

Sue McCoy

Spinning the Wheel

How to spin wool into yarn, an idea into a story, change a fact into a fiction? Obviously, spinning creates a transformation. One could say that we are transformed each minute as our body cells require, so that over the years we actually become different people and different personalities.

Most of our transformations are physical, but many are psychological and emotional. Do we ever really stop hearing our mothers' voices in our heads? Do we ever really believe that we are grown up now? We believe in change as we watch our lives unfold, or we recall the past. But knowing that change exists often results in fear and denial that it will ever happen to us.

Some changes that seem so wrong, so sudden, and so devastating can bring us to our knees. When our daughter died suddenly we found ourselves having to cope with unimaginable grief without warning. Accidents, illnesses, and many unexpected changes can reorder us instantly. We are constituted to live as though all will be well and yet we are undone by tragedy.

Denial of change to come is dangerous because it informs our big decisions now. It is courageous to transform a situation before the changes begin. Some young people make big career choices based on their artistic or athletic abilities, only to stumble into middle age without the resources for new careers. Many elderly people refuse to accept the onset of aging bodies and limited resources, believing that

a multi-level house that requires major upkeep will never be a problem.

Lifestyles must always be changed, if not by us then it will be done for us or to us without our input. It is the resistance to and denial of change that creates the problems.

The anthropologist Margaret Mead suggested that everyone should have three

life partners, for youth, middle age, and old age. That may be extreme for most of us, but for many her suggestion has become fact. Psychologists know that our mental and emotional needs change throughout life, and the proliferation of self-help books proves that we are beginning

to seek support for life changes. Partnerships in marriage may not last, and every woman should be prepared to be her own support.

The philosophy of Buddhism recommends that we meditate on change, to expect it, to accept it, to roll with it. The creative response to change can be exciting, adventurous, and challenging. I see so many people who joyfully create changes in their lives, reveling in new opportunities. But equally I see many who are so fearful of change that they become paralyzed to act and live in negativity.

Joseph Campbell reminded us to follow your bliss even if this means transforming your lifestyle. Career counselors often tell students to do what you love and the money will follow. Some of this sounds a little like pie in the sky, but surprisingly, it often works out well in real time. The great stuff that happens is usually the result of someone spinning toward transformation.

