



# Do You Have To Change?

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From the day we are born to the day we die we change. This is inevitable. Our bodies grow older and our minds become ever fuller from knowledge and experience.

However, despite the inevitability of change, we have a very ambivalent attitude towards it. We welcome change and use phrases such as 'getting into a rut' or 'if you don't move forward, you stand still' or 'that's so yesterday'. These phrases indicate that we think lack of change is bad. And yet at the same time we resist change, because it takes us out of our comfort zones.

Our attitude towards others mirrors this love/hate relationship we have with change. We want to believe we accept and respect everyone for who they are. At the same time we can find the conflict resulting from difference too difficult to cope with, so we try to change others to be more like us or we try to avoid the discomfort of being around them. And yet, we want others to accept us for who we are and we don't like it when they want to change us or if they try to avoid us.

We strive for harmony, but that is only possible if we make the effort to change to accommodate others' preferred way of being and when we do that we are not being true to ourselves. So: 'to change, or not to change?' Is that the question?

Some of us take pride in not being a sheep and not being swept up by the tide and, in fact, this in itself can bring about great changes, such as the ideas introduced by Galileo and Darwin. Sometimes we decide to stand up to the trends of our day, but over the generations the strength of social change is stronger than any one of us and our conscious thinking alters altogether, so for example we would no longer consider wearing Elizabethan clothes or sending children up chimneys. At other times we have little control over changes happening during our lifetime, such as when laws are passed. Whatever the type of change, change is inevitable.

Even if we really go out of our way to resist change, the world around us changes and so our relationship to everything around us changes even if we try to stand very still. As our relationships change, our reactions become different and, as a result, we change. Change is inevitable.

We are living through a time of upheaval with political and financial changes to our institutions which could equal the changes of the industrial revolution. Whether we like it or not, life as we know it is changing and with change comes confusion and uncertainty. Perhaps, then, the question we should be asking is 'how should I deal with change?' rather than 'to change, or not to change?' Maybe we should stop trying to avoid change and start concentrating on being able to manage and survive more effectively in changing situations.



Perhaps try jotting down how you might manage yourself more effectively with a specific change you are facing currently, in this blank space:

Change for me is ....

As a way of starting to face change you may also wish to consider these questions:

- Do I know what my role is during the time of change?
- How can I improve my support systems?
- Do I need to support others?
- Do I know what my role will be after the change?
- How can I try to understand the other point of view?
- How will understanding the alternative views help me?
- Why is it so hard for me to change or let go in this situation? What am I afraid of? Can I manage these fears in some way other than just resisting the change?
- Are there other alternatives to my view or the other view being suggested? Does this help?
- Why do I need things to stay the same? What would the real consequences of staying the same be?
- What would be the real consequences, both short term and long term, if the change was to go ahead?

