

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Change."

ACCEPTING THE THINGS YOU CANNOT CHANGE

When life hands someone else something that they did not plan or want, it is relatively simple to see when there is nothing that can be done. The vision is cloudier when you are personally involved. Suddenly, you find yourself fighting the change and the result is like spitting into the wind: it comes back and hits you in the face.

Here are four steps that can help you through the change crisis:

1. Verify Control. Quickly assess that the result is beyond your control. Sometimes this requires nothing more than a reminder to yourself. For example, the death of a loved one is undeniably beyond your control. If you did not get a position you had applied for, the decision was not within your control. During this step, you may identify things you will choose to do differently the next time a similar situation arises.

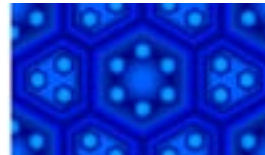
2. Identify the Consequences. Just what does this change mean to you physically, mentally, and emotionally? Be sure to list the 'pros' as well as the 'cons.' Sometimes there are benefits even to an initially perceived negative change.

3. Check your Attitude. If you realize that the change is/was not within your control (Step One), and you can reasonably estimate how this change will effect you (Step Two), then it is time to have a positive talk with yourself to ensure that future actions on your part will help, rather than hinder, your future. Focus upon the positive consequences or how you can handle the negative ones.

Use PowerWords® (positive verbs that command your brain to respond positively) to help you through the tough times. (See *Talk Is NOT Cheap!*; Bard Press 1999.)

4. Take Positive Action. Now it is time to act. Stop moping and licking your wounds. There comes a time when taking action is the best step to full recovery. What can you do that would make life within this situation better? Write down a plan and stick to it. Share it with someone that you trust so that person can encourage your continued action.

If you really don't like the change, here is a positive thought: the change will change. In the meantime, accepting what you can do to not only survive, but thrive, will help.



Our days are a kaleidoscope.
Every instant a change takes
place... New harmonies, new
contrasts, new combinations of
every sort.

Henry Ward Beecher

What Our Clients Are Saying

"I have been required to attend many different training courses in my career that I did not find very effective and I assumed the TLC course I was to take would be no different. I could not have been more mistaken. Your class was both the most fun and most effective course I have taken. It was well worth the time out of my busy schedule. I still consciously utilize and practice what I learned from the class 2 years ago, and it has had a direct positive impact on my communication skills. Both the class and the instructors are to be highly commended. Thanks!"

Noreen Barnes, Atlanta GA

"Thanks to you and your outstanding training. I will be utilizing all the skills you spoke about at our seminar."

Carolyn Sue Martin, Paris Landing KY



January 2004

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A MIDLIFE PERSPECTIVE	2
GO WITH THE FLOW!	3
SPARE CHANGE ADDS UP	3
CEO CORNER: "Nip It Now"	4
ASK THE EXPERTS	4
FEATURED SERVICE: Free Advice	4

LOOKING AHEAD:

♦ The February issue of *The Exchange* will focus on **Community Building**.

LOOKING BACK:

- ♦ For previous editions of *The Exchange*, go to our [back issues](#).
- ♦ Re-read the **12/2001** edition: **Perseverance**.

When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.

Victor Frankl



A MIDLIFE PERSPECTIVE

By Ben Cairns, M.A.



When I was 20, I went through the Erhard Seminar Training for self-improvement. The leader of the training asked us "What do you think your life will turn out like?" A

lot of us had ideas about the different things that might happen and other predictions. **"This is it!"** He boomed into the microphone, "Take a look at your life **right now**, and this is how it turned out. You are the product of the things you have been thinking and doing up until now, and this is the result. If you want a different or better life, you have to start thinking and acting differently. You have to make changes."

It took that loud, bold-faced challenge in a seminar to get me to understand that, as Stephen Covey says, "We can't change where we are overnight, but we can change the destination." I have made changes over the last 23 years that have made a huge difference.

Turning 40 is generally accepted as the classic "halfway" point in a person's life. It has the general effect of putting a person into a rather self-reflective mood. Some people handle this experience well and others do not. When I turned 40, I had a lot of things going on and just didn't have the time for another crisis. So, I naturally turned it into another bold-faced opportunity to confront myself and redirect my future. A lot of good things happened and it was an interesting experience.

Prior to then, I had only imagined how it would be to get old and eventually die. It seemed like dying was such an unreal and far-out concept. But, when I turned 40, I suddenly realized that I could easily gauge my own life frame within the bounds of my own experience. High school graduation was 22 years before. I knew what that timeframe felt like. Flip that span forward once, and I would be at retirement age. Flip another 22 years ahead, and you could sit on my headstone. Things came into clear focus and I had instant perspective. Here are some of the things I did as a result:

I wrote down 100 goals, just like Coach Lou Holtz. I made plans for the goals I was serious about and discussed them with my wife and mentors. Doing that surfaced a lot of things I had only dreamed about, and within a week, I had been able to complete some things that I did not think would happen for years to come. My wife created some of her own goals and we created some family goals together. We got excited and then we got to work. I learned that once you have a plan for your goals, you must also schedule them and review your progress on a regular basis. And, add new goals as you go along. Remember that the results

are in the follow-through!

