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Top 10 Reasons to Embrace Change

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When Leah asked me to write an article for her Quarterly issue about change, I thought “how hard can this be”? After all, my life has been a constant roller coaster since the OLA election process began last year, including this scramble of thoughts: Should I accept the nomination? What if I get elected? What does the vice president do? Oh wait, they want me to be president now? Now?

You see what I mean. Change has been a constant factor in my life lately. Many people have complimented me on jumping right in and becoming president before my time. Let me fill you in on a secret. Embracing a change over which you have no control leaves people thinking you are really something. Like leadership material (see number 7 below). But really, if a change is a foregone conclusion, why not embrace it?

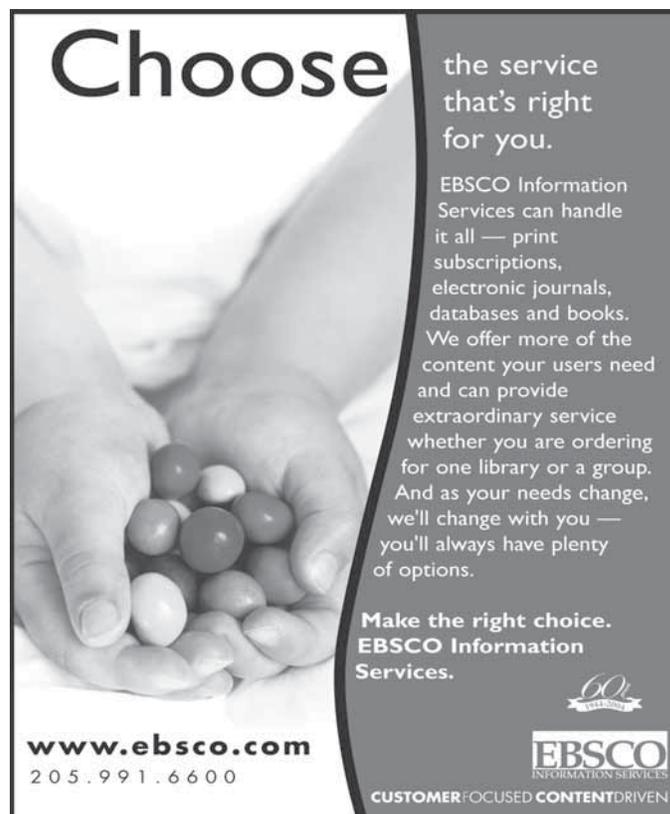
Still, when I really thought about change and how I personally achieved change, I initially came up blank. Somehow change just happens, right? I realized pretty quickly that this was not completely true. Change, while not always intentional, is not always accidental either. How do I approach change?

This will come as a surprise to all of you (not!), but I decided humor is the tool I use the most to embrace change. As we all know, much of the time humor is funny because it is true. We are amused when people actually say things out loud that we are all thinking. Often, I am the person saying

those things out loud, though usually in a stage whisper to the person seated next to me. Professional? No. Hilarious. Sometimes. Here is my effort to apply humor to change:

Top 10 reasons to embrace change

1. Resistance is futile and you know it. Not only is resistance futile, but it makes you look like a stick in the mud.
2. Embracing change gives you an opportunity to control it, and most people I know like (OK, love) control.
3. What if change actually improves things? It's crazy, but anything is possible.



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4. It's better to have changed and chucked change than never to have changed at all.
5. Change is fun! And good for you! Kind of like veggies.
6. Changing something means you get to reward yourself. Change is hard work, so don't forget to reward and comfort yourself afterwards with your favorite food, a shopping spree, etc.
7. Choosing to change makes people think you're really something, like leadership material, you know? See above.
8. Do you really want your life to be stable, enduring, steadfast, and immutable? Or do you want to live a little? So change already!
9. This from W. Edwards Deming: "It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory." A tip worth some follow-up, I think.
10. And finally this quote from Ellen Glasgow gives new "depth" to change: "The only difference between a rut and a grave is their dimensions."

Am I clear yet?

Another component that helps me in the change progression is processing. Like many annoying people, I process out loud. So while some of you thought I was slipping into my presidential role with ease, I was actually discussing every last boring detail with anyone who would listen, and even some who wouldn't, particularly my girlfriends who I walk with each morning. They have heard more about OLA in the last year than they would want to hear in a lifetime. Not to worry; I listen to them too!

The next biggest piece to successful change is your supporting cast. When rou-

tines are altered, stress is bound to follow. It is so helpful when the other people in your life are able to relieve that stress by providing the support you need. In my case, the people I work with completely supported my "out of office" work. Sure, my boss rolled her eyes a few times, but never once did she complain out loud about my new responsibilities. And at home? Although my husband and boys never gave the presidential title the honor and deference it deserved (such as kissing the gavel), neither did they complain when I spent lots of Saturdays catching up on work. This cut the guilt factor by half.

Although I am known far and wide for my spontaneity and easy-going nature (right!), planning is the final component necessary for successful change. Just how am I going to get from Point A to Point B? Although I have trouble seeing past what's for lunch, never mind dinner, I appreciate the concept of planning. It can turn a change victim into a change agent. Planning by committee is my *modus operandi*. As you will no doubt have figured out from my conference thoughts on collaboration, I like the idea of connecting with people to work on projects. This goes for planning as well. After all, I know my brain is not up to the task of doing it alone! I figure between me and the rest of the group, there is at least one entire brain at work.

In summary, these insightful words from Robert C. Gallagher say it all: "Change is inevitable—except from a vending machine." If that is the case, you might as well get up off your duff and meet it at the door. Change is a-coming! 🌿

Mo 'Change-is-good-for-you' Cole is the OLA past president (no longer president—that just changed and I'm not resisting), and is the brand-new (watch what you wish for) Director of the Kellenberger Library at Northwest Christian College, Eugene.

