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CELEBRATING CHANGE

Is change something to celebrate? Often times when we think of change, fear is our first emotion. Most people do not like to think of change, because it feels like something out of our control. When you think of change what feelings come to mind; fear, doubt, anxiety, terror, dread, the unknown, unexpected, anger? Or do you look at it with feelings of; excitement, enthusiasm, anticipation, hopefulness, eagerness or even joy?

You have probably heard the saying, "Change is the only constant in life." Since change is constantly occurring, then we must learn how to accept it, and even learn to celebrate the changes. Understanding change will be your first step to celebrating change.

Change has several faces. One face is **Reactionary Change**. This is the type of change that occurs suddenly, and therefore we must react. An example could be an accident, a death, a sudden loss of a job, illness or a divorce which requires us to react and realign our life.

Another face is **Anticipatory Change**. With this type of change we have advance warning, so we are able to anticipate the change. An example could be retirement, getting married, moving to a new city, or having a baby. We are allowed the opportunity to plan for the effects on our life.

And then there is the face of the **Unknown Feeling Change**. With this type we may not know exactly why we want to change; we just know we want something different. An example of this type of change maybe choosing a new place to live, trying a new route instead of the normal route, or trying something new at a favorite restaurant. This type of change allows us to explore choices and options.

The last face of change is **Not Quite Right Change**. With this type of change we feel that something is not quite right and that there could be something better. An example of this type of change may be deciding to redecorate the house, get a new car, or just make an improvement in your life. With this type of change we are seeking a change for the better.

As we come face to face with change we will realize the impact on our life. Regardless of our emotional state surrounding the change, there will be an effect on our lives. We may feel a **fundamental change**, which truly changes who we are at your core, our essence. Or we may encounter a **revelatory change**, an epiphany that gives us that "a-ha" or "light bulb moment" type of change. Or we may experience a **habitual change**, where we change a long held habit.

With all change there is a process that occurs. The process doesn't necessarily happen in a specific order, but as we progress through the change we will typically experience each aspect. First we realize that the **change is occurring**, although this may take some time to recognize. Once we recognize the change is occurring, we need to **factually disengage** from the past. To do this we will need to see what the current state is, see there is a new way and accept that change is occurring. The most difficult process in change is **emotionally disengaging** from the past. We may realize there is a change but may not be accepting the change, and be yearning for 'how it used to be.' If we can see the **anticipated end** we will begin to process through the change and be on our way on the learning **curve**. This is where the opportunity begins. With each change there is the opportunity to learn and grow. Once we are completely through the change and on the other side we will **internalize the lesson**, the true blessing of change.

There is a goal oriented way of getting through the process of change which may help one move from fear of change to acceptance and celebration. The steps are:

1. Identify and define the change.
2. Communicate the results of the change.
3. Recognize what is NOT changing.
4. Remember personal greatness, strengths and qualities.
5. Identify the positive feeling the change will bring.
6. Make a new plan around the change.
7. Find a support network.

If we focus on the positive aspects change can bring, we will find the blessing in change, even a difficult change allow us the opportunity to grow spiritually, and may open new paths that we could have never anticipated. Change is a blessing, sometimes in disguise. Learning to follow the steps above will make change easier and may even enrich the process. The next time you face change **CELEBRATE**: a new you will be emerging!