

Transitioning To New Life - Now And Beyond

CHANGE The Essence of Life

Change is not a choice, it is the way our Universe and all of life functions. The world we live in is a place of life because being alive is constant change. Anyone who is against change is against the reality of life. Resistance to change is a primary cause of many of the ills and anxieties of people. About 20 years ago, the American Dairy Association had a catchy jingle called, "There's a new you coming every day."

Here is a quote that makes my point clear, "Change is inevitable and it will happen with your help or without it. You may be a traditional person who likes life as it is. But your life has changed all around you since your childhood and it will continue to do so for you, your children and theirs. Of course, you don't have to like it and you can even resist it but you will not stop it." From: Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/123266>

Humans from a Scientific perspective:

"It is true that individual cells have a finite life span, and when they die off they are replaced with new cells. Red blood cells live for about four months, while white blood cells live on average more than a year. Skin cells live about two or three weeks. Colon cells have it rough: They die off after about four days. Sperm cells have a life span of only about three days, while brain cells typically last an entire lifetime (neurons in the cerebral cortex, for example, are not replaced when they die".

"There's nothing special or significant about a seven-year cycle, since cells are dying and being replaced all the time. It's not clear where this myth began; perhaps some well-meaning but innumerate person simply added up the all the lifespans of the body's various types of cells and (mistakenly) assumed that all the cells are renewed after seven years."

From: <http://www.livescience.com/33179-does-human-body-replace-cells-seven-years.html>

Change & Renewal from Other Perspectives:

- Gigantic celestial objects and enormous masses rush through space at unimaginable speeds
- We are rotating around the Earth's axis at a speed about 1000 miles per hour
- Our planet is revolving around the Sun in an orbit 186 million miles wide at the speed of 67,000 mph and our Sun is taking its planets on a ride around the center of the Milky Way
- In distant space new galaxies are being formed while others are swallowed by black holes
- Old stars collapse and explode to become supernova, or shrink and become little white dwarfs
- On planet earth, which looks like a calm blue marble from space, atmospheric conditions from above and the volcanic forces from below cause continuous change in the layout of the continents and the oceans
- The continental plates float over the Earth and when they collide, great mountain ranges occur
- For similar reasons, the Atlantic Ocean widens by four-tenths of an inch every year
- Volcanoes rise and empty their contents as the building material for new lands
- The wind and the rivers erode the soil, leveling the heights or causing deep canyons, slowly but steadily changing the layout of the land
- Animals and plants that sustain life on Earth come into existence and then disappear in lives that range from a few hours to several centuries
- The plants recycle the soil and the gases and feed the animals, which return back to the soil when they die. Your body is renewing itself without you being aware of it. Wounds heal, nails and hair grow.

Islam:

From an Islamic perspective, the author of this article notes many other changes in the universe and our world and ends his thoughts with these words:

"In all this seemingly chaotic rush, there is a hidden order that keeps everything on course. When astronomers inspect the deep skies, they gasp when observing the beauty of celestial objects, like the nebulae structures recently discovered with the Hubble Space Telescope.

On Earth, life continues to function on its course. Your body works until it has fulfilled its expected life span. And, despite all the electrons that are flying, disappearing, and reappearing, the book you left on the desk this evening will be there tomorrow morning-unless you have children at home.

It should be clear that any mishap, even for the slightest moment, might render the universe useless. So, why isn't everything turning into a chaos of colliding, rotting, disappearing particles? What is the force that sets the harmony in the universe? This is best explained by Said Nursi, who wrote a century ago: "The Glorious Creator of the universe is Self-Subsistent, that is, He subsists, continues, and endures of Himself.

All things subsist and continue through Him, they remain in existence and have permanence. If that relationship of Self-Subsistence was cut off from the universe for even the fraction of a second, the universe would be annihilated." From an Islamic perspective:

<http://www.onislam.net/english/health-and-science/health/464668-constant-change-a-renewal-in-the-universe.html>

Dictionary:

The dictionary defines Subsistence as - "the state of existing in reality, a means of surviving." This is the key mystery to all life that Science calls the Big Bang, "(cosmology) the cosmic explosion that is hypothesized to have marked the origin of the universe". In this moment everything in this universe was present and by expansion and evolution continues to change.

