

Chapel

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I have spent the last year thinking a lot about change. In the past 12 months I have moved back to Maine from Boston, started a new job, left that job, bought a new house, watched camp transition to a foundation, found a new job, and planned a wedding. In the next 2 months I will be moving to the new house, starting that new job, and getting married. As someone who historically has not handled change well, this is a lot of change in a short amount of time. I know a lot of you are in similar situations - first time away from home and adapting to the major change that is camp life, thinking ahead to after camp - maybe starting at a new middle school, high school, or even college - or not knowing what to do after camp ends. It can feel completely overwhelming.

I know I often feel overwhelmed with the changes happening in my life. It is easy to get lost in the anxiety that often surrounds change. Its easy to ask "What if" and think the worst. Being comfortable is easy and safe, but it is also what holds us back. Change forces us to step out of our comfort zone and face the "what if" questions. Before camp, new campers may ask themselves "what if I can't live away from home?" Well, you are all doing it every day. Older campers may ask "what if I can't get the award I want?" or "what if I don't fit in with my new cabin?" - Think for a second - are you doing everything you can to make it happen? Or are you just accepting the 'what if' that you asked at the beginning?

I know I ask myself these questions a lot. "What if the new house isn't what you actually want?" "What if your new job isn't the right fit?" It is easy to use these questions as excuses.

When I get overwhelmed I think back to myself years ago. For example, I found out that what I thought had been a concussion was actually a prefrontal cortex injury and the memories I had lost would never come back. I also decided to move to a city and had to adjust to the chaotic life there while also changing jobs three times. Just a few years ago we lost a member of our family, Sandy, who was always a steady rock in our lives. I watched my parents pull back from what has been their lives for the past 30 some odd years, or in Dave's case, his entire life. With each of these events, I realized that my life would never go back to the way it was, and I could not come to terms with that.

But here's the thing. Despite everything that has happened in the past 10 or so years, I have survived. And become a better person because of it. And you will too.

SITTIN' ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY, by Otis Redding

A few years ago, after I had met with a neurologist who explained the fallout of my brain injury, I was at home planning a lesson for my elementary students about Martin Luther King Jr. I found a quote by him that went like this:

“If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward”

I thought about this a lot. “Keep moving forward.” In order to move forward, we have to accept change, no matter how hard it is. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I was so focused on how life would never go back to the way it was, that I had forgotten to be open to the new possibilities that come with change. Its not all bad.

Think of all the good things that come with change. New friends, new opportunities, new challenges. In August, I get to move into my new house, with my new husband, and start a new job that I am really looking forward to. You get to start a new year at school, with new teachers, new friends, and new chances to do something incredible.

Even Camp is changing. By becoming a foundation, camp will be protected for generations to come. And while it may feel strange this year to not see Dave doing announcements in the barn every day or hear a different voice at flag raising, know that change just means we are moving forward.

Even you. You are changing every day. The person who woke up yesterday is not the exact same person who woke up today. You know more today, have seen more, heard more, experienced more. You will never go back to yesterday's you. And that's ok.

Change doesn't happen in isolation though. How you change, how your life changes, affects those close to you. Your friends and family are there to support you while you try to figure out who you are becoming. Your counselors are here to help you feel comfortable facing the “what ifs” and show you that even as counselors, we are still figuring it out sometimes. Becoming a counselor is a huge change after being a camper, and it isn't always a perfectly smooth transition. Your cabinmates are going to treat you the same way every day, even if you aren't the same person today as yesterday. They are figuring it out too.

I know that I have received incredible support from my friends and family. On bad days when I'm feeling overwhelmed, I know I can talk to EJ. If I need a pick-me-up, I know I can count on Jess or Gabby or Jen for a dog picture or funny message. If I have a problem, I know I can talk it through with my mom. Watching Dave and Pine support

each other over the past few years both with the loss of their best friend and the transition of camp has been inspiring. I am so lucky to be surrounded and supported by some absolutely amazing people. And you are too. Look around you. These people will help you become who you are supposed to be. They will forgive you when you make mistakes and celebrate with you when you reach a goal. You will inspire them with your change and be inspired by theirs.

We are going to sing a song, then I am going to ask if anyone has a major change in their life that they would like to share. We as a community want to support each other. You would be surprised how many people have been through what you're going through and want to help you.

TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN', by Bob Dylan

I will go first. I am moving in August. This will be the first time I will be living in my own house and it is scary!

Would anyone else like to share something that is changing in their lives?

Its not easy to say that you're scared of something. Its not easy to accept that things are changing and that your life will never go back to the way it was. But we need to keep moving forward.

Here's the secret. Change is what you make of it. I could go back to where I was and let the fear of change continue to weigh me down. Or I could look forward to everything that is to come. Marrying a pretty cool guy, moving into a new house that we get to make completely our own, starting a new job that allows me to do exactly what I want to, and who knows what else!

Here's something to remember though - The tall pine trees, the sparkling lake - those will never change. If you ever feel like it is too much, just look up at the trees or at the lake.

Please stand for the camp prayer then remain standing for our final song.

SOULSHINE, by the Allman Brothers

LOOK TO THIS DAY