



DR. MYLES
MUNROE

THE PRINCIPLES AND

BENEFITS

OF

CHANGE



FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE IN UNSETTLED TIMES

THE PRINCIPLES AND
BENEFITS
OF
CHANGE



FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE IN UNSETTLED TIMES

DR. MYLES MUNROE



WHITAKER
HOUSE

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV®, © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the *New King James Version*, © 1979, 1980, 1982, 1984 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. Scripture quotations marked (NASB) are taken from the updated *New American Standard Bible*®, NASB®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Some definitions of Hebrew and Greek words are taken from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* or the *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (NASC). The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

**THE PRINCIPLES AND BENEFITS OF CHANGE:
Fulfilling Your Purpose in Unsettled Times**
Hardcover edition

Dr. Myles Munroe
Bahamas Faith Ministries International
P.O. Box N9583
Nassau, Bahamas
bfmadmin@bfmmm.com
www.bfmmm.com; www.bfmi.tv; www.mylesmunroe.tv

ISBN: 978-1-60374-097-5
Printed in the United States of America
© 2009 by Dr. Myles Munroe

Whitaker House
1030 Hunt Valley Circle
New Kensington, PA 15068
www.whitakerhouse.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Munroe, Myles.

The principles and benefits of change / Myles Munroe.

p. cm.

Summary: "Reveals how we can respond positively rather than react negatively to change that happens to us, around us, and within us and how we can initiate change, enabling us to fulfill our God-given purposes"—Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-1-60374-097-5 (trade hardcover : alk. paper) 1. Change—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BV4509.5.M86 2009

248.4—dc22

2009018191

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical—including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system—without permission in writing from the publisher. Please direct your inquiries to permissionseditor@whitakerhouse.com.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12  17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09

DEDICATION

To Ruth!

You have weathered the changes of my life for thirty years and taught me the value of the beauty of change.

To Charisa and Chairó!

I watched you successfully manage the changes from birth to adulthood, and I am proud of you. You taught me many of the principles in this work, and I trust you will maximize the changes throughout your lives.

To the over six billion planet dwellers on an earth that changes every minute. May this work equip you with the tools to not just watch things change but make things change for the better.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since this book has been over twenty years in the making, I hope that all the leaders, friends, family members, and colleagues who have inspired me over the years will know my gratitude, even if there are too many to name on this page.

First and foremost, my thanks to my beloved wife, Ruth, who has stood by me and encouraged me to keep sharing my thoughts with the world.

Second, to my children, Charisa and Myles (Chairo) Munroe! Thank you for allowing me to fulfill my passions without a sense of guilt. Your patience and understanding are inspiring.

To my very talented, wise, and excellent editor, Lois Puglisi! Your commitment to perfection and quality is exceptional, and I owe you a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation for helping me deliver this work to the market of humanity. A philosopher is only as valuable as his readers; therefore, I thank you for helping this work make it to the hearts of men and women whom I hope will benefit from the content of these pages and make change a friend.

CONTENTS

Preface.....	7
Introduction: <i>A Historic Convergence</i>	9

Part 1: The Change Factor

1. Everything Changes	
<i>An Inevitability Shared by Everyone on Earth</i>	15
2. Reacting to Change	
<i>Our Natural Tendency: Acting before Thinking</i>	27
3. Responding to Change	
<i>Essential Life Skills: Preparing for the Unexpected, Initiating Purpose</i> .	37
4. Protection against Change	
<i>Safeguards against Disappointment and Frustration</i>	45
5. Maximizing Critical Change	
<i>Growth, Creativity, and Innovation</i>	53

Part 2: The Purpose of Change

6. Your One Constant in Change	
<i>Nothing Is Permanent Except God and His Promises</i>	63
7. The Nature and Characteristics of Seasons	
<i>Change Is Built into Creation</i>	73
8. Worldwide Tides of Change	
<i>Ten Areas Converging to Transform Our World</i>	83

9. Personal Purpose and Change	
<i>Let Your Purpose Guide You through Times of Transition</i>	103
10. The Greatest Hindrance to Positive Change	
<i>Outdated Methods and Traditions Stifle Innovation</i>	117
11. The Challenge of Change	
<i>Change Tests and Reveals Who We Are</i>	129

Part 3: Initiating Change in Your World

12. The Mind-set of a Change Agent	
<i>Attitudes for Interacting with Change</i>	143
13. Charting Your Course to a Preferred Future	
<i>Essential Features of Purposeful Change</i>	151
14. Overseeing Change in Your World	
<i>Keys to Planning and Preparing for Change</i>	161
15. When You Need a Course Correction	
<i>It's Never Too Late to Change</i>	171
16. Ten Ways Leaders Respond to Change	
<i>Change Is Inevitable. Change Is Necessary. Change Is Possible.</i>	183
Principles for Emerging Leaders	
<i>A New Approach to Life</i>	190
Notes	207
About the Author	208

PREFACE

Nothing is as permanent as change. Understanding this paradoxical truth transformed my life. It protected me when I was a youth, and it has helped guide me as an adult.

