

Change

In real time, the *status quo* is a figure of speech, an inference, no more than that.

Change, on the other hand, is very real, and it is everywhere, everyday coming quicker at us -- relentless, inexorable, inevitable. New things to learn, new things we may not be able to learn, things we find difficult to trust, certainly not as easy to trust as the things already known.

And as we engage change, something deep within us yearns for times past, times in a place where things were more secure, roles set, where the breathing was easier. Main Street. A village green. How were these things lost? Were they ever really had? Was time ever stilled and our lives in it secure?

And from where does change come? From a hurricane charging a coast? An earthquake breaking across the land? No. These are events, not change. Change comes from us. First sparked from within us, and then from us on others about us. We change those things we can get to and affect, things we think need fixing.

We create change. As certainly as there is something in us that looks back to an idyllic Main Street, there is something else that pushes us forward in time. But is it change only that is at play? Change for change sake? No. More is at hand and we must understand it.

Change is not a random process, though the process of change can have random effects. Change engages the mind but it is more than logic. Change is a consequence of human consciousness, that by which we know that we *are*. And, more than this, it is that by which we can understand that we are in a continuing state of *coming to be*.

And how does this process work? There are four basic steps. First, we see a thing, there before us or in our mind, in being. Second, something inside us examines its dimensions and parts, considers whether it is heavy or if it would roll if pushed. Third comes speculation, the mixing of perceiving a thing and its

possibilities. Since it is easier to roll a rock than to drag it, what if we found a way to roll other things? How about a wheel? I like it. But it's still just that, an idea. Someone has to do something about it, to get the thing built and then take responsibility for its impact and effect.

This process is how change comes to be, how humans effect change. And this process is within us before we engage it. It is an ability with which we are born. Our having it is part of what being a human being is all about, what it *means*. The fact of this ability will be taken as a given. And this can be done safely and with confidence because each of us uses this process regularly, even now as we read about it.

So, humankind is endowed with a consciousness and consciousness drives change. Thus, there can be no *status quo* really, only *status changing*. We didn't lose Main Street. It may not ever have existed as we now imagine it. And even if it did, it did so in a time that has *unavoidably* passed. You can change or you can be changed but you cannot remain the same.

This does not mean, though, that you cannot have and nurture values over and through time. It means that you have to take action to live and promote these values in a world that is unavoidably changing.

The question then is not whether there is change, for there is. It is all about us, continuously. The question is whether there is something in change that is inclined to be good, to be useful, to improve things and to make them better.

Now some might balk at a person's ability to judge whether one state of affairs is better than another. We are going to assume that we have this ability. We are going to assume that a secure and just peace is *better* than an unlimited war, that it is *better* for children to survive their parents, that to live free of political repression is *better* than to live under it.

We will further hold that quantification

of such judgments is not unreasonable. Thus, it is better to have 50 years of a secure and just peace than to have 20 years, that surviving only *one* of your three children is better than surviving all three of them, that *half* the world living in conditions approximating political freedom is better than only a *quarter* of the world so doing. And if we can say these things, which we can, then we can say that the world has gotten better, which it has.

The getting better of things is not a random event. It follows from the exercise of human consciousness over time within the context of the core tenets of this nation's founding -- that each one of us is of value and that we each must be responsible for the lives we are living, for the actions we take.

So, it is from here that we begin. Change is a human thing. It stems from the actions of others - or ourselves. Indeed, those impacted by change have the same power of consciousness to deal with it as those who initiated and caused it. Further still, in adjusting their actions to meet change, these, in turn, initiate change of their own to which others may need to take action.

For all the fear that can attend 'change', it is, in its particular iterations and instances, something of a static word, a snapshot of what just happened to the *status quo*, a slice in passing time. Seen in this light, a particular change is only an element of a continuing process of what is *coming to be*, one made inevitable by human consciousness, and as universal in human experience as gravity.

And for those who would lead? Change is the *medium* of what they do, either initiating it or reacting to it.