



Change...there is a side to me that the older I get, the less I want to...But, you've heard it before:

change is inevitable...

So, sort of like conflict, I can run from it or embrace it...lean into it.

Why is change so difficult?

Is it because we like what scientists call **homeostasis**, or equilibrium, and change threatens that comfort zone?

I recently finished reading Brenda Salter McNeil's excellent book, *Roadmap to Reconciliation*. The primary context for her thoughts on reconciliation is racial reconciliation. She says that

change usually happens as a result of a catalytic event.

And now I will begin to paraphrase what Salter McNeil says. This catalytic event (or something I've often called a triggering event) must be

scary enough

that we realize that something **MUST** change. We're in a new zone.

Things can't stay the way they've been.

For example, a long-standing, close friendship is threatened because trust was repeatedly broken. I'll use myself. Let's say I "betrayed" a close friend...And it wasn't the first time...I can say, "It's not that big a deal." Well, that may be what I believe, but if the other party says, "We're done!" I think that should scare me a bit...If our relationship is at risk, am I willing to change? I would hopefully realize that the risk of **NOT** changing, recognizing my wrong and attempting to rebuild trust is greater than admitting my wrong and doing all I can to win back my friend's trust. The relationship "came to a head." That is the catalytic event. And I'm scared to death to lose this long-term relationship.

Not only must the catalytic, or triggering event be scary, it must have a culture, a context around it that is

safe enough

that we (I in this case) don't turn tail and run. So, back to my betrayal of trust, what does that "safe enough" mean? It would mean that my friend still wants relationship and is willing to give me the chance to prove myself trustworthy. I may want to lean into the hard work of regaining someone's trust, but if there isn't a "safe" place to work on it, I might say, "I'm out of here."

So, there is a kind of Goldilocks "magic" here. Remember Goldilocks and her search for the right porridge – *Not too hot...Not too cold...*What follows the catalytic event must be not too scary but not too safe if real change is to occur; the kind of change that I really desire in me. I want to be trustworthy. And I want my friend back.

One more thing about change. While the catalytic event may be a one-time event,

change happens slowly.

I break trust quickly. I gain it back slowly. In the context of relationship, patience with myself and the patience of the other party will more than likely be severely tested. But take heart in remembering that most of what we value in this life involves some or all of the following: adversity, perseverance, patience, grit, determination, hope and mutual understanding. Those sound like qualities I want in my relationships. How about you? Will you let catalytic events take you to new heights or will they plunge you into pits? The choice to change is yours.