Change is natural to existence and common to all creation. Everything is in a constant state of change, and nothing can stop it. Change is both evidence that we are alive and proof that we are finite—because everything has its own season, and nothing on this earth lasts forever.

Change is a principle of creation. In short, everything changes.

The simple statement *everything changes* conveys a principle that can bring tremendous peace and understanding to us. If we accept the inevitable truth that nothing in our lives will remain the same, we can develop realistic levels of expectation and minimize our disappointments.

We generally experience four types of change in life: (1) change that happens around us, (2) change that happens to us, (3) change that happens within us, and (4) change that we make happen.

One of the greatest tragedies in life is that only a small percentage of the world's population responds to change effectively. Many people are victims of

8 The Principles and Benefits of Change

change. Some people dread change; others refuse to accept it. These approaches are formulas for frustration, depression, and wasted potential.

Are you teetering at the threshold of a new season? Change may make you feel more trepidation than trust. Yet you can learn to embrace change with a positive attitude and use it to benefit your life, as well as others' lives.

Or, perhaps you anticipate change in the future and are excited about it. As you read this book and come to view times of transition from a new perspective, you'll discover tremendous opportunities for personal, professional, and corporate growth. These new possibilities hold an exciting destiny for you.

Be bold and embrace the next season of your life. It's the only path to fulfilling your potential—and your unique contribution to your generation.

Lost opportunity means the sacrifice of destiny.

—Dr. Myles Munroe



INTRODUCTION

A Historic Convergence

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present.

—Abraham Lincoln

No matter who you are—regardless of your country, race, ethnicity, language, and disposition—*time* and *change* will affect you.

Life is continually handing us personal, family, community, and national changes. However, we are also living in a time when there is a convergence of worldwide changes that is creating a transitional tide in human history. We are experiencing change on a big scale. In response, we must understand this change and meet it effectively or the forces of transition will pull us along, and we will have no influence in the midst of them.

Historic convergences and transitional tides have occurred at significant points throughout the ages. A historic convergence is a strategic period of history when major events occur, bringing with them momentous transformations in social, economic, political, and spiritual conditions. In the past, some strategic changes have been welcomed by people, while

others have been dreaded. Certain changes have drawn mixed reactions from individuals. Unsettling times throughout history have resulted in societal fear, panic, distress, and confusion. Many people were not prepared for these changes; some reacted with suspicion, contempt, and violence, while others simply surrendered to the inevitable and became victims of the elements of change.

Let us look back through the corridor of time to various strategic points in history. Transitional periods occurred during the times known as the Dark Ages and the Enlightenment, during the times of the exploits of great explorers such as Christopher Columbus, during the western expansion of Europe to the Americas, colonization, the slave trade, the birth of the republic of the United States, World Wars I and II, the creation of the United Nations, the birth of the nation of Israel, the Civil Rights Movement, the decline of communism, the expansion of Islam, the birth and growth of new Eastern religions, and the emergence of international terrorism.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were noted for great changes in the arenas of science, technology, transportation, communication, education, and religion. The explosion of scientific discoveries led to advances in medicine and the invention of the telephone, airplane, radio, television, and computer. The development of intercontinental travel resulted in intercultural exposures not possible in earlier times. The world truly has become a “global village.”

***Change is in
the air. It is
everywhere.***



This brief overview captures the complex nature of some of the events that have shaped the world in which we live today. As we move forward in the twenty-first century, we, also, are caught in transitional tides. Everyone with a measure of discernment, spiritual insight, and historical perspective can sense a historic convergence in every sphere of life. Change is in the air. It is everywhere. The present time period demands a response within the context of these changes. What is the nature of the transitions taking place at this juncture in history?

A quick assessment reveals tremendous change in the international political equation. We have seen the demise of colonialism, the extinction

of the Cold War, the birth and rise of increasingly significant independent states (both large and small), an increase in worldwide economic interdependence, and global access to instant intercultural/international communication through the Internet. Post-World War II leaders have passed their leadership to younger generations who are removed from that era, bringing a youthfulness to national leadership not seen in some decades. In the Christian church, old guard Protestant and evangelical leaders and those who founded the charismatic movement are drifting from the scene. Their departure makes room for a new crop of leaders for the twenty-first century church.

Moreover, a significant shift is taking place in former colonial territories that were once the focus of mission efforts, many of which have been identified as undeveloped, developing, or Third World countries. The growth of the national church and church leadership within these nations requires a new approach for a new era.

