

The Speed of Change

by

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A recent joke tells of a college freshman stopping a young lady hurrying to class. “What’s the rush?” he asks. “I’ve got to get to class before the textbook goes out of date,” she replies.

While this joke is overstated, we must admit change is taking place at a faster pace than in years past. What follows are a few examples of how change has occurred with greater and greater frequency.

- Sony Corp. invented the Walkman in 1979 and to date has developed over 227 different models.
- New models of computers are often out of date within 120 days and discontinued within one year.
- In 1971 the average American was targeted by at least 560 daily advertising messages. Today the number has changed to 3,000+ messages per day.
- In the early 1990s it took 7.5 days to manufacture a computer which now only requires a few hours.
- Since 1987 the number of fax machines in U.S. offices has increased +10,000,000.
- Since 1983 the number of computers in U.S. offices has increased +25,000,000.
- Since 1987 the number of registered e-mail addresses has changed +26,250,000.

What are we going to do about it?

One of the most consistent aspects of life is change. Thus, to grow and develop in this fast-paced society, we must move with it. Here are a few ideas on how we can face the speed of change

First, realize change is part of God's design.

The world has been in motion ever since God created it. While God personally does not change, the creation changes regularly. Remember: God appointed mankind to manage the earthly resources which includes managing change in an appropriate manner rather than resisting it.

Second, learn on the fly, forever.

Once upon a time a basic education prepared a person for a lifetime of work and ministry. Today, basic education is effective for 10-15 years at most. Continuing education is today's watchword. Learn as you go from every source that you know.

Third, rescript challenges.

In Chinese, the word for crisis is derived from two different symbols: one represents despair, the other opportunity. Rescripting means looking for the opportunities in the changes around us, rather than the difficulties.

Fourth, focus on your core.

People can live with change all around them if there is a changeless core within them. Spend time developing the spiritual center of your life. Take time each day to read God's word, mediate, and pray. In addition take a few moments to walk, or listen to birds, or watch clouds, or listen to your favorite music, or read a book of poetry.

Fifth, right size your life.

Reorganize your life by getting rid of unnecessary work or involvements. Only about 20% of what we do is really necessary. The rest is in our lives due to our choices. Take time to consider what you can scale back on, such as board and committee attendance, or extra assignments from work, or habits like watching television.

Sixth, empower those around you.

Give those around you more power to make decisions on their own without having to get input or permission directly from you. Speed up meetings by asking those under your oversight to bring problems AND solutions when they meet with you. Resist the temptation to be an active participant in all meetings and activities.

Seventh, live by your mission statement.

Write a mission statement for your life and then live by it. To be effective, it should be 25 words or less in length. Then evaluate all that you do against your statement. If an activity does not fit into your statement, consider not being involved.

The speed of change is not likely to slow down in the years ahead. To be effective in our lives and in the Lord's work requires better management of our time.

Which of the ideas presented above do you think would be the most helpful to you?

What should you begin to do?