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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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“Change always comes bearing gifts,” wrote PricePritchett, but I’m sure we’ve all sometimes wondered if those gifts were worth it, and if it might not be better—easier—to forgo them instead of having to deal with the discomfort of change. Then again, we often don’t have a choice; changes have a way of coming upon us whether we want them or not.

Like most people, I like predictability. Change can mean stepping into the unknown and losing my comfortable routine, and that’s frightening.

It also means I have to give up some control. That’s scary too. Even when you prepare as well as you can, there are so many factors involved when major life-changes happen, that you can’t possibly control them all.

Still, looking back on my life, and all the changes I’ve experienced through the years, I know what I went through made me who I am today. No matter how difficult these changes were initially, I now see that I would have missed so much if I had not said “yes” to changing circumstances and new opportunities.

Changes come to all of us in different ways. They may come in the form of marriage, motherhood, separation or divorce, grandparenthood, changing careers, changes of location, or changes in health. Accepting and even embracing change, in whatever form it comes, can result in wonderful growth and renewal. The articles and stories in this issue of *Motivated* attest to that.

I hope reading through them will leave you with the same positive feeling I had after I worked on this issue, and that you will be able to conclude, as I did, that change is good!

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Changing Landscapes

By Joyce Suttin, adapted

I was driving home today and missed my turn. I'm familiar with the neighborhood and have turned into that street thousands of times. But I was confused by the changing landscape.

An unused shopping mall was being torn down, and bulldozers had been busy all week. Suddenly, the corner building was no longer there, and I went cruising past my turn. I hadn't realized how accustomed I was to turning left at that building.

I began to think about the landscape of my life, and how difficult it is to respond to changes. I like to follow familiar routes. I like to know my way. I like to cruise along without having to think about it. I am thankful for new technologies that provide turn-by-turn guidance whenever I have to venture into new areas, because I don't always have a navigator in the car with me to read the map and help me spot street signs. But familiarity can also become a navigation system.

I grew up in the countryside and learned to use trees and hills as landmarks instead of streetlights and signs. I very rarely read signs unless I am in unfamiliar territory.

I like to unconsciously follow the way I have traveled thousands of times by looking at the visual landscape.

There have been a few times in my life when I had sudden changes, and my personal landscape was completely overhauled. I struggled to find patterns and learn the ropes in my new domain. The only way to find my way was listening to my inner voice, like Google Maps, "In 30 feet, turn left on Broadway..."

Changes force us to get out of our ruts, pay attention to where we're going, and carefully read the signs. God can guide us through changing landscapes, no matter how much things have changed. All we have to do is ask for His help.

Right now the demolition process down the street looks like a big mess, but somebody knows what they are doing. Somebody has a plan, and eventually, I will be thankful for something new and better in our neighborhood. The only way to have improvements is to have change. In the meantime, I need to be a little more conscientious driving home, and remember where to turn. No more relying on "automatic pilot." ■

Starting Over

By Cheryl Madison, adapted



Symbolic Photo

My husband and I moved to Canada a few years ago after 30 years abroad. During those years, I had lived, worked, and traveled without ever returning to the place of my birth for any length of time.

The repatriation process was a bit of a culture shock, though I quickly came to love living in a country that embraces diversity and welcomes immigrants from around the world, creating a racial and ethnic mixture that exudes tolerance and teaches patience for the many people trying to find their way, learn a new language, and adapt to a new culture. It brought home the realization that our planet is full of people rebuilding their lives, searching for new homes, learning new languages and trades, and starting over from scratch. A phenomenon that has increased in modern times.

While receiving some medical tests, I struck up a conversation with the radiologist, a pleasant, kind woman with a patient demeanor, who shared her story with me. She was born and studied medicine in the Soviet Union. After the fall of communism, she immigrated to the Middle East, where she discovered that she would have to repeat most of her medical training if she wished to practice medicine there. Feeling called to be a pediatrician, she repeated eight laborious years of medical training and once again took up the practice. Life did not turn out as planned for her and her family there, so they immigrated again, this time to Canada. Once again, she discovered that she would have to endure some eight years of medical training if she wished to practice. At that point, she gave up her medical practice and became a radiologist, as she felt that now that she had children of her own, it wasn't

possible to repeat the training.