In *The Principles and Benefits of Change: Fulfilling Your Purpose in Unsettled Times*, we will look at worldwide and personal challenges we all face today. We are truly in seasons of change. It will take an informed, globally minded, spiritually sensitive, skilled, educated, purpose-inspired person to effectively make a difference in our generation and set a standard for the generations to come. It will take those who understand the dynamics of change and who determine to respond rather than to react. Today's leaders will have to be creative on demand, understanding their roles and purposes in their generation.

The historic convergence discussed above is occurring in ten major areas. I believe the twenty-first century will be known as the age of:

1. Globalization
2. Information
3. Communication
4. Mobilization
5. Cultural Diversification
6. Mergers and Networking
7. Longevity of Life
8. Technology

9. Social and Political Transition

10. Rapid Transformation

A paradigm shift is taking place in these arenas, a trend that we will look at more closely in the chapter “Worldwide Tides of Change.” Across the globe, leaders are sensing an urgency to integrate their nations into these changes. Old styles of leadership have lost their effectiveness and must yield to the new equation of twenty-first century leadership.

Moreover, the emergence of Third World leadership in the social, political, and religious fields is undeniable. The formerly opposed, rejected, and ignored are rising up to places of influence. This international change includes a shift in emphasis, priorities, and methods. Whether you live in a modern industrial society or in the developing Third World, you must carefully consider how these changes affect your life. It is imperative that

On a global scale, as well as on a personal one, we must be prepared for transformation. we know how to prepare for the change, how to respond to the change, how to maximize the change, and what to do to change *ourselves* in order to fulfill our individual and corporate purposes.

On a global scale, therefore, as well as on a personal one, we must be prepared for transformation. Let us embrace the principles and benefits of change so we may fulfill our individual and corporate destinies, in all seasons and circumstances of our lives.



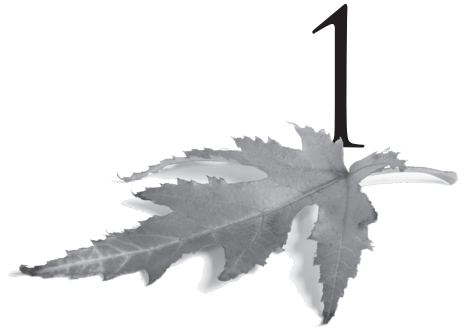
Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower



Part 1

THE CHANGE FACTOR



EVERYTHING CHANGES

An Inevitability Shared by Everyone on Earth

The future has a way of arriving unannounced.

—George Will, Pulitzer prize-winning journalist and author

While we live and breathe on this earth, 6.7 billion of us human beings share the same inevitability: we all have to face *change*. The same was true for everyone who existed in the past. The same will be true for everyone who will be born in the future.

Our lives are in a constant state of transition. Life is always moving forward; nothing ever remains the same. Even those who live essentially quiet lives are affected by change. To a greater or lesser degree, we are continually being transported—whether suddenly or gradually—into the new, the different, the unexpected, or the untried.

Change is one of the most important factors in life, whether that change is imposed on us or we've created the change ourselves and are eagerly anticipating its possibilities. Yet most people don't manage change effectively and positively. Some believe that change just "happens," and they

don't think seriously about the effects change is having on them. Many also neglect to initiate positive changes that would make a significant difference in their lives and the lives of others. And the majority of us end up, in some way, the victims of unwanted change.

Four Types of Change

We experience four distinct types of change in life:

1. Change that happens *to us*—unexpected or anticipated change that affects our personal lives, families, careers, and so forth.
2. Change that happens *around us*—unexpected or anticipated change that affects our society, nation, or world and that also has some impact on us personally or on our ways of life.
3. Change that happens *within us*—unexpected or anticipated change that directly affects who we are—either physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.
4. Change that *we initiate*—something created or altered by plans we have implemented in order to move us from the present to a preferred future.

We can identify each of the above as a distinct type of change, even though, sometimes, there may be overlap between them.

What Are the Results of Change?

Change transports the present into a future that demands a response.



Change transports the present into a future that demands a response. Often, that response requires further change from us. The fact of the needed change may bring positive activity—excitement, anticipation, and energetic planning. Or, it may bring a negative reaction—uncertainty, stress, and emotional shutdown. How we react to change has greater consequences to us than we may realize.

Imagine that you were transported a hundred years into the future. The changes that would have taken place in your nation and the world would be such that you would hardly recognize your own

community. Abruptly coming into a transformed world would be a drastic encounter with change. Almost everything you are familiar with on a day-to-day basis would be gone: family, friends, culture, ways of interacting with the world (such as technology, communication), ways of perceiving the world (socially, politically, economically), and so forth. The language would even have evolved. Your words and even speech patterns would seem quaint to those in the twenty-second century. You would be as disoriented as someone from the first decade of the twentieth century trying to figure out what an iPod is.

