

Change

Change... constant, perpetual, never-ending, absolute; in this vast universe we live in, nothing ever stays the same. No matter where you go on our planet, change is undeniably evident. The weather is in a state of constant change, the oceans are incessantly in motion; even the seemingly solid ground we live on is in a constant state of flux. The infinite expanse of space we gaze up to at night is continually growing, continually changing. And that, is precisely why we are here in this human experience - to continually grow and to continually change.

As above, so below... this comparison of our own selves to the ever-changing universe became very clear to me after the breakdown I suffered in late 2007. It was then that I finally realized we are really not meant to stay the same; we are meant to continually grow and expand. I suffered that major breakdown because I was not willing to make a change, even though I knew for certain that I was not growing. But it was through that experience, that I was compelled to review and renew my willingness to evolve as an individual and to take the next step in my own personal "Road to Recovery". That next step, of course, was CHANGE.

I rebounded from that breakdown with an incredible feeling of relief, and a whole new sense of purpose. It was so exciting to "know" how important change was in a person's life. It was, and still is, so exciting to face the changes of each and every day, to grow and learn, to realize I am only held back by my own limitations and

choices. I had spent most of my life wanting to change, but had seemed to always surround myself with people telling me I would never change; I could never change, that I would never do any better. Even to this day, I am still told that I will never change.

Sound familiar?

Encouragingly enough, I was finally able to see that those less-than-optimistic people were just trying to keep me down at their level, because they were too scared to change themselves. What I discovered, and this is vital to understand when you decide to make significant changes in your life, is that it will affect every single person involved in your life. And the people who are not ready for change will offer resistance and fight you, tooth and nail. Their ego knows that when you start to make positive changes they will have to face something within themselves. This is a very frightening concept to many and the ego serves to protect their fear.

I have spent most of my life knowing something more was out there, but absolutely unable to figure out how to advance toward it. I knew that something better was out there, but it was easier to stay lost in a world of drugs, lying, cheating and really accepting a life that did not belong to me. Now, of course, I question why anyone would ever choose a life like that over happiness and fulfillment? But, fact of the matter is, the inability to change is simply the inability to make a choice. That inability to choose to become a better person basically stems from a primal fear that we are going to change into a different person. You see, we become what we surround ourselves

with; we want to fit in, we don't want to 'rock the boat' or hurt another person's feelings, so we choose to stay where we are. It's easier, it's familiar, and it's much more comfortable than trying to carve a new path.

Well, maybe it's time someone reminded you that your path is just that, your path! You need to do what is best for you and sometimes you just have to accept that other people are going to criticize and ridicule you for doing what is best for you, instead of what is best for them. If you need to change the way you do something, and the opportunity presents itself, do it! You must begin to have the faith that when you are presented with an opportunity to make a choice, to make a change for the better, it is a gift and there is a reason that gift has been given to you.

Resistance to change presents its own challenges. I'll be the first to admit that even the thought of change can be scary; that's why so many people steadfastly resist it. Even I have been looked square in the face and told, "I am not changing for you or anyone else!"

Well, one thing I have learned about people, who are steadfast in their refusal to change, is that they are usually hurting a relationship in which they profess to love the other person. That seems to make absolutely no sense, does it? As a relationship is always evolving and changing, the people involved are obviously changing and, hopefully, growing.

I remember, years ago, when I was still married I knew that I needed help. I knew at some level that I was hurting our relationship and, if I carried on the way I was, things were going to turn sour; and probably pretty quick. I truly felt it was safer to just stay the same than to actually have to deal with what was wrong.

Unfortunately, it's not only our intimate relationships that suffer; the inability or the unwillingness to change affects every part of our lives. It affects our relationships with our children, our level of health, our relationship with money; it even affects the success we experience with our job.

So, why do we do this? Why do we continue to do things that hurt ourselves and the people around us, when we know it is not serving? It is because none of us want to become a *different* person. I think that, inherently, most of us believe if we make changes in our lives, even if we are not happy, we will become someone different, someone we no longer know and someone less accepted by all those we know and love. There's a fear of loss of control, a sense that we are being controlled in some way by someone else. The sad reality of the whole situation is, we are being controlled; not by others, but by our own ego.

Change is NOT about becoming a different person! Making changes to your life has absolutely nothing to do with being controlled, with becoming less, or with losing sight of who you truly are. It is about becoming a better person. It is about becoming the best person that YOU can be, and it is about becoming the person

YOU were meant to be. Change is about seeing where things can be tweaked a little bit; change that one thing and move on, change another little thing and move on. It makes no difference what area of your life needs to be changed; making any little change will, in fact, improve every facet of your life.

You see, change at its core is not about the things most people resist. Change is simply about growth and learning. When a professional athlete works with their trainer, things get changed up constantly: work-out schedules are adjusted, diets are modified, supplements altered. In the end, there is an increase in performance. Was the athlete controlled in some way? Was the athlete made to feel less? Was the athlete put in a state of lack? Of course, the answer is NO. The athlete grew, probably in many ways not just one. Their performance certainly improved, and if not, more changes may have ensued.

What is it about a professional athlete that allows them to accept change so easily? Simply put, they want to be the best; they just want to be the best. I challenge you, right here and right now, to want to become the best you can be. I challenge you to accept that change is required to attain that goal and I challenge you to start making that one small change.

Another dispute to the concept of change is the misconception that we are already perfect and that nothing needs 'fixing'. This is simply not true. The minute we think we are perfect and require no more improvement, we have just started dying. How can it be

otherwise? You see, we live in a world of opposites, up and down, right and left, hot and cold. And what is the opposite of growth? Obviously it's death.

So when you think, or even worse, when you feel that you do not need to change, you automatically attract dying into your life. We have already figured out that in order to grow, you need to change. If you reject or fight change, you have also rejected growth; consequently, you have accepted dying.

When I accepted change into my life, it hit me like a ton of bricks; things start to change all on their own, including the people and circumstances around me. It's the inevitable law of change. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to tell you that changing my life or you changing your life is an easy venture. But then, nothing worthwhile is ever easy. And change certainly doesn't happen overnight.

I do want to tell you, though, that it is very gratifying. Once you accept change into your life fully, once you accept change without attachment to being in control, it is amazing to watch the changes that happen all on their own.

So, rather than fearing change and resisting it, get excited about it. It's time to get really honest with yourself here and do a self-check on your attitude to change. Ask yourself these questions right now:

Have you ever told yourself that you did not need to change?

Have you ever told someone else that they could not change?

Have you ever felt bad about a situation, but thought your only option was to accept it?

Have you ever thought it's too bad you can't have something?

If you said "yes" to any of these questions, maybe it is time to accept that you are actually limiting yourself and that your thoughts are actually setting you up for failure.

Change is a required part of our personal growth and development. We are, in fact, always given opportunities to change; to change the situations we are in, to change the way we do things, to change our minds from minute to minute as information changes. If we do not accept change into our lives completely, how can we achieve anything better, more serving? How can we ever have different results if we don't change our thoughts, feelings and actions?

As the saying goes, 'Change is inevitable...growth is optional. Choose wisely.' I bid you to make your choice.