

TRANSFORMATIONS

Who Stole My Bananas?

Change Happens! Are You Prepared?

by Pamela Bell

Have you ever noticed the accelerated rate at which an infant changes? Any parent obviously has, but for those who are not parents it is a sight to behold. From one week to the next there is this incredible and rapid growth that seems to happen overnight. Then one day your helpless little infant has needs of their own and is all the more happy to tell you what they are!

This isn't an article about children. I don't even have children and would be writing about a subject I know little about – from observation rather than experience. This article is however about change and on this subject I could write volumes.

We all were infants at one time (or at least I hope so!) and came into this world with the ability to adapt to our ever-changing needs and environment. We had no choice really, growth was inevitable

and we knew nothing of taking care of ourselves. We were forced to go with the flow and put our total trust and ultimate survival in the hands of our caretakers. Now, fast-forward about twenty or forty years. What Happened??? When you weigh the ease with which we made changes as children against the difficulty we have making changes as adults, it is quite a sobering conundrum. So what do you think happened between then and now to make “going with the flow” so difficult?

Yes of course we get set in our ways. And we also grow dependent on stability and routine. And then there is the fact that we've invested prime years into developing our “likes” and “dislikes” and need to honor them as such. We also have learned to covet what we know and perceive to be “safe” and to fear what we don't know and perceive to be a “threat”. The unknown is a threat of sorts – it is a threat

to our homeostasis. We are comfortable with what we know. It is predictable and allows us the capacity to plan a life around relative certainty (isn't this an oxymoron?)

The truth of the matter is change continues to happen throughout our lives and we can resist it and make it hard on ourselves or we can embrace it and make the best of what we've got. Think of all the changes that have occurred in your adult life: You get a job; you lose a job. You buy a new car; you wreck your new car. You gain weight; you lose weight. You fall in love; you fall out of love. You get sick, and hopefully, you get well. You have a full head of hair and then one day you don't? There are countless changes that we face everyday - some are easy and we manage them with grace. Others are not so easy and they challenge the very bedrock on which we stand.

I call this change “Who Stole My Bananas?” after a wonderful book by Spencer Johnson titled: Who Moved My Cheese? It is a book about change in the marketplace and either you grow with the change and look for the new cheese or you spend your valuable time looking for the old cheese. These same principles can be applied to all areas of life and basically you can choose to “sink” or you can choose to “swim” when change occurs. Being prepared for change will keep you afloat and help propel forward, swimming with the tide rather than against it.

Just as an example, somebody stole my bananas in the year 2000 when, just as I was entering a building, a 300lb door came off its hinges and fell on top of me. I won't bore you with the gory details but boy did somebody ever “Steal My Bananas!” The real question I am posing here is “Who

Stole Your Bananas? And what did you learn from it?

The best thing you can do to adopt or prepare for unexpected change is to have systems in place that support you through the difficulty. Some possibilities might be: 1) A circle of caring friends or family that you can rely on for both physical and moral support. 2) A strong spiritual practice or any practice that brings you inner strength and stability. 3) A strong and healthy body. Never underestimate the importance of your body's health in rebounding from both a physical or emotional trauma. 4) A list of good practitioners with whom you feel comfortable. There is nothing worse than being at the mercy of a practitioner you don't trust when at your most vulnerable. Build a list of references from your friends if you have been fortunate enough to not have needed health care thus far. And count your blessings! 5) A “Rainy-Day” savings account. Experts say you should have at least 3 months of living expenses socked away; but 6 months is better! 6) A sense of humor. Things are never as bad as they seem initially and laughter at your own vulnerability will carry you over the rough spots. 7) A positive attitude! I know this sounds trite but it truly is the key to any successful recovery.

There is a saying that goes: “We don't get what we want, we get what we think we deserve.” Best to start working on this one right away.

Look at this exercise as a type of “survival kit” for dealing with change gracefully. It is no different than the First Aid Kit under your bathroom sink or the Earthquake Kit you keep in your garage. This is simply a survival kit that nobody ever talks about. Change happens. Are you prepared?

“The stuff of our lives doesn't change. It is we who change in relation to it.”

Molly Vass

Pamela Bell is a professional Life Coach, Educator and Inspirational Speaker. She is founder of LifeSource Coaching and is reached at pamelabell@mindspring.com 800.689.9672 (ext. 66)



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