In the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, one of the characters, Brooks, is paroled from the penitentiary. Brooks hasn't lived out in society for five decades. He went to prison during the first decade of the twentieth century and is released in the 1950s. He considers harming or even killing a fellow inmate because then he will be charged with assault or murder and be able to stay in prison. His friends talk him out of it, however, and he is released from the penitentiary as scheduled. Brooks boards the bus that will take him into town, where he will live at a halfway house and work at a grocery store, bagging groceries. The bus speeds up to probably thirty-five or forty miles per hour, but Brooks clutches tightly to the seat railing because the speed is overwhelming to him. His expression of fear contrasts with the rest of the passengers on the bus, who just look bored. Brooks has no frame of reference for what the others take completely for granted. "I can't believe how fast things move on the outside," he writes to his friends. Everything about his life is unfamiliar, foreign. Brooks has nightmares in which he is falling. "I'm tired of being afraid all the time," he says.

Change and Loss

Gradual change, experienced on a daily basis, is relatively easy for people to handle. Often, they don't even notice it. But sudden change can affect people in a way similar to Brooks' experience. Depending on the intensity of the change—and the resulting loss—the effects of change can vary from merely stretching someone to grow a little to causing someone to experience such mental conflict between past and present that he or she succumbs to a breakdown or even commits suicide. That's what happens to Brooks in *Shawshank Redemption*. He can't handle living on "the outside,"

and, tragically, he takes his own life. Commenting on Brooks' situation, another character, Red, gestures to the prison walls surrounding the outside courtyard and says, "I'm telling you, these walls are funny. At first, you hate 'em. Then, you get used to 'em. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on 'em."

Similarly, the effects of failing to implement positive change to improve one's life can range from someone missing out on a single rewarding experience to not fulfilling his or her entire purpose for living.

In most of the above scenarios, the person reacting negatively to change experiences loss. Mostly, it is the loss of potential. It's the loss of what that person could have been or done by responding constructively to change. This is why it is essential for us to learn to oversee change rather than become its victims, and why we must initiate change rather than be left behind by it.

The ongoing dynamic of change is one of the most important factors of human life.



The ongoing dynamic of change, therefore, is one of the most important factors of human life. How we relate to change has a significant impact on our quality of life and whether or not we accomplish what we are meant to during our time on earth. Understanding how to view, respond to, and benefit from change is vital to a well-balanced and fulfilled life.

Five Principles of Change

Let's consider five foundational principles of *change* and their implications:

1. ***Nothing on earth is as permanent as change.*** What a paradox! One thing that's always present on this earth is change. Nothing else can really be expected or guaranteed.
2. ***Change is continual.*** Our lives keep moving forward, and the environment around us undergoes alterations all the time. Change doesn't stop when we sleep, when we take a vacation, or when we're on a lunch break. Change is ceaseless.
3. ***Everything changes.*** The details of our lives are always in transition. Here are just some of the ways in which your life will (or can) change:

- ✦ Your *knowledge* will change. We are always taking in more knowledge and information from a variety of sources. Often, the more information we receive, the more we view life and other people differently. New knowledge will change your perspectives or broaden or deepen your original ideas.
- ✦ Your *interests* will change. Some of the things you are interested in today may change tomorrow as you expand the range of your experiences. Or, you may decide to focus on just one or two areas of interest in order to achieve a particular goal, putting other interests on the back burner or dropping them altogether.
- ✦ Your *values and priorities* will change. The things that you value now may not be the things that you will value in the next ten years, five years, or one year. I don't necessarily mean core life values, although these may change. Rather, I'm referring more to the priority or value we place on certain people or things. This may change due to increased personal maturity or to the particular stage of life we are in. For example, when many couples get married and start families, they begin to think about pursuing spiritual values because they think it will be good for their children. Or, the change may have to do with temporary life circumstances. Perhaps you had been focusing on building a vacation house, but you lost your job and are now focused just on keeping your primary home. Your plans have had to be cancelled or postponed. You don't value that vacation house as a priority anymore because something more important has taken its place. When your values change, it can change your whole lifestyle.
- ✦ Your *body* will change. If you are a young person, you are still growing and maturing into an adult. If you are already an adult, you will notice various physical changes as you grow older: your hairline recedes; your eyes don't focus as they used to, and you have to buy reading glasses; your strength and flexibility are not what they had been; and so forth. These types of changes can significantly impact the quality of our lives if we are unprepared for them.
- ✦ Your *family relationships network* will change. We don't really know how our relationships may change in any given year. You may gain