My life was out of balance because I needed to place more emphasis on my health and family. I got a primary care physician and worked out a new diet and planned for the types of exercise and screenings that would protect me. I resolved an old running injury with physical therapy. I also made an agreement with my wife that we would make sure to have regular "face time" where we would talk about the things that matter most. Also, I now listen to people with a lot more intensity than I ever have before.

I made plans and have followed through on reading and reflection. I have a great library! I tear articles out of magazines that I carry around in a "rip and read" file (thanks, Brian Tracy!). Whenever I have an unexpected delay, I read the articles and discard them. At any given time, I am reading at least one book that deals with human behavior, relationships, or communication. I also make sure to read for fun. When you see me, just ask what book I am reading!

I began organizing an archive of all of my photographs and notes. I started by sorting the photos by year, and they have been going into albums with labels and artifacts like ticket stubs and receipts. The whole family has gotten involved with this ongoing project, and we have plenty left to do on those rainy days when we're stuck in the house looking for something fun. The notebooks have become more useful, since I can now find information and use it when I need it. They have also become a record that I'll leave behind for my daughters to get to know me better some day.

I made a last will and also a living will. There is no sense in putting my family through a lot of legal and emotional hassle if the unexpected happens.

Turning 40 created a lot of action in my already busy life. It seems that I, like most of us, get sort of hypnotized by the steadily passing days and weeks. It is easy to just live life by taking advantage of the accidental opportunities that present themselves. But, that is just living life "by accident." I have learned how to incorporate my goals and new habits into my daily routines and live my life with much more purpose.

So, whatever happened to my so-called midlife crisis? It was one of the best things that ever happened to me. You can make anything a crisis or an opportunity, you get to decide that for yourself. Do not wait for a birthday ending in a zero to take up the challenge of making a midcourse redirection. No matter what your age, my challenge to you right at this very moment is to embrace change and live your life "on purpose!"

Helpful Hints:

- Anticipate change; change is constant.
- Look for the positive aspect of the change.
- Notify people of change as soon as possible to reduce rumors.

Time is a dressmaker specializing in alterations.

Faith Baldwin



To learn more about it, click here!

GO WITH THE FLOW!

One of the best idioms relating to change is "go with the flow!" Change is inevitable. The only thing that is consistent is that whatever is current, will eventually be changed. "Go with the flow" is an expression that is used as advice to a person who wants to do things the hard way as opposed to doing things an easier and more proven way. Some people are often tempted to go against the norm, just because they like to be different. That philosophy in life can earn rewards and at the same time lead to unnecessary headaches, lost time, and lessons that are ego shrinking.

So what does "go with the flow" have to do with accepting change? Our TLC readers who are swimmers or rowers will appreciate this one. "Flow" in this expression refers to the current in a body of water, usually a river or a stream. To "go against the flow" means to paddle or swim into the current. This is a strength building technique for performance enhancement in swimming, canning, kayaking, and rafting. It takes more energy and control to propel oneself against the prevailing water current. When you go with the flow, you can travel faster and with less effort because you are using the natural momentum of the water's movement.

Just like in life, the current in the water represents the current state of change in our lives. When that change comes, we can either go against it, or we can travel with its flow and ride along more smoothly. There are definite times to go against the norm. For example, when Columbus was told the Earth was flat. Or when the Wright Brothers were told that man was not meant to fly. Or when Oprah Winfrey was told that she was "not good enough." There are also times to go with some changes in life such as learning about the internet, continuing your education, or accepting different cultures and viewpoints that may be different than your own.

In this New Year, carefully choose your direction. In the meantime, instead of being a victim of change, be the master of it by learning when to go with the flow!

SPARE CHANGE ADDS UP

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.



Have you ever seen coin-filled jars just sitting around someone's house? I had one, and for two years, each time I came home, I would empty the loose change from my pockets into the jar. One evening I had an unwelcome case of insomnia and decided to count the change. I was surprised at how much money I had accumulated. Although it was a seemingly thoughtless process to dump the coins

into the jar every evening, over time my spare change was enough to take a weekend vacation and buy my daughter some nice toys. I bought some electronic toys for her Daddy, too!

That spending spree was an eye opener for me. I thought about how often I did something small that led to big benefits. There is a Japanese saying, "Kaizen." It refers to taking small, incremental steps to accomplish something great over time. For example, let's say you want to learn a foreign language. If you were to apply the philosophy "Kaizen," you would only practice about 15 minutes, every day, for a year. At the end of that year, you could be fluent in that language!

