

## Strategies for Managing Change

By Mary Jo Kurtz

*"You cannot step into the same river twice..." Heraclitus*

A river changes constantly as new water flows through it. Did you know that the same is true for our bodies? Deepak Chopra's Quantum Healing explains that 99% of the atoms in our bodies were not there a year ago. Not only that, our body develops new skin every month, a new stomach lining every four days, and a new liver every six weeks!

It's pretty clear that change is continuous in every aspect of our lives. The question is, do we have the mental perspective to handle change well? Some change is thrust at us -- like illness, death, divorce or the loss of a job. These types of change can certainly be traumatic. There are other types of changes that, though we create these changes deliberately, they can also be stressful like marriage, relocation or a new career.

Before you embark on making deliberate changes you may want to ask yourself the following questions:

- What is it that I really want?
- Why now?
- Am I truly willing to make this change?
- What is stopping me or can stop me?
- What am I truly feeling?
- Is there a reason for this feeling?
- How normal is it given my situation?
- Do I believe I can truly have or do this?

If you are faced with traumatic change and having a difficult time handling it, you may find that studying the **5 Guiding Principles of Change** below will make the changes in your life easier to handle. The key is that every time we make a positive change in our lives or survive a traumatic change we are one step closer to being the person we are meant to be.

### **5 Guiding Principles of Change:**

- Every situation we encounter is an opportunity for our growth. There is a purpose in everything that happens to us, even in failure. We must find the purpose and see the lesson to be learned. This is where we grow from.

*Difficulties are opportunities to better things; they are stepping stones to greater experience. Perhaps someday you will be thankful for some temporary failure in a particular direction; when one door closes, another always opens; as a natural law it has to balance.*

*- Brian Adams*

- Our lives are full of challenges and even sometimes pain; how we choose to view the challenge and how we will react to it are completely up to us. As we grow older we encounter more and more tragic events in our own lives and in the world around us. However, we see that these challenges and their pain are unavoidable. We must accept that it is only within our power to choose our feelings and actions.

*"Be the change you wish to see" ...Gandhi*

- Everyone we encounter is our teacher. Everyone we meet in life offers us something that we need on our journey. Consider what it is you are supposed to take from this relationship. Think about your situation and who is involved. Whether it is your children, roommate, teacher, friend, etc., ask yourself: What can I take from this experience? What am I supposed to be learning?

*"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself"... Leo Tolstoy*

- Attack life as if it is the "perfect adventure". Life is meant to be a pleasurable experience. In the words of Forest Gump, "**Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get.**" There should be excitement in not knowing what the end result will be. Our constant need to know and to control only puts us into a fearful mode. It is when we can have faith and live in the anticipation of what else is to come that we will make room for more in our lives.

*"Life is a daring adventure or it is nothing..." Helen Keller*

- "**Life is a journey; not a destination**"; Consider for a moment Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz* who thought the only way to get home was to stay on the yellow brick road. Dorothy's sole focus was on the end result, getting home. She never realized what was along her path. I challenge you to consider that we too are already on *the yellow brick road*. The destination is immaterial. Enjoy the road and all you find on it.