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Go With The Flow

REFLECTIONS by...

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One of the things you learn as you are going through the various stages of life is that no matter what you are involved in, life has a way of throwing obstacles at you.

Just when we start to get comfortable with a person, a place or a situation, something comes along to change it. A friend moves away. A child graduates and takes a job in another city or gets married. Unexpected expenses arise which force you to use savings that were set aside for a vacation. Or you get laid off from work.

Our ability to cope with change and disruption determines, to a great degree, our peace, happiness and contentment in life. But how do we develop this ability to cope with change? How do we help children learn this skill?

Philosophers have considered this question for centuries. According to the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, comfort can be found in remembering that "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." A friend of mine once stated that in order to work for the government, "survivability depends upon adaptability". I recently watched a show on television where a California surfer summed up the answer to life's problems in four simple words: "Go with the flow."

The Californian explained, "It's like surfing. You can't organize the ocean. Waves just happen. You ride them where they take you, then you paddle back out there and catch the next one. Sure, you're always hoping for the perfect wave, but mostly you just take them the way they come."

Perhaps the surfer has the answer we have been looking for.

Life is nothing more than a series of events - both good and bad. No matter how good your organizational skills or how well you have planned for all eventualities, there will always be life-influencing factors over which you have no control. The truly successful person expects the unexpected, and is prepared to make adjustments should the need arise, as it almost always does.



That doesn't mean you don't keep trying to make your plans and dreams come true. It just means that when things don't go according to plan, you just work around them and then move on. As the surfer said, "You ride them where they take you, then you paddle back out there and catch the next one."

What we must all realize is that some obstacles are easier to take than others. Missing a baseball game because of rain is easier to take than the sudden death of a family member. But the principle is the same. "You ride the wave where it takes you, then you paddle back out there and catch the next wave, always searching for the perfect ride." In other words, you work around the obstacle the best you can and then you move on with your life.

People have often commented on my ability to remain calm under difficult circumstances. I merely tell them that the secret is to keep your planning to a minimum. If I have to get to Sudbury, I will plan on taking the shortest route along Hwy 69N. But, if for some reason I am forced to take a detour through Garson or Rayside-Balfour, I have learned to simply enjoy the ride. I will eventually get to . It may take a little longer, and the road may be a little bumpier, but I will get there. I have also learned over the years that usually when I am forced to take a detour, I encounter some very worthwhile life-experiences along the way that I would have missed had it not been for taking the detour. As weird as it sounds, I actually look forward to the unexpected. It's like opening a Christmas present - you never know what you are going to find.

So, as a student at the beginning of your exciting journey of life, let me advise you not to fear change, but rather learn to cope with it by enjoying the ride and then moving on with life.

Go with the flow!