

Transition Series Q&A

Q: Why does change feel so hard?

A: I think how change feels all depends on our comfort level. Daylight Saving Time feels hard to me because it throws my biorhythm off, disrupts my sleep and feels unnatural. On the other hand, I used to do shift work at the hospital. Most people prefer the day shift, 7am to 3pm. When I changed to evening shift, 3pm to 11pm, it was not hard. It was perfect because I was young and loved to stay up at night. When we move from comfortable to uncomfortable, we aren't happy. Sometimes we resist change because it isn't familiar and once we get comfortable with the change, we wonder how we could get along without it. My mom is 91 and now she's a thousand miles away and frankly she gets a little anxious. We talk on the phone using her little flip phone but I can't see how she's doing. This week I went into her gmail account and set up video chat. It took some doing. I called her flip phone and walked her through opening up the video chat. Eureka! She was excited! Asking her to do video chat seemed hard for her. Now she's pretty happy with it. Whatever the change is, we have to find a way to become comfortable with it.

Q: How do we avoid the trap of comparing new to past?

A: AWARENESS! This is probably less of a problem if you like the new more than the past. Since the past is gone, the comparison isn't a problem—unless you soon grow tired of the new. Comparisons in general aren't helpful because what you have is what is present. Whatever you are comparing to probably isn't what is present. So stay aware of your comparisons. Practice empathy with what is present. Ask how you can be supportive. Connect with who and what is present by engaging in the activities and conversations unfolding. Challenge yourself to see the good in what is present.

Q: Why does God/Spirit seem closer and more real when you are mad at him/her/it?

A: I suppose because when you are mad, you are engaged. Often we allow Spirit to become distant and separate. When we aren't actively thinking about Spirit, it can become a vague, ambiguous idea we aren't very connected to. Even in gratitude, we can disconnect from Spirit and get lost in connecting with the things we list. Anger is a high energy emotion. Not high vibration but high energy. We aren't well trained in moving our energy into high vibration emotions like love or even zeal. But anger gets our juices flowing. Which causes us to open in ways we have distanced ourselves from. And there Spirit goes, moving in through the crack we made in our shield. Then we have to examine our feelings and beliefs. What exactly are we really mad about? Is what we are mad about really God/Spirit? If it doesn't feel like love, it's not God. God is love. One Power, One Presence. Usually we are mad because what is present, as we just talked about, does not suit us. It's not what we wanted, it's not familiar, it's not meeting our expectations.

So how do we make peace with what is present in the temporary world and open to more connection to the real nature of Spirit? First, I think we have to discern that just because God is everywhere present, God doesn't **cause** every condition we see. God doesn't manipulate the manifest world—we do. With our thoughts and beliefs and actions, we shape the manifest world. Once we get the distinction between presence and cause, we have to evaluate and repeatedly re-evaluate our perceptions of the nature of Spirit/God. Every time we get off track about the nature of the Divine, we have to find our way back and usually with some new insight or perception about that nature. With each return maybe we can stay closer to God without being mad.

Q: How can I grieve change in a healthy way?

A: Well go back to the first 3 sermons on engaging change, endings and the void. Depending on where we are, our healthy responses may shift a bit. Having said that, here are some more universal ideas:

Change is normal. Grief is normal. And both are phenomena of the temporary conditions of our humanity. While we work on accepting the feelings around change and grief, we have to remember we are more than our humanity. We are still spiritual beings.

We can't avoid or discount change or grief. We should not feel shame about our humanity. For whatever reason, our human experience is a part of our spiritual journey and we are meant to hold our duality in balance, as demonstrated by Jesus. Loving the ability to love means enduring the human emotions around loss. Two sides: one coin.

So feel the feelings and ground yourself in the I AM of your spiritual nature. Find the practices that support you the most when feelings overwhelm you. A walk. A candle meditation. A journal practice. A mindfulness exercise. Let the feelings wash over and let them go.

Let change be change and endings be endings and sadness be sadness. A lot of our unhappiness is trying to change what is. Or resist what is. Or deny what is. Make peace with what is. Resistance and denial leave you stuck in what is. We can't reverse change so the best path forward is forward!

This last one is totally up in the face of humanity right now: Be okay in the mystery of not knowing. The whole world right now wonders what is ending; how long is the void; what comes next; how do we all get through this? As humans our inclination is to fear and to protect ourselves against what could go wrong. So far this leads us to hoarding, blaming each other, acting in ways that are hurtful. As spiritual beings our inclination is to move to possibilities—what valuable lessons could we learn? What skills and insights are we gaining? What transformation is unfolding? When nothing is certain, everything is possible. Free concerts are on Facebook and on balconies in Europe. On every continent people are learning to wash their hands and care for one another. There is scary stuff and there is wonderful stuff. We choose going forward.

Q: Some are still grieving Wilma. How do we move forward and help each other?

A: I think I talked about grief being cumulative. So every ending triggers grief that includes the unfinished business from all the endings before the one we're in.

Back to back significant losses can trigger overwhelming feelings. So I think the first thing to notice is how our grief is impacting our thoughts

and actions. If we find ourselves overwhelmingly angry or sad or fearful or depressed, it might be helpful to say out loud—that's the grief talking. Things will change. We will find a new way forward. Going forward we will carry the best with us.

When they made the movie *The Shack*, apparently, they asked a bunch of people to write songs. The music for the most part, isn't in the movie. But there are several songs I really like and one of them is by Kelly Clarkson and Aloe Black. Not a likely pair but it works. The song is *Love Goes On*. Here's the refrain: There ain't nothin' so broken love can't heal, I feel. Every day I grow older, time reveals, reveals. Nothing's really gone, we bring the past along and love goes on.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6z--hFKHoE>

Nothing's really gone, we bring the past along and love goes on. In my grief work I've found that although we bring the past along, we can choose how that past comes along. It can come along as a wounding, a sorrow or a resentment OR, if I choose to do the forgiveness and peace work, I bring the **best** along. I bring the love, the lessons and the gifts along.

So we turn our attention to honoring the love that goes on. How do we want to honor what it meant to have Wilma in our community and all the love she shared? How do we want to honor what it meant to have Reverend Joy in our community and all the love she shared? We ask each other the question and we listen to one another. I think that's how we move forward, knowing nothing's really gone, we bring the best along and love goes on.

That's all for my answers. I have a couple more questions and they may be a sermon in April. Next week we'll talk about new beginnings, even if we are still in the midst of the void of Covid 19.