
Navigating Transition

with a winning attitude



Curiosity and Lifelong Learning

BY MALCOLM

I have no plan to grow up, indeed I have a plan to not grow up! What I mean is that if being grown up as many see it means that I have arrived, am now mature, competent and fully equipped for life, then I don't want that. I have seen too many people pin on their badge of maturity somewhere in their forties, and then cease to develop and grow, coasting from then into retirement. Noooooo, our 'second half' can be the richer half if we do it right.

The whole idea of generational wisdom being passed from elders to the young is so powerful and elegant, but it is ineffectual if the elders have nothing, or only flawed wisdom to transmit.

In our own relational and work world, which has mainly been centred in a church organisation, we have many role models about ten years our senior. These people are doing life so well in their 70's that they are an inspiration to us still, and I sometimes say to them, "Keep going, I've got my eye on you", and I have.

So for what it's worth here is my take on this...

- We get one shot at this life, and we need to make it count.
- No matter how well we hedge against it, life will get hold of each of us at some time, with challenging circumstances and things beyond our control.
- I want to be fully alive for every moment I'm here, and this means milking every opportunity which comes my way for all it's worth; whether I'm a fan or not makes no difference.
- I can learn and grow as much or perhaps more from things which are not to my liking or of my choice as I can from favourable circumstances. Mahatma Gandhi went to South Africa simply to represent an Indian business man in a legal matter, and look how that ended!
- On the day I pass into eternity I want to have done the following; made plans for the future; learned something new; had my opinions or thought processes challenged; grown personally; and impacted someone from the younger generation.

Adopting this stance doesn't mean that I enjoy difficult or damaging change, but it does allow me to grow, learn and emerge stronger and better equipped for the future than if I moaned and complained.

About fifteen years ago I began to experience mild symptoms which became a bit of a concern, and as it progressed I began to wonder if this was a potentially life altering situation. The fear and anxiety this possibility brought were significant. As it turned out I did have such a thing. Not my choice, unwelcome, and it has lived up to the tag 'life altering'. So my options were clear and limited, either moan and give in, or push the boundaries and get on with life.

This situation has taken me to places of the soul I had not dreamed possible, changed my lifestyle and perspective, given me greater empathy for those who suffer, strengthened my trust and faith, helped me to value every day and to live in constant gratitude for life.

Making the difficult choice to transition positively in this unwelcome situation whilst still seeking improvement and relief, has undoubtedly made me a richer person in ways which may not have happened left to my own devices. Clearly I could have made the alternate decision and become inward, resentful, cynical etc, but choosing optimism and progress has left me a better person with a big smile on my face.

Consider who penned the quote *"A bend in the road is not the end of the road, unless you fail to make the turn"*. It was Helen Keller. She also said, *"Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing."* and she ought to know.

How about you? What changes have you experienced which have caused you to re-evaluate your life and find a beneficial way forward?

