

From the Heart. . .

. . . Lifeskills for Today

By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Celebrating Change, part 1

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Who really loves change? Most of us more “senior” folk typically think only those under 30 years old! Yet, for most of us, change can elicit all kinds of emotions, especially fear. Fear of change comes in all packages . . . the unknown, the untried, the footsteps of failure, the shadow of shyness. You name it. So, how can we actually celebrate change? Let’s hear from a few notables who have shared their life lessons with us.

Lady Bird Johnson offered us this, “The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid.” Erica Jong, American author and feminist settled the dilemma with “I have accepted fear as a part of life - specifically the fear of change....I have gone ahead despite the pounding in the heart that says: turn back.”

Another tip that definitely offers hope for us all comes from Rosa Parks, America’s *First Lady of Civil Rights*. “I have learned over the years that when one’s mind is made up, this diminishes fear.” When we hold firm to this, we can more easily keep fear in tow. In the novel, *Jacob Have I Loved*, Katherine Paterson cautions us to know

the difference that fear plays in our lives. “To fear is one thing. To let fear grab you by the tail and swing you around is another.”

If fear has grabbed our tails, we lose on many fronts, including friends knocking at our door. As Shirley Maclaine has said, “Fear makes strangers of people who would be friends.” Then add George S. Patton to match up this unlikely pair! “There is a time to take counsel of your fears, and there is a time to never listen to any fear.”

What tips can you offer to help us celebrate those changes in our lives? Whether those changes are small steps to the big ones, let’s all begin to practice putting fear on the run. Let’s look at change as an opportunity to celebrate, no matter our pounding hearts! See you next week with part 2 *Celebrating Change*, learning to have courage to change and learn new things, whether you are only eight years old or eighty!

Sharon L. Benedict, is a speaker, author, and weaver, and loving it! She is available for speaking engagements, freelance writing, and will even weave you a one-of-kind creation, just for you. Sharon also welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com. Visit her website at www.celebratingyourjourney.com.

From the Heart. . .

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By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Celebrating Change with Courage, part 2

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Before we can really begin to step out and embrace change, we must face those fears that hold us back. Whether those changes are small steps to the big ones, let's all begin to practice putting fear on the run. Let's first look at change as an opportunity to celebrate, no matter our pounding hearts! Whatever our age may be, eight or eighty, let's see what others have said about change. You may just find the courage to learn something you couldn't any other way.

Here's a little science tip from Peter Borden, "Most advances in science come when a person for one reason or another is forced to change fields." For most of us, when we find ourselves entering a new field of occupation or study, not only are we learning new things, but many new ways of doing things with new people.

Change happens on many levels that challenge us to step in with courage and commitment. How about adding celebrating to the mix . . . plus some new friends? Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 18th century lyric poet and statesman offers us a glimpse into the possible. "Science arose from poetry--when times change the two can meet again on a higher level as friends."

One thing is for sure, change happens one step at a time, even when it doesn't feel like it. Riley Keough, American actress and model, gives us a well rounded perspective with "Life changes so quickly, feeling grateful to be around such wonderful people to strengthen and grow with."

Laurence J. Peter, 20th century Canadian educator and best known for the formulation of the Peter Principle, offered a moment by moment tip we can all wrap around our minds and hearts. "Real, constructive mental power lies in the creative thought that shapes your destiny, and your hour-by-hour mental conduct produces power for change in your life. Develop a train of thought on which to ride. The nobility of your life as well as your happiness depends upon the direction in which that train of thought is going."

Here is the challenge given by King Whitney Jr. for us all. "Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better." What lens are you currently viewing through?

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Celebrating Change . . . your second chance, part 3

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“We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance.”

This gem comes from Harrison Ford, renown actor, as quoted by Garry Jenkins in “Harrison Ford: Imperfect Hero.”

Whenever I think about the years I raised my two daughters, I feel like I missed so many opportunities to be with them, play with them, and find ways to make the sweetest memories. Yet, knowing as I grow more senior and big changes happen, I can smile. With each change I have a second chance to make the most of each moment with my wonderful daughters. It’s all in the attitude and my actions.