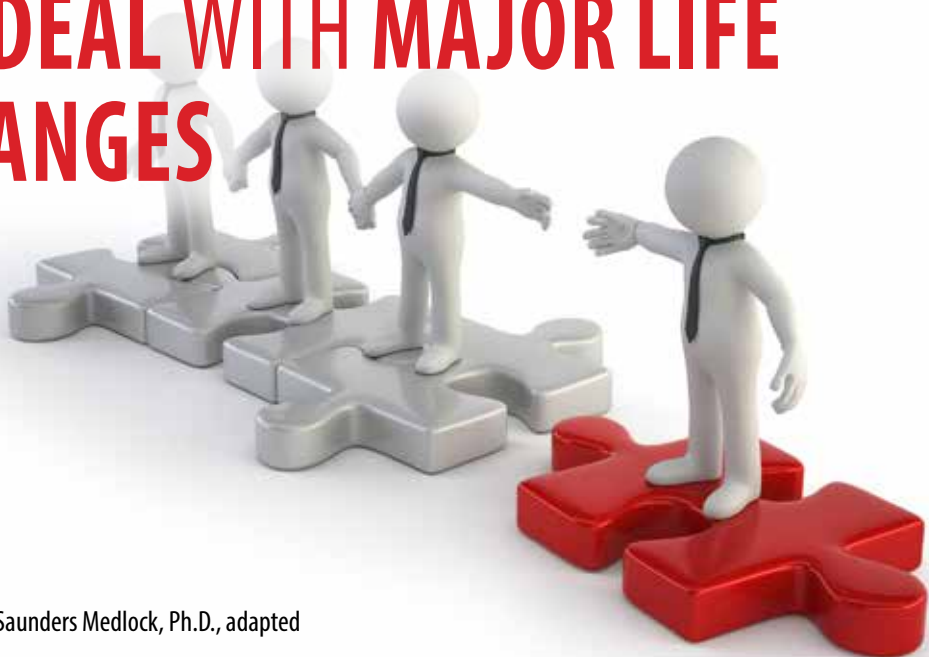
As she shared her life story, she did so with cheerfulness and without complaint. She had assessed her options, redirected her plans, and started over from scratch. I am sure her cheerfulness and patience were hard-earned, and I expressed my appreciation to her, which brought a smile to her face.

Certainly, starting over during mid-life is not an enviable position. But many people today face this reality. It seems that there are few careers that come with a "guaranteed for life" sticker, and in today's world, versatility and adaptability are paramount.

Living in an area of the world where so many people are first-generation immigrants has brought home to me the fact that starting over is a fact of life that many people are facing in today's world, as the dynamics around them shift and populations migrate and travel the globe in search of better opportunities and a better life. They choose to be strangers in strange lands to provide a better life for their families and children, and step out with incredible courage to do so, often with few resources and having to leave behind their families, careers, and credentials. They still conceive of a future that is better, and that makes it worth the risk and the challenges.

Starting over still looms large, and at times the challenges seem overwhelming. But taking a look around and seeing the courage of other people who have crossed land and sea in search of better circumstances in this world has served as a confidence-booster that God never puts us in a position where we can't grow and expand. ■

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TO DEAL WITH MAJOR LIFE CHANGES



By Lisabeth Saunders Medlock, Ph.D., adapted

In a split second, in a freak accident, I lost much of my sight. The reaction and adaptation to the trauma and my new disability taught me some key lessons about going through a major life change. A set of life lessons that helped me to survive and thrive. And since most of us go through changes in our lives, some drastic, some minor, these lessons may be applicable to you.

1. It's okay to be emotional: It's natural to have feelings of sadness, to grieve over the loss of something, to feel angry about your situation, or to place blame. You have permission to feel that way, but only for moments. You can have your pity party, yet eventually you have to move on. If you spend too much time in that place of anger or pity or blame, you end up not being able to adapt to your change.

It keeps you in a place of helplessness. And where you like to go is to a place of hope and of growth.

2. You can give yourself permission to be vulnerable: Some of us like to project an image of being strong and fearless, but sometimes it's not the truth. The truth is that we're scared, vulnerable, weak, and in need of help. We need to allow ourselves to rely on others. And showing that vulnerability is OK. It may feel like you are exposed, but being completely exposed is not always a bad thing. There is always learning and growth that can come from it. You allow people to really see you and when they can see you, can know your stress or pain, they can help. Vulnerability is just part of who we are as people.

