

The Flying Trapeze

Sometimes, I feel my life is a series of trapeze swings. I'm either hanging on to a trapeze bar swinging along or, for a few moments, I'm hurtling across space between the trapeze bars.

Mostly, I spend my time hanging on for dear life, to the trapeze bar of the moment. It carries me along a certain steady rate of swing and I have the feeling that I am in control. I know most of the right questions, and even some of the right answers. But once in a while, as I'm merrily, or not so merrily, swinging along, I look ahead of me into the distance, and what do I see?

I see another trapeze bar looking at me. It's empty; and I know that this new bar has my name on it. It is my next step, my growth, my aliveness coming to get me. In my heart-of-hearts I know that for me to grow, I must release my grip on the present well-known bar, to move to the new one.

Each time it happens, I hope - no, I pray - that I won't have to grab the new one. But deep down I know that I must totally release my grasp on my old bar, and for some moments in time I must hurtle across space before I can grab the new bar. Each time I am filled with terror. It doesn't even matter that in all my previous hurtles I've always made it.

Each time, I am afraid I will miss, that I will be crushed on unseen rocks in the bottomless basin between the bars. But I do it anyway. I must.

Perhaps this is the essence of what the mystics call faith. No guarantees, no net, no insurance, but I do it anyway because somehow, to keep hanging on to that old bar is no longer an option. And so for an eternity that can last a microsecond or a thousand lifetimes, I soar across the dark void of "the past is over, the future is not yet here". It's called a transition. I've come to believe that it is the only place that real change occurs.

I've noticed that, in our culture, this transition zone is looked upon as a "no-thing", a no-place between places. Sure, the old trapeze-bar was real, and the new one coming towards me, I hope that's real too. But the void in between? That's just a scary, confusing, disorienting "no-where" that must be broken through as fast and as unconsciously as possible. What a shame!

I have a sneaking suspicion that the transition zone is the only real thing, and the bars are illusions we dream up to not notice the void. Yes, with all the fear of being



out-of-control that can accompany transitions, they are still the most alive, growth-filled, passionate moments in our lives.

And so, transformation of fear may have nothing to do with making fear go away, but rather with giving ourselves permission to "hang-out" in the transition zone between trapeze bars. Allowing ourselves to dwell in the only place where change really happens. It can be terrifying. But, it can also be enlightening. Hurtling through the void, we just may learn to fly.

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