

Construction Zone, New Development Underway

A specific change within ourselves may be initiated for any number of reasons. Two significant motivations include recognising and consciously deciding to attend to an underdeveloped or absent role that we require; and a specific situation demanding responses that we are unable to sufficiently offer. Whatever the catalyst for personal change, the more dramatic the change and the urgency or drive to change, the greater the upheaval you will experience. It can look very much like your inner being is a construction zone. Internal structure are pulled down, old patterns and beliefs that have been dormant may be liberated and occupy your psyche, even if unconsciously, and groundedness may disappear while a new foundation is formed. This all depends on the magnitude of the change. Life crises can often stimulate such upheavals, with examples of such events being birth of a child or grandchild, divorce, illness, death of a loved one, or the proverbial “mid-life crisis”.

A recent example from my own experience has been recognising patterns I have around taking leadership roles. Based on my life and experience there is no question that I can step into leadership and do well.



Construction zone, new foundations forming

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Abstract

Personal change, whatever the source, causes upheaval, particularly of our inner world, and the messages that the learned voices of our experience say.

Keywords

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However, my journey into leadership often takes me through one of the following routes:

- If others are seeking the leadership role, I step back and say to myself, “Let them have it.”
- If no one wants a leadership role (or it is an initiative I have started), I throw myself in with energy and gusto.
- If I am invited into leadership, there is some degree of internal resistance that doubts my capacity and pushes the opportunity away.

All of those being true, I have sometimes surprised myself and moved forward with a degree of ease, though internal resistance invariably manifests at some point.

Lately, as I have recognised these patterns more fully, I have decided to develop my capacity to gracefully claim leadership, step into the space and occupy it with a sense of ease and belonging, and allow myself to be seen. Sounds easy! What a journey it is so far. In a recent situation where I was facilitating I was feeling great,

owning the space, and fully there, and then familiar voices sounded off in my head that I was inadequate, should not be there, and I would surely fail. I realised that the difficulty for me serenely and gently occupying space is that I then hear the cacophony of voices that pull me down and back. That moment became a process of choosing to stay in that space, recognising all my own internal nay-saying voices, expanding my capability for intentionally remaining in leadership and cutting, or at least acknowledging and loosening, the bands that hold me to past experience and beliefs. In the meantime

my internal world is in a state of relative turmoil, with anxiety and shame being merged with excitement and hope of a new way of being. This is a great time for me to appreciate my fog, recognising it is a natural part of the process of change, and that at some point the dust will clear. Then, I will have easier access to the new capacity forming within me.

What do you do when the fog arises from within? Do you allow it to be, and recognise it as a natural and necessary part of the process of change, or do you avoid the change or otherwise attempt to suppress the fog?

For more information related to themes in this article, refer to chapter 4 ('Life is Bleak and Awful') of: Harrison, S. G. (2012). [Appreciate the Fog: Embrace Change with Power and Purpose](#). Auckland, New Zealand: Xlibris Corporation.

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