

Saying Yes to Change

Totem Report August 23, 2017

By Bret Anderson

Unsung hero, **Ken Grant**, performed his great shepherding trick of locating all the participants and moved them to the front. It is truly amazing how he does this! To set the tone for today's meeting, **Joel Paget** started us off with good words from Confucius and Casey Stengel: *It does not matter how fast you travel so long as you keep moving and it ain't over till its over*. **Mike Colbrese** and **Marli Iverson** led us in *God Bless America* in the key of F despite Mike trying not to "B flat".

George Twiss introduced us to new member **Brad Ray** who is Deputy Chief Marketing Officer for the National CASA. This great organization provides volunteer advocates for abused and at risk children.

Daron Vchulek reminded us about an opportunity to watch a Husky home game on September 16. **President Mark**, upon discovering how many UW graduates there are in Seattle 4, has decided to forgo any more Husky jokes. Go Dawgs!

Next our speaker, Dr. Richard Groves, began his presentation "Saying Yes to Change." He shared his reaction to the awe and wonder of the eclipse but he reminded us that in 600,000 years or so, the moon would slowly drift away and would be too far away to cause a total eclipse. Things, no matter how large, change. Pangea is another example of how even the earth itself changes. Crater Lake used to be the volcano Mt. Mazama.

The second law of Thermodynamics tells us that entropy (the tendency to become disorganized) is always on the increase. And it speeds up. An egg dropped breaks into hundreds of pieces and cannot become an egg again. Orange orchards in California have now become freeways. The aging process within ourselves travels one way. Entropy destroys predictability.





There is hope because we find that out of breakdown comes something of a higher order. For example, the United States arose again after the destruction of the Civil War.

What is the difference between change and transition? This is really significant. Change can be reversed. It is, as Groves says, re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Hitting the iceberg is a transition. It only goes one direction and is immutable.

We, humans, naturally resist change. Brains are tenacious at maintaining the status quo. Once we recognize that we are

indeed at a transition, we need to adopt new and different behavior. This reshaping behavior includes will power, focused attention, emotional intelligence, new behavior rituals, coaching and mindfulness.

No one wants to do it, real change. No one does it for fun. Real transition requires that we recognize where we are, recognize where we want to be, and then develop the behavior that will get us there.

Groves identifies five stages of transition. The first is the unsettling, when we realize that the status quo is not working anymore; we are at a transition and not just a change. The next stage is the opening; deciding to carry on or as Robert Frost says "The best way out is always through." The third stage is the unraveling or naming the tragic gap, a gap between the way things are and the way that they might be. Following is the fourth stage, the stilling. Then comes the final stage, the releasing, putting soul and role together. There is a letting go and moving on. Of course this is hard and can hurt and we suffer. Tears of sadness are tears of joy as well.

The closing quote is from Mary Groves, Dr. Groves late wife, "Tell me what it is you plan to do with your one wild and precious life."