William James, American philosopher and psychologist (1842-1910), offered “Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.” If we can really grab hold, changing our attitudes, we just may find in each moment a second chance to not only change our own lives but those around us.

For many of us, we think we have to win the lottery, get a big promotion at work, get a surprise inheritance to have our minds and attitudes changed. We are always holding off in the moment for some unknown future windfall. But we all know if we are

honest with ourselves that “Fortune does not change men; it unmask them.” Suzanne Necker, (original name Suzanne Curchod, 1739-1794), was a writer and the premier Swiss hostess of a brilliant Parisian literary salon, a gathering place for notables of the day. She was also the wife of Jacques Necker, the finance minister under King Louis XVI of France. Even in the middle of opulence during Necker’s life, gems were learned and shared with the world.

Yes, words create change good and bad. As the biblical saying in Proverbs 25:11 (NKJV) nails the good ones, “A Word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver.” Words that encourage, lift, and give hope become far more valuable than even gold or silver. Yet, makes us richer all the same. Words fitly spoken are all wrapped up in the truth we need to hear and our hearts need to heal. We also must remember that “The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it” as offered by Flannery O'Connor, American writer, essayist, and an important voice in literature (1925-1964).

So, the next time a change is knocking at your door, say hello to your second chance. Begin to create special moments with those you love and care about. And remember change will also expose your attitude. With each word let the change speak truth to you, no matter how hard it is to hear. Here comes your second chance to not only change your own life but also make a difference for someone else. You both will be richer for the change and so will your second chance.

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From the Heart. . .

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By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Celebrating Change . . . for the better, part 4

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As we finish out the year of those twelve practical lifeskills, we end with lifeskill “Celebration.” The final installment this month for part 4 is celebrating change for the better. More than any gem I have heard or read over the years, Mahatma Gandhi shines through with “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Another gem is actually a song I love. The Imperials sang one of the most beautiful songs that still brings me to tears, wanting my life to make a difference for others. The song is “You’re the only Jesus . . . some will ever see”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2neQ5Hx0Hw0>).

I may be getting a little mushy here for some, but isn’t this the season for sharing the heart of the season, and making a change for the better? So, as Gandhi and Jesus would agree, let us all be the change in this world today.

Ok, here’s a small chuckle to lighten the mood a little. I know one thing has changed for me since middle age. According to my mirror and E. Joseph Cossman, entrepreneur and wealth-builder, “Middle age is when your broad mind and narrow waist begin to change places.”

Changing for the better has everything to do with taking care of yourself. Look in the mirror and see what your doctor has been telling you to change for years. James Gordon, M.D., clearly knows his patients with “It's not that some people have willpower and some don't. It's that some people are ready to change and others are not.”

James Prochaska, Professor of Psychology and author of *Changing for Good*, offers very basic ways to get ready and sustain the change.

- The first is to find and learn new facts and suggestions supporting the change.
- Experience and express negative feelings about one's problems such as worry or fear.
- Realize that the behavioral change is part of one's identity.
- Assess how one's problem affects the physical environment.
- Choose and commit to act on a belief that change is possible; accepting responsibility for changing.
- Substitute healthier alternatives for problem behaviors.
- Avoid triggers and cues.
- Increase the rewards of positive behavioral change and decrease the rewards of the unhealthy behavior.
- Seek and use a strong support system of family, friends, and co-workers.

I would also encourage you to include faith family in your support system.

When Prochaska steps become a natural part of your daily life, you will discover Nelson Mandela's *A Long Walk To Freedom* gem will also shine through for you. “There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you

yourself have altered.” You will look back to where you came from and where you are now, and declare the change was worth the journey.

In closing out 2014, be the change this world needs by taking care of yourself and allowing for change and growth in yourself and those around you. Pearl Buck (1892-1973) leaves us with what makes for a good marriage and a good life for us all. “A good marriage is one which allows for change and growth in the individuals and in the way they express their love. “

I hope this Christmas season has been one where love and change for the better is yours. May this coming New Year offer you changes for the better each day and throughout the years ahead! See you in January to begin a new season of practical daily lifeskills, beginning with Relationships & Core Values.

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