3. You are never alone: Sometimes when we go through major changes we think we are dealing with something no one else can understand or no one else is going through. But there are others that can empathize with you. You're not alone. Even if you don't ask people to be around you, family and close friends will come to your side. You're also never alone because you always have yourself to rely on. And ultimately none of us are separate from the Creator or separate from the universe. So the idea of being alone is a false one.

4. You have to ask for help: Often people don't know what to say or what to do. After I had my accident, there were people that didn't call me for several months, and these were people close to me. Some people get stuck because they don't know what to say or what to do. Sometimes people are natural caregivers. They jump right in to help. But these are in the minority. So it is your job to tell people what to say and what to do that will be helpful. Being able to clearly articulate what you need gives people a sense of relief. In the end, people really like to be told how they can help you in very specific terms. So empower them and empower yourself by letting them know specifically how they can help.

5. You can adapt to anything: Our ability to adapt is amazing. As I began to adapt to being a person with limited sight, I was continually amazed at how quickly I could figure out how to get around problems and obstacles. Necessity is the mother of invention, and you will naturally find ways to solve your problems and do things in new and

different ways when you're presented with challenges. The adaptability and flexibility of our spirits and of our beings is a given. Those who cannot change and adapt have convinced themselves it is not possible. If you trust that you can adapt, then you will. And if you believe that you can change, then you will, no matter what the challenge.

6. You have to have hope for the future: I've been given news that there is no hope for a change in my sight and have been through two surgeries that did not improve it. Despite these setbacks, I have to believe that there is hope in the future. Having that hope and having a positive perspective is what keeps me moving forward every day. Believing that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, even if you can't see like me, is the most important thing in getting through a change process.

7. You will grow as a person, but you are still the same: Going through a change, especially one that is traumatic, changes you forever. It changes how you see life and deal with things. You're never going to be the same again and that's a good thing. Because in the midst of change is a great deal of learning, if you are willing to have vision and perspective. In any change process, you can become stronger, and a better version of you. Just because something changes about you, even something radical, doesn't change the core of who you are as a person. I, as now a visually impaired person, have my same mission, my same purpose, and my same values. If you are strong and centered and grounded, that is still who you are. Sometimes you have to remind yourself of that. ■

THE ROAD YOU TRAVEL

By Mara Hodler, adapted

About 13 years ago, my husband, Sam, and I had to make a trip to relocate. We loaded up our old truck for the move and headed off. We had planned for this move pretty well. Everything was neatly packed and sorted. We had mapped our route and estimated our time. We had made a budget for gas, food, hotels, and all that. It was our first long trip with a baby, so we had made sure we had everything we needed for the journey. Our intention was most definitely to end up at our destination.

On the morning of our departure, we got up early and hit the road on time. Only one problem: We didn't head east as we were supposed to. We got on the highway and out of habit began heading west. Eventually, the signs for another city—in the opposite direction of where we were trying to go—alerted us that we might not be going the right way. As soon as we recognized our mistake, we took the first U-turn and began heading in the right direction. We arrived at our destination only slightly delayed.

The point isn't just that Sam and I are directionally challenged, but that it's the road you're on, not your intentions, that determines where you end up. We

had absolutely no intention of going to a different city and every intention of going to get to where we were going; but regardless, we would have ended up somewhere completely different if we'd stayed on our first route.

But at the end of the day, actions are going to top intentions every single time. Our lives are the sum total of our actions, not our intentions, dreams, or wishes. The lesson is a simple one: pay less attention to intentions. Instead, look at the road you are on.

If you want to make it to a different place, get on a different road. Make the link between your choices and the results in your life. Evaluate and adjust your course accordingly. It's something we all have to do. We have the power to choose, to navigate, and to determine the roads we travel.

Most of us don't get lost or get on the wrong road on purpose. Rather, we don't recognize the choices we make every day as choices that get us closer to our destination or take us farther from it. Once that connection is made, it's easier to adjust the course we're on to one that will take us to where we want to be. ■

MAKING PEACE WITH JO

By Anna Perlini, adapted

One of my favorite books when I was growing up was *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott. The novel follows the lives of four sisters—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March—detailing their passage from childhood to womanhood. There were analogies with my family since I also had sisters, and the youngest one, born premature, reminded me a lot of frail and sweet Beth. It took no time for me to identify with Jo and her strong, emotional personality, her boyish ways, her love for literature, her initial rejection of the idea of marriage, and so on. She was my secret role model.