Every New Year, people make significant promises to change their lives. We call these changes "resolutions," but the only thing that really gets resolved is that, by March, we resolve to go back to the way we were. What happens?

The changes are too big too soon. For example, let's say you do not exercise and you eat a lot of junk food. To say, "Starting tomorrow, I am going to jog 5 times a week and only snack on carrots and celery, and drink water." From where you were, that's a BIG change. Start with small changes such as: walking twice a week, eating something sweet only once a week, and drinking 8 ounces of water per day. Then, gradually increase the number of days and the length of time you spend walking each day. These small changes will add up over time.

Start saving more money today. Start eating right today. Start telling those you care about how much they mean to you today. Start reading more today. Start practicing that new activity today. Continue collecting the small changes in your life to reap the big rewards of spare change!

May you have...

Enough happiness to keep you sweet
 Enough trials to keep you strong
 Enough sorrow to keep you human
 Enough hope to keep you happy
 Enough failure to keep you humble
 Enough success to keep you eager
 Enough friends to give you comfort
 Enough wealth to meet your needs
 Enough enthusiasm to look forward
 Enough faith to banish depression
 Enough determination to make each day better than yesterday
 Best Wishes for a Prosperous New Year

Author Unknown



Remember to...

- Close your eyes, take a deep breath, or move your body when change becomes stressful.
- Make affirmations and visualizations during times of change and stress.
- Realize that change is often a positive opportunity.

Be the change you want to see in the world.

Ghandi

One never knows what will happen if things are suddenly changed. But do we know what will happen if they are not changed?

Elias Canetti



If we don't change the direction we're going, we're likely to end up where we're headed.

Chinese Proverb

Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.

Pauline R. Kezer

TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC

842 S Germantown Road
Chattanooga, TN 37412

Phone: 423-622-8255
Fax: 423-624-4365
1-888-BECAUSE

Email: tlc@talklisten.com
www.talklisten.com

CEO CORNER: "Nip It Now"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

When I think of change, I tend to remember those times when my life took an abrupt ninety degree turn. With my head still spinning, I did well to deal with whether I would fight it or adapt to it. Not all change is rapid. When it occurs gradually and is also considered negative, the tendency is to placate or fool ourselves into thinking we can turn the corner later because it really won't be much worse tomorrow. Change that creeps into our lives lulls us into complacency.

Outside of pregnancy, I have never known anyone to gain thirty pounds in a few months. Gradually, we put on a few pounds. Our clothes don't fit, but one size up is no big deal. Besides, buying new clothes has a pleasant aspect to it. And the overseas clothing industries make the sizes smaller than they used to. Sound familiar? Procrastination and excuses allow us to accept inactivity towards gradual unwanted change.

The property owner across the creek from our retreat began harvesting timber a few years ago. On a few occasions when I was on our property, I could hear the saws. When I climbed up on the ridge, I could see the devastation, but all was hidden with beautiful hemlock trees on the level ground of the creek banks. While the saws were creeping towards the white water creek that separates our property at one point, it was so gradual that I took no action. I intended to talk with the neighbor the next time I was there. The "next time" occurred months later when I was visually assaulted by the view across the creek that showed ugly stumps where beautiful trees once stood.

Handling the damage from gradual change is much more complicated and less rewarding than taking earlier action would have been. I contacted the neighbor and received permission to plant new evergreens along his property by the creek. Had I acted earlier, I am confident I could have saved the big trees whose stumps now remind me of gravestones. With a little bit of money, a lot of physical effort, and being denied the green shield of the trees until they reach maturity, I can fix the problem.



How about you? What change is creeping into your life that you have been ignoring and hoping will just go away? I encourage you to take action today. Besides preventing a possible disaster in the near future, you will feel the relief that comes with action. Do not delay. Look for reasonable and timely solutions. Nip it in the bud now while you can solve it more simply. Observe. Think. Act now. Live your dreams!

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I work for a company that has a rotating "flavor of the month" and I'm not talking ice cream! I'd quit except that would just be another change. Help! Anti-Change

Dear Anti-Change,

Sort your changes into two different 'boxes': 1. "I can control or influence." and 2. "I have no control or influence." The changes in Box 1 require research, teamwork, and recommendations for solutions. Box 2 changes require you to check your attitude and identify the consequences for any action you choose to take. Place most of your energy in the changes that you have some control or influence. For most people, that can keep them quite busy.

FEATURED SERVICE: Free Advice

If you have any question about communication, leadership, attitude, or getting along with people, send it anonymously to tlc@talklisten.com. One of our Senior Communication Coaches will respond to you by email with a detailed answer within the week. When your question fits the monthly topic of The Exchange, our newsletter that you are now reading, we will publish your question and a brief answer. Your identity is kept confidential.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

All original materials in this newsletter are the copyrighted property of TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC. For reprint permission, please email a request to tlc@talklisten.com.