Change - by Thanissaro Bhikkhu - (a Buddhist perspective)

"Change is the focal point for Buddhist insight — a fact so well known that it has spawned a familiar sound bite: "Isn't change what Buddhism is all about?" What's less well known is that this focus has a frame, that change is neither where insight begins nor where it ends. Insight begins with a question that evaluates change in light of the desire for true happiness. It ends with a happiness that lies beyond change. When this frame is forgotten, people create their own contexts for the teaching and often assume that the Buddha was operating within those same contexts." For a more complete understanding you may go here:

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/change.html>

Judaic/Christian:

Having been raised in a Judaic/Christian background there are three words that come to my mind in presenting our individual participation in change as the essence of life itself; Fruitfulness, Diversity, and Service. We were born and we will die (pass on - be transformed). This is true of everything in our world and in our universe, only the length of this cycle changes for the vast diversity of matter all around us. We all share in the elements that make up all matter and have recently learned that we share the same DNA, in varying patterns, with all cellular life forms. It has taken billions of years from the time of the creation and these three words will continue to bring even more dramatic change for billions more.

In the first chapter of Genesis, the first story of creation, God speaks and brings forth the beginning of all things in our universe telling living creatures to "be fruitful and multiply". Following the introduction of humans in verse 28 God says, "Be fertile, increase in number, fill the earth, and be its master. Rule the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that crawl on the earth." (GW)

FRUITFUL:

This word is defined as - "productive or conducive to producing in abundance". At the beginning of creation, the Big Bang, there was an unimaginable explosion of fruitfulness. The Prime Event was initiated and the expansion of all the possibilities began and continued for many millions of years before the universe began to fully bloom. "Be fruitful and multiply" in Genesis was a beautiful and rather accurate way to describe, not only the beginning of universal expansion, but also the early formation of our earth. According to the Genesis story there were four days before our Sun was born to continue the growing expansion of all the planets and stars in our Galaxy. The days before our sun were clearly not solar days nor were the other days that followed. Scripture tells us that, "One day with the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day" (2 Peter 3:8) but Science has observed that the time for the development for our sun and earth were more like billions. I am impressed that God included humankind in this creative process after we came on the scene only several hundred thousand years ago.

It is also important, especially in today's understanding, to realize that being fruitful and being in control as a master or ruler should hardly be interpreted literally. We no longer live with "the divine right of kings" understanding of how one may rule nor do we accept that masters should have the right to enslave. We have come to understand the scriptures with a broader emphasis on the love and compassion of God doing justice. Here is a 21st century commentary regarding Genesis 1:28, "The dominion that God desires is one that protects the defenseless and gives justice to the oppressed. Applying this to the command for humanity to exercise dominion over creation, we can see that while we rule over creation, we're called to protect it."

<http://christopherbrown.wordpress.com/2009/01/03/genesis-128-to-subdue-and-have-dominion-over-creation/>

As Paul, in Galatians 5:22 (GW), has summarized the nature of God, "the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

There is another important aspect of fruitfulness in our world today that goes beyond the outward and visible sexuality of fertility suggested in Geneses 1:28 above. As we mature in our understanding of God's love and compassion for all people, in all times, and in all places, we need to consider the inward and invisible nature of that grace in our manner of living. We are told in the Gospel of John, chapter 14, as Jesus was telling his disciples that he would soon be "going to his Father", (verse 12) "I can guarantee this truth: Those who believe in me will do the things that I am doing." As we accept the magnitude of God's presence in our lives, as Jesus did, we can see spectacular gifts of fruitfulness beyond expectation in almost every area of our lives. In the outward and visible we have cars, trains, planes, rockets, satellites, world-wide communications in both picture and sound, etc. In the inward and invisible we are able to eradicate and heal all manner of diseases, invent and discover medicines, replace or repair defective organs, artificial organ regrowth, re-growing body parts and regenerative medicine. Here is a video of a developing new way to treat skin burns and skin grafting: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXO_ApjKPal&feature=youtube_gdata_player This is one glimpse of our continuing advancement of how we, as the people of God, can and will create new ways in all areas of living.

DIVERSITY:

Diversity - noticeable heterogeneity. Heterogeneity, "the quality of being diverse and not comparable in kind." Despite the fact that we all come from the same elements and matter from the beginning of our universe, we are amazed by the diversity in our universe and our world. Even among people, even siblings in one family from the same parents, there is a unique diversity in body, mind, and emotions. Over our human lifetime we have emphasized these differences to cause separation and distinction that has led to separation and segregation. These judgements of superiority or inferiority are the causes of many wars and conflicts along with erroneous dominion of rule and class. We tend to forget that there is One God, the Creator of all with a clear propensity for love and respect for these apparent differences among us. There is an interesting exhibit moving around our world, a Project of the American Anthropological Assoc. called FACES of AMERICA - PBS - with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. It clearly demonstrates that there is no such thing as Race and we are not really so different after all. You might wish to take the time to survey this interactive site is available online:

<http://www.understandingrace.org/home.html>

For the most part these changes, that continually occur among us and the whole of our universe, are better seen as advantages to growth and possibilities. When we begin to see them as a gift and a probable resource for a diversity that prevents dull sameness, our universe and world continues with excitement and drama. It is because of these gifts of difference, ever so slightly at times, we continue the productivity of a progressive future for the years ahead. When we as people on this planet begin to appreciate the advantages of diversity in the way we think, speak, and act, we can, instead of wars, create greater support for interdependence and intergenerational aspirations that bring the fullness of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all.