In *Little Women's* Italian edition, the novel is divided into two books, the first one covering the four sisters' childhoods and teen years. When I read the sequel a few years later, I was utterly disappointed and almost disgusted. Whatever had happened to my Jo? She ended up actually getting married and having children! No way! I tossed the book aside, and that marked the end of my "relationship" with Jo.

Of course, years passed, and I also married and had children. Now I even

have grandchildren! When I last visited my parents, I happened to find that old dusty book in a box in the attic, and the old feelings of enticement and disappointment combined resurfaced, but I brought it down and reread it for the first time in decades. By the time I got to the last page, I had made peace with Jo and no longer felt betrayed by her choices. I could see that despite the adjustments she had to make to her plans, she had remained true to herself and her ideals, her heart more alive than ever as the years went by.

That made me ponder on the realization that growing up is not just inevitable, it's good. Like someone said, "Getting old is not so bad if you think of the alternative." Each season of life has unique beauty and originality, challenges and rewards. It's definitely possible to grow up without losing your core values and your dreams, in spite of what life might throw at you. Even though you might momentarily lose sight of them, they are there, well-kept and ready to come out anytime you are ready. ■



DRINK UP!



By Jennifer McGinley, adapted

I recently became the mother of two. There are so many new emotions, joys, and lessons that come along with welcoming an additional child into the family. The newest challenge I face is getting ready to go back to work and preparing our three-month-old baby girl for this transition. My first daughter (now almost four years old) never took

to feeding from a bottle, and my second seems to be no different. Time after time, I face the same disappointment and feel terribly wasteful as I dump out the unfinished milk.

As the precious nourishment disappears down the drain, I wish she could somehow understand that what I'm doing is for her own good. I wish

she could understand that this milk is almost as good as the usual serving, even though in different packaging. It's not as warm, cozy, soft, and comforting, but it is perfectly suited to her future needs. I wish she could understand that I'm not trying to upset her or withhold what she wants to hurt her, or because I don't understand her hungry and frustrated cries. I do it because I love her and want her to be able to cope with the changes that are about to come and ease her into this next stage in our lives.

As the start date of my new job looms closer, I'm starting to feel the stress. Standing over the sink one evening, I found myself thinking about the last six months and how much has changed for our family. Over a year ago, my husband and I opened a very successful business with two of our closest friends. We had put off having our second child to devote our full attention to this endeavor. Our work and those we worked with brought a lot of joy into our lives. It was a dream come true, and we had great hopes for the future. That said, after the business took off, we were looking forward to a slightly slower-paced year to focus more on our family.

But just before entering our second year, there was a disagreement with one of our business partners on a matter of principle. Rather suddenly, three of us ended up losing our entire investment in the business and more. It was a heartbreaking loss on so many levels.

I heaved a sigh as I came back to the present and swallowed the lump in my throat. Why did this have to happen? Why do I have to now be in a position where I must leave my little one so soon?

Why did this person hurt us so deeply? Each year presents brand-new ways of testing our endurance, and this one takes the cake. When will we be able to take a breather?

My mind at that moment was definitely not focused on spiritual things, but just then, a thought struck me, like an understanding that had suddenly been injected in the midst of my troubled train of thought. What I'm going through with my baby could be compared to what God must do in our lives at times. He only wants good things for us, but sometimes the things He allows to come into our lives don't seem good to us at all. What's being shoved in our face is awkward, unfamiliar, and uncomfortable. We can't see much beyond the big obnoxious thing, and we feel separated from the warmth and closeness that we have grown accustomed to.

Just like my baby, I was crying out, not seeing how any good could come out of this situation. Meditating on this a bit more, I could think of countless times throughout my life when I had met with heartbreak, injustice, and faced challenges that seemed daunting. With time, I saw that each one was just a stepping stone. It led to new places, people, and experiences, which in turn brought me joy, fulfillment, and new skills that equipped me for other opportunities that later came my way. Without these past traumas and dramas I know I would not have the confidence that I now have to face this latest life-changing event.

With renewed faith I warmed up another bottle, and told myself, "Drink up!" ■

Change

NOTABLE
QUOTES



There is nothing permanent except change.—**Heraclitus**

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.
—**George Bernard Shaw**

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.—**Maya Angelou**

You must be the change you wish to see in the world. —**Mahatma Gandhi**

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.—**John F. Kennedy**

When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.—**Viktor E. Frankl**

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.
—**Wayne Dyer**

It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.—**C. S. Lewis**

The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance. —**Alan Watts**

For the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.—**Steve Jobs**

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. —**Reinhold Niebuhr**