

This I Believe – Sarah Livers

This I believe: as human beings have a wondrous ability to adapt and evolve endlessly throughout the course of our lifetime.

We have these moments in life, many more than we realize, when we're looking down that proverbial road, imagining what's to become of us. At the time, we don't always see the road for the opportunity it is. Sometimes we tell ourselves lies, excuses or rationalizations: that we missed the deadline, that we won't make it, that we'll never measure up. And then by some rare form of grace, we're on the other side of that same road, perhaps a little tainted, but wondering why we devoted so much time to worrying about the destination when we knew we could manage the journey all along.

I've gone through countless cycles of being set in my ways and then eventually surrendering to a change. I was raised in a traditional family of four, and attended a private Catholic school with my brother. The community was as small as some of its thinking. I followed suit and found it easy to adopt rituals and behaviors: sleeping with a night light, not questioning authority—especially God -- and doing nearly everything in my power to please my parents.

But somehow overtime the security of my favorite comforting blanket became more of a chokehold, and I needed to try something different. I became accustomed to sleeping in the dark. I shed my timid skin, and while I didn't necessarily question authority, I was able to come to my parents with questions, and work on the person I was becoming.

In retrospect these achievements were small, but they built up a sense of change and adaptation that I respected; I wasn't so afraid of the future.

Some time ago, I was told I had a disease. I didn't want to hear it. I wanted to wrap myself back up in my comfortable blanket of predictability and shut out all talk of blood sugars, and insulin, and carbohydrates. It didn't take me long to become afraid again. I was frozen in place at the beginning of the road. The journey of being a newly diagnosed diabetic, to say the least, looked dismal and defeating.

While still numb, I began to take those first blind steps into change and adaptation. The change stood out like a sore thumb—literally. Each prick of the glucose meter felt like a stab into a past I could never bring back. It was one thing to accept change. It was quite another to be forced to cope and adapt for survival.

I now know that adaptation doesn't come like a pre-packaged meal with a side dish of understanding. When you allow yourself to go through the motions of change, the true evolution takes place, creating a new being with a new set of rituals and attitudes and growth. Like the paths we walk in life, we are ever-changing, and yet the foundation remains ever the same. I believe this: it is not the continuity of the road beneath of our feet that builds a new character, but rather the will to travel at all.