

Some Reflections on the Chaos and Hope in Transition

Excerpts from The Other Side of Chaos by Margaret Silf

Experiences of change encourage me to believe that it is often those time when we are "dislodged" and forced to leave our accustomed comfort zones to embrace a new phase of our lives that we really do receive an invitation to "begin to set ourselves free." No one knows or can predict what new growth may be sprouting in our lives if we risk the journey that takes us through the uncharted universe of change.

Transitions are messy. Transitions are chaotic. Transitions are where our hard-won order breaks down into disorder. Just let the Spirit hover over the chaos! Chaos is not bad news, a mess that we have to bring back into the "right order" that existed before someone messed it up. Chaos is a sacred reality, the very thing that is needed for a new creation to begin, a gift overflowing with potential.

Can we imagine that God is there alongside us saying, "This is where we are, and this is how things are. Now together let us look for the most life-giving way forward"?

One of our biggest fears is that we think we are on the verge of losing what we value from our past. To embrace the unknown future that change and transition hold out to us is, we feel, to risk losing all that we have invested in so far. Could it be that God is saying to us, "Walk on with empty hands because I have so much more to give you and you can't receive it if your hands are full. Don't be afraid that you are losing anything at all, because everything that matters, from this time of graced encounter, or from any other experience in your life, has been internalized and is firmly lodged in your heart. It is part of you. It travels with you and can never be lost. It will play a crucial part in shaping your future." Secondly, a desire to look back will never take us forward, but it can become a weight on our ability to move beyond ourselves toward the people God is dreaming us to be.

We find ourselves in the midst of transition, and author, Margaret Silf, offers a few practical ideas to help us navigate the new of it all. Feel free to add your own.

- Live primarily in the new mind-set, defined by your new situation, not the old one.
- Approach the transition by viewing it primarily as a birth, not a death.
- Give yourself time to catch up with the speed of change.
- Reflect on the legacy of anything you feel you have lost or had to leave behind.
- Don't try to adapt to structures which you question or believe should change.
- Accept responsibility for what is happening in your new life.
- Envision the future as you would like it to become.
- Seek and nourish community. Keep an attitude of positivity.