Diversity will not only improve your life but it will also improve the lives of those around you. When I read the Gospel of John recently I noticed the diversity that was in the ministry of Jesus. The tradition of many in his time was judgement, but Jesus practiced a ministry of inclusion. His next most common invitation was, "follow me". There are seven signs, more traditionally called miracles, that I have combined with the signs of God's spirit of compassion and love in Galatians. Here is a simple list:

- LOVE - The totality of Jesus' life and teaching was to convey the love of God
- JOY - The wedding in Cana when Jesus turned water into wine so the joy of the feast would continue

- PEACE - Jesus heals the Centurion's son - he was a soldier of Rome that often brought judgement, oppression and harm
- PATIENCE - The Samaritan woman at the well when Jesus reaches out to her in spite of the fact that she was not a practicing Jew. She and her people were transformed by God's love to them even though this story does not tell us they became Jews in the way they worshipped
- KINDNESS & GOODNESS - Jesus feeds the 5000 without restrictions or requirements to all who came
- FAITHFULNESS - Jesus walks on water to reach his disciples in a boat as their faithful leader
- GENTLENESS - Jesus heals the man at the Pool of Salome & the man born blind, again without requirements or conditions in his caring compassion
- SELF-CONTROL - Jesus raises Lazarus as a sign of things to come, celebrating the control of life now and forever given in creation

Note: greater details of this summary can be found in a series of sermons from the Gospel of John found here: <http://janddhealth.homestead.com/Writings.html> - enclosed in the red box.

There is a bumper sticker today that I believe reflects the proper attention we all need to realize, encourage and respect our need for diversity in our shrinking world.



SERVICE:

One of the greatest statements about Jesus, for me at least, is "It's the same way with the Son of Man. He didn't come so that others could serve him. He came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many people." (Mark 10:45 GW) I wish to note that the principle definition for the noun ransom is, "the act of freeing from captivity or punishment". Jesus' principle words and action during his life of ministry on earth was to release those under the domination of Roman rule from captivity and punishment. (1 Corinthians 2:17 GW) "Whoever is a believer in (a follower of Jesus) Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence." As a (follower) of Jesus my need to be served has greatly diminished and my greater desire is to serve others as I am given or take opportunity. In my estimation too many who call themselves Christians "believe in" Jesus (tending toward worship) rather than following his example in word and deed. The greatest honor I can give to Jesus in to imitate, as best I can, his life and witness toward loving and respecting all people in the name of God.

Our Judaic/Christian scriptures teach, by verse and example, "give and it will be given unto you". I have noticed that most sacred writings of other faiths also promote this same message in terms of their cultures and local expressions. When we consider ourselves superior to others, in whatever way, we lack the humility necessary to be of true service to those who may have need. Even a small amount of haughtiness makes the "other" inferior and disallows a loving and honest attempt to promote, benefit, or be useful. The teachings of scriptures also emphasize that it is to "give and it will be given unto you". Our natural inclination is to think that we receive what we deserve or what we earn, and this may be true, but our inner spiritual nature is more completely satisfied by giving. Like many adults, especially parents and grandparents, giving gifts brings a special joy. As we mature in life we begin to understand the sacramental nature of sharing what we have with others in need. A Sacrament, after all, is an "outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace" that benefits both the one who gives and the one who receives.

By now you may be able to see that change is never the problem but is rather a wonderful and essential gift that is a part of all creation. Perhaps it is time for everyone to begin to recognize and learn to utilize this amazing asset for the benefit it is meant to be. Growth, in any form or fashion, is impossible without change. Without change we would have never grown to become an adult and when can anyone afford to stop growing until they are no longer in this life. When we recognize that "yesterday" is over and gone, only then are we able to move forward to the new moment of "today". I am sure you have heard the phrase, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life". Now, in fact, today is the only opportunity we have to "be all that we can be" by engaging with "change" to effect and affect the way we live. Keep in mind that "tomorrow" is another day that might never come. We have been told to "plan ahead" but there is no guarantee that we will have the opportunity to follow through on that plan. Among the Twelve Step Groups we hear, "one day at a time", and that reality must be faced by everyone. Isn't it about time we learn to accept the value and necessity of change and use our ability to change on a regular basis? Use all the gifts given to you for life and Be Blessed by the blessing you share.