed by creating the list.

This exercise helps you to realize some underlying factors that may be manifested in relationship struggles, health deficits, patience changes with close friends and family, or lack of motivation that once enabled you to accomplish more.

If you did not create a list, stop reading and take the time to make a list now. I'll wait.

[Here's the link to last week's post.](#)

What are the possible responses to a changes list?

I see two options:

1. Learn from the changes and challenges
2. Ignore the effects and try to shield yourself from events that trigger responses

Homeostasis is the wonderful word that means "things stay the way they have always been for me."





But, since homeostasis is impossible, even for a rock, the idea of staying the same is an illusion.

Change is a fact of life. You can't avoid it. Sometimes you can modify it. But you can't stop it.

You will Respond to Change one way or another. Why not be a caterpillar?

Option 1: Learn. Change.

- Accept change and enjoy the journey to see how the difference will work out, which results in peace and calmness.

Actually, the first step in learning from the life changes in your list is already done: you've acknowledged that life has changed around you.

How does one go about learning from life's changes?

Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do. Change always shuts some options, but inevitably opens others. Search for the open doors. The opportunities.

When cancer came into my life, change was not an option. Things would change, I chose radical surgery. I had to give up my wedding photography business – at least temporarily. Probably permanently. A year after surgery I still cannot hold my big camera steady, but I'm working to re-gain my strength and stability.

How do you respond when life changes stop you from doing something that you have chosen to include? An important career or skill or hobby or life-style?

Replace it with another option. Review your sometimes hobby interests. Make one a direct choice. Cultivate the interest and skills that are needed to become – an artist, a writer, a gardener, a student. Gain skills and knowledge. Video on-demand courses are plentiful and inexpensive.

Create your own on-demand videos or webinars. The equipment to make that possible is not expensive nor difficult to master.

Attracting an audience or following of thousands – even hundreds of thousands – is not out of the question. But, even without a huge following, choosing and doing what you can will add meaning and satisfaction to your daily routines.

Option 2: Ignore. Resist.

- Fight against change and see difference as unwelcome, worry that the way others see you might diminish, which will cause your self-image to also suffer, and you to be nervous and fretful.



I will again use my cancer experience as illustration.

Once my diagnosis became known, I had many people who felt they should share their advice with me. Uncles, brothers, and acquaintances were paraded before me as proof that I should follow their examples.

“With no surgery, my uncle has lived for 20 years after his cancer diagnosis.”

“Just ignore it. Pray. God’s will be done.”

“Take this herb or supplement or aroma therapy to get it cured naturally.”

Ignoring a life-threatening diagnosis is never a good idea. I chose to trust my doctors. Chemotherapy followed by surgery were scheduled. My life would never be the same. Different, but still good.

Resist

We’ve seen a big Resist Movement in the USA lately. I can speak from the point of human psychology regarding the effects on the resisters: their choices and efforts bring only frustration and anger into every part of their lives.

I strongly believe in resisting.

- Resist the urge to Give Up.
- Resist the urge to feel sorry for yourself.
- Resist the feeling of helplessness that will come over you as you lie in bed, too weak to get up.
- Resist the thoughts of rejection because God allowed this to happen to you.
- Resist being an invalid.
- Resist, I Can’t.
- Resist Self Pity.

As Henry Ford said, “**Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right.**”

There is wisdom in the prayer of serenity written by the [American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr](#) (1892–1971)

God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,



Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serenity_Prayer

You can do as much as you think you can. But no more. Dream Big! Fly!

Use this as a stepping stone to add to your life, to add to your repertoire of skills and accomplishments.

Turn your “Give up!” into a “Give Out!”

- Find others who need encouragement and be their champion.
- Volunteer at a school (I know, that’s becoming harder and harder to do.)
- Volunteer at a hospital or managed care facility.
- Organize a group from your church or club to meet a need in the church or community.

**“Find a way to get it done,
not a reason why you can’t!”**



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