

Ihla Nation
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Topic: Change or Time

SHAPESHIFTER

Time and change weave together invisibly shaping life. Time sometimes moves at warp speed; sometimes like a giant sea turtle inching slowly across the sand. Occasionally I am outside of time - living in, around or through change or floating through an ethereal mist of unknown futures. Does time create change or change metamorphose my sense of time?

The old adage *when one door closes another opens* is not relevant to my life. Closing doors often left me in liminal spaces waiting waiting waiting for the next door to open, using all my will, smarts and abilities unsuccessfully to pry it open. My stubbornness and determination to move forward has been like a salmon swimming upstream. Time and change became a matter of living in the present moment and going with the flow. Time and change have minds of their own.

I've lived my life backwards. At a young age, I lived through rites of passage that only happen to most people in later years when life has better prepared them. At 14, my mother showed signs of dementia. At 16, my thyroid was removed when cancer planted a small growth. Thus began lifelong vigilance for the tailings such drastic surgery causes. At 19, I married and, at 20, had a child. Within a year, forceful changes were needed. I'd dropped into a claustrophobic crevasse with walls made by unchosen life experiences and naive decisions. By 22, my mother was in a nursing home and I was her guardian and daily visitor. I enrolled in community college and got divorced. I matriculated at CSU/Fort Collins as one of only four single mothers on campus, and, at 26, graduated with honors with a BA in social work.

Life was off and running. I was educated. I was smart. I had plenty of life experience. I was learning how to be assertive along with many American women. I could now control, mold, shape, determine and manipulate time and changes in my life.

Or not.

It took several years of bumping my head against economic trends and gender issues, especially the suspicions and stereotypes about single mothers. Eventually I questioned “you create your reality” and “just think positively” and all your desires will magically appear. A myth the country embraced in the remnants of the “peace and love” sixties generation of my youth.

Many years of spiritual searching included leaving behind my Lutheran indoctrination, traveling new age spirituality, and earning a master's degree in eastern religions. I arrived at “spiritual realism”. There *is* something greater than I which sometimes swoops in to help and guide me. Other times IT has apparently gone to the Bahamas and is not answering ethereal emails. I'm left to my own path of meditation and decisions. I sometimes manifest what I desire and other times time and change manifest experiences for me. Then I accept what is - after a struggle with my will - make changes where I can, and learn life's lessons through spirituality and embracing the real.