

## **Change is Happiness**

Change is critical to your success and happiness. I cringe to think what might happen in our lives if we don't allow ourselves the opportunity to make the appropriate changes. Sure, we can pretend that we don't need to change, that there is nothing wrong with our lives. Then, however, we soon forget the consequences of not taking action and making the changes we know we need to make. One story that illustrates this point well is from Samuel Whitman.

The ice storm wasn't generally destructive. True, a few wires came down, and there was a sudden jump in accidents along the highway.... Normally, the big walnut tree could easily have borne the weight that formed on its spreading limbs. It was the iron wedge in its heart that caused the damage.

The story of the iron wedge began many years ago when the lad of a white-haired farmer toiled on his father's homestead. The sawmill had then only recently been moved from the valley, and the settlers were still finding tools and odd pieces of equipment scattered about....

On this particular day, it was a faller's wedge—wide, flat and heavy, a foot or more long, and splayed from mighty poundings which he found in the south pasture.... (The wedge is put in a cut made by an axe and then struck with a large hammer to enlarge the cut.) Because he was already late for dinner, the lad laid the wedge...between the limbs of the young walnut tree his father had planted near the front gate. He would take the wedge to the shed right after dinner, or sometime when he was going that way.

He truly meant to, but he never did. The wedge was there between the limbs, a little tight, when he attained his manhood. It was there, now firmly gripped, when he married and took over his father's farm. It was half grown over on the day the threshing crew ate dinner under the tree....

Grown in and healed over, the wedge was still in the tree the winter the ice storm came.

In the chill silence of that wintry night...one of the three major limbs split away from the trunk and crashed to the ground. This so unbalanced the remainder of the top that it, too, split apart and went down. When the storm was over, not a twig of the once-proud tree remained.

Early the next morning, the farmer went out to mourn his loss....

Then, his eyes caught sight of something in the splintered ruin. "The wedge," he muttered reproachfully. "The wedge I found in the south pasture." A glance told him why the tree had fallen. Growing edge-up in the trunk, the wedge had prevented the limb fibers from knitting together as they should.

If we neglect change, if we try to bury our problems in our life, the wedge of not changing will be more destructive than the hammer of change. Open yourself up to see what you really want to become. Set the course and then make the changes. You and you alone can navigate your life. See the horizon of success and never let anything take you off course.

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