



On Change: Some Personal Reflections

by D. Rosowsky, December 2016

Change is necessary and inevitable. But it does not need to be resented or resisted. We should resent only circumstances that allow others around us to adapt but prevent us from doing the same. When confronted with our changing world, if we choose not to respond – not to adapt – decisions affecting our future are taken away from us and made by others.

With external forces of change multiplying and becoming stronger, it is that much more important that we do not impose additional constraints (obstacles) upon ourselves. We can choose to adapt or choose to be left behind. Our conviction, stubbornness, or failure to act will not slow the pace of change in our world.

Failing to (or resisting) change when the world around us has changed is *not* a strategy. Such resistance exacerbates inequities, log-jams, and stagnations. And invariably, failing to adapt in a changing world leads to unsustainable practices – whether financial, social, cultural, or intellectual – and ultimately hastens irrelevance.

Sustainable practices, in all of these domains, requires change. In fact, the *only* constant in the long-term survival of species or systems is adaptation. To those who would say maintaining the status quo *is* a long-term strategy, I would offer that nature, social dynamics, culture, and economics disagree.

We live in a changed world, and we will live in a changing world. Not everything will be up to us. But where we have opportunity to secure our future, or to expand our influence, or to realize new successes, or to improve our circumstances or those of people around us, or to positively influence communities in which we live and work, we cannot resist – we *must* seize the opportunity.

When, as an institution, we *do* seize those opportunities to manage and effect change, we strive for open, thoughtful, and collaborative processes. And we understand and accept that not everyone will agree with the outcomes of those processes. The impacts of change are most often differential; intentional and strategic change is necessarily biased. Such change cannot and should not have equal impact. But ultimately, the impact from which we all benefit is that of a strong, vital institution better prepared to face an exciting, and (yes) ever-changing future.

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