
The Beacon

Guiding You Through the Process of Change

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A Change of Heart

The concept of change can evoke different feelings for different people. Change can feel exciting, adventurous, and hopeful but it can also feel frightening, full of the unknown, and unwanted. Whatever the emotion change can be an opportunity for transformation.

Change can mean a transition to a new job, home, or relationship. Sometimes these are changes that we embrace or they may be imposed upon us by others. These external changes are often the ones we seek when life feels uncomfortable or unhappy or unsatisfying. People sometimes feel like their life is stuck in the mundane or that a relationship or job is just not working. The natural response is to move away from pain and discomfort and seek new opportunities. It is often easier to find fault with the situation or the person and decide that it is time to move on. The newness of the external change can feel invigorating and right but is it really?

Sometimes the greatest change comes from our internal transformations. Remaining just where you are can lead to self discoveries and depth within a relationship that you never expected to find. John Wellwood in his book [Love and Awakening](#) calls this moment "sitting on the razor's edge". Instead of moving away from the pain and conflict one can use it as a chance to grow and change within the old, familiar place or with the person who stirs the strongest emotional passions. No matter how uncomfortable this may seem the chance to learn and to succeed within the situation may lead you home.

When external change feels like the answer you need to ask yourself some hard questions. What do I need to look at in myself? What is this situation trying to teach

me? Sometimes sitting quietly in meditation, taking a walk, or engaging in some other solitary activity can crystallize your thoughts and help you to find the answers within. Staying in the situation can provide you with fertile ground for looking at parts of yourself that you will not access otherwise. Many times in relationships we believe that if we could just move on we could get it right for ourselves. Yet, relationships and most situations are not static processes. They present us with these challenges for a reason and are part of the ebb and flow of the connections with others. Familiar relationships are actually our chance to find out more about ourselves. Sharing this newfound self knowledge with others can also enrich and heal current relationships and encourage others to listen and understand you even better. Moving on to a new person or place may not allow that new vision to blossom. It sure may feel better for the moment or even longer but eventually the issue you need to understand will surface again. That is why so many people replicate the same conflicts in new relationships or jobs even though they thought that they were choosing a better alternative.

In an essay entitled [Contemplation and Intimacy](#) Monica Furlong states "Contemplation is about waiting, if necessarily in pain, within a fixed situation...It is about finding the answers that lie not without but within..." The greatest personal changes may actually be right in front of your eyes if you just stay in your life as it is and learn from the relationships you have already.

"The most powerful agent of growth and transformation is something much more basic than any techniques: a change of heart"
John Wellwood

Recommended Reading: [Ordinary Magic](#) Edited by John Wellwood, Shambhala, 1992

Love and Awakening by John

Wellwood, Harper Perennial, 1996

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