

How Do You Face Change



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“WE FEEL THAT GOOD TIME PASSES FAST, BAD TIME LINGERS ON AND WE EXPECT THE CHANGE TO HAPPEN. HOWEVER, WHEN THE CHANGE HAPPENS WE MAY NOT HAVE THE INSIGHT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT AND WHY IT HAPPENS, AND THE FORESIGHT TO KNOW ITS POTENTIAL BENEFIT.

When I look back at my own ordinary life of last 40 years, I can still recall few but critical incidents such as imbibing values by observing actions of my parents in the childhood, a schoolmate ridiculing my dark skin, an inquisitive childhood enquiry to my mother as why she worships tulsi (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) plant, tragic death of close relatives in quick succession, the hollow feeling one got even after topping the university graduation exams, inability to write quality report, leaving an old job, and exploring spiritual journey along the way to understand such changes. Choices I made and response to such changes make me what I am today. I feel content but still a long way to go forward and rise upward.

Life changing experiences like these baffle all of us during our life time. Our response to such changes depends on our mind set and value systems. We feel that good time passes fast, bad time lingers on and we expect the change to happen. However, when the change happens we may not have the insight to understand what and why it happens, and the foresight to know its potential benefit. We normally flow with the cause-effect-reaction that happens unless a major incident shakes us. Our awareness and understanding of the change help us to deal with it effectively.

What is change

We all grow up observing cosmic changes such as sun rise, sun set, wind flow, varying temperature throughout the day and seasons, cloud formation leading to rains, storms and other natural calamities. There are other natural changes such as earth rotation on its axis and also around the sun, and ice formation at glaciers that happen continuously and cyclically even though we don't see them happening. These

changes impact us all although individually we don't even occupy a dot space in the cosmos.

At personal level also there is a constant change – breathing-in, breathing-out, and ageing which we observe, and also involuntary changes such as functioning of internal organs, blood circulation, and formation of new cells which we are not aware of.

In a nutshell, every moment voluntary and involuntary change takes place outside as well as inside our body. Present moment is connected to the past moment on the one side and with the future moment on the other side making an infinite continuous chain of past-present-future. There is no moment without change.

How change happens

Strong emotions emerging out of a tragedy, fight, love, feeling of loneliness, disease, charismatic leadership, plight of others, loss of job, and a book reading can bring a spontaneous or a gradual change in us. Change happens at three levels: thought, words, and actions. An idea enters the mind through a sensory organ. It agitates the mind till it gets expressed or repressed depending on whether intelligence can control the mind or not. Change at the thought level is most difficult to come by as it involve unlearning past habits and/or belief systems and learning something new or a different perspective after you have accepted the shortcoming in your thinking. Once the change happens at the thought level through repetitive actions it becomes a habit again. Also, repetitive words and actions can bring change in our attitude.

Why we resist change

We change voluntarily only when we are not satisfied with the existing

situation and practices of past no longer work. Change may be for the better or for the worse depending upon how we view its impact on us. A supposedly bad impact may turn out to be good long after it has happened. Change presses us out of our comfort zone. We take our time to adjust to the change. However, once adjusted we have a natural tendency to slip again into the comfort zone, and resist any further change that presses us to move out from there as it upsets our control over outcomes.

How to bear the change

Change happens whether we want it or not. Any anticipated change can make us nervous, scary, excited, or happy depending upon its likely impact on us and we may act proactively or reactively to it. Change is easily accepted by those looking constantly for new things to improve their work and life. Change may not come quickly and easily. Despite my interest, desire and continuous action it took me 10 years to write my first quality report. Change seeks a better state of mind and is complete when you feel you have achieved so.

So, what you can do when faced with an undesirable change:

Let go: When you feel that despite your best efforts an unfavourable situation exists, letting

go helps. It is easier said than done. Try not to hold on and allow it pass on. Initially, we may come across feelings of anxiety, revenge, and competition but with practice we can learn to make peace with oneself.

Bring out the learning:

Every change in our life happens for a purpose and offers a unique learning. Reflection and introspection helps to develop awareness and understanding of the learning. Listen to your heart to bring out the learning. Act on the learning and you get your sense of purpose.

Set a higher purpose:

In response to changes one faced I developed a phrase 'move forward and rise upward' that works for me. It helps to have your own purpose that guides you in difficult situations and take right decisions when in doubt. We may fall again and again but it helps us to remain on the path to make incremental progress. Setting a higher purpose for yourself will help you apply 'let go' and 'bring out the learning' easily in unpleasant situations.

Views expressed are personal.

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