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Change IS Life

Summer is that time of year we give ourselves permission to take a vacation from life's routines. We take time to rest, relax and reenergize ourselves for the work ahead. Part of my vacation ritual is finding a quiet time and place to think in detail about events and changes that have occurred since my last vacation. It is a great way to get in touch with your "evolution". I challenge you to give it a try.

So, you are off to the beach or the mountains, or just to the hammock in the backyard. Anywhere you are going is fine just so you have uninterrupted think time. You want to have a pencil and paper handy if you prefer to write your thoughts as I do. Be warned, this can be a powerful trip down Memory Lane. Depending on how much effort you give it, you may raise emotions long forgotten, find answers to questions that have haunted you or face realities you have never acknowledged.

Start with your first memory. Close your eyes and think back to your very first memory. For most people that will be somewhere between 3-5 years old. Get a very clear picture of that memory. Who is there with you? What do you see, hear and smell? Now answer the question, "Why is the memory powerful enough for it to be my first?"

Then, think of all the milestones in your life. Go through the same process you did with your first memory. Ask yourself the same questions. Think carefully about how this memory has shaped your life. Was it a positive or negative influence? Why?

As you work through this exercise you will notice that every milestone marks a *change* in your life, and you may notice identifying these changes is harder than you thought it might be. When carefully examined, your life events may not be quite the same as when they were just vague memories. They may not be as dramatic or joyful. Your emotions may be deeper than you expect. You may find they have labels such as your "first disappointment", "first realization that all people cannot be trusted", "first realization that you are powerful", etc. All of these thoughts have always been with you, just under the surface waiting for you to examine them and accept them. It is somewhat like the fact

that we all know we will die and yet for most of us, it is just a vague reference in the back of our mind, something we don't think about every day, don't worry about, something we accept but do not dwell on.

I hope this exercise will help you to realize that you can effect or take advantage of change simply by acknowledging that you have control over the way you respond to change. You do not always have a choice in the change that happens, such as accident, death, job loss or natural occurrence, but you do have a choice in the way you respond to it. You and you alone can make any change a positive experience, adding it to your "personal sum total" in a positive way, a way that will have an effect on all the changes and events that happen for you in the future.

No matter what you discover or how long you work on this exercise, you will surely learn that we are all born unique and it is the events of our lives and the way we respond to them that create the people that we become. You will also learn that change is not an event, it is a transition, one that often takes time, a lot of time.

Now it's time to get back to your vacation, but before you do, acknowledge that change will happen, life without change is not life, that each time an event happens you respond to it based on all the other changes that have occurred, and that once you respond and make that response a part of your life's record your life is altered. Life is yours to create, one change at a time.

Sherry B. Jordan, MA. a Management Coach and Senior Consultant with Coaching.ppr can assist you in identifying your life or career goals and set strategies to meet them. For more information, visit PSSA on the www.coachingppr.com or call at 904-616-9237.

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