

Change

1 No gardener ever made a rose. When its needs are met a rosebush will make roses. Gardeners collaborate and provide conditions which favor this outcome. And as anyone who has ever pruned a rosebush knows, life flows through every rosebush in a slightly different way.

Rachel Naomi Remen

2 Everything begins on the verge of awareness. The dawn is not and then is. Sleep is and then is not. In between is the awakening. . .

The passage of thin light, between, breaks open the day. The passage of thin sound, between, flows into the day. Too soon the numbing rumble of traffic swells, the day glares.

Let the soft haze hang again across the row of morning. Wait upon the narrow moment, the first awareness of being in between! Live days and seasons on the thin edge of dawn, in praise that every single thing begins now!

George Kimmich Beach, 1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection

3 The ground's generosity takes in our compost and grows beauty! Try to be more like the ground. **Rumi**

4 There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter. **Rachel Carson**

5 What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset. **Blackfoot**

6 Poem excerpt

For nothing is fixed,

forever and forever and forever,

it is not fixed;

the earth is always shifting,

the light is always changing,

the sea does not cease to grind down rock.

Generations do not cease to be born,

and we are responsible to them because we are the only witnesses they have.

*The sea rises, the light fails,
lovers cling to each other,
and children cling to us.*

The moment we cease to hold each other,
the moment we break faith with one another,
the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.

--adapted from *Nothing Personal* by **James Baldwin and Richard Avedon**

7 Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.
Aldous Huxley

8 I believe there are certain things that God uses to get us out of a bad situation, and I believe music was one of the things he used for me. **Mary J. Blige**

9 I'm always looking outside, trying to look inside. Trying to say something that is true. But nothing is really true. Except what's out there. And what's out there is always changing.
Photographer Richard Frank

10 Remember that sometimes not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck. **Dalai Lama**

11 We are uncomfortable because everything in our life keeps changing -- our inner moods, our bodies, our work, the people we love, the world we live in. We can't hold on to anything -- a beautiful sunset, a sweet taste, an intimate moment with a lover, our very existence as the body/mind we call self -- because all things come and go. Lacking any permanent satisfaction, we continuously need another injection of fuel, stimulation, reassurance from loved ones, medicine, exercise, and meditation. We are continually driven to become something more, to experience something else. **Tara Brach**

12 Change and Anti-Racism

Our only change at dismantling racial injustice is being more curious about its origins than we are worried about our comfort. It's not a comfortable conversation for any of us. It is risky and messy. It is haunting work to recall the sins of our past. But is this not the work we have been called to anyway? Is this not the work of the Holy Spirit to illuminate truth and inspire transformation? It's haunting. But it's also holy.

— **Austin Channing Brown, I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness**

13 October is the fallen leaf, but it is also a wider horizon more clearly seen. It is the distant hills once more in sight, and the enduring constellations above them once again. **Hal Bourland**

14 You will evolve past certain people. Let yourself. **Mandy Hale**, *The Single Woman: Life, Love, and a Dash of Sass*

15 When things happen to us in life, we either get better or bitter. It's that simple. **John Dunston**

Expectation, Sadness and Disappointment

16 People seem to do whatever they can to avoid recognizing that they are disappointed and will twist their thinking every which way to not recognize a true disappointment.

17 Disappointment forces you to admit that you did not get what you wished to have, and it is actually easier for you to protest with anger than it is to encounter your sadness about the course of events. In an obstinate way, anger will allow you to continue idealizing what could have been while consciously denigrating it, and you will hang onto it only because it's what you needed at the time. Disappointment accepts reality.

18 If sadness can help you to remember and accept reality, achieve insight that can realign your goals, alert you to be cautious before making decisions, and create an opportunity for you to observe yourself, then perhaps its adaptive purpose is evident: like all emotions, sadness, in spite of how it makes you feel, is simply trying to protect you.

--psychologist **Mary C. Lamia, PhD**, Psychology Today blog post

For Reflection and Discussion

A Does change make sense as a spiritual theme? How do you understand change as a spiritual theme?

B Can you recall changes that you've responded well to? How were you able to respond well? Did spiritual practices help? What helped?

C What change(s) in your life are proving difficult? What emotions come up? What have you tried and what will you try to move through the change(s)?

D What comes to mind when you think of "change" and "All Souls" together? How does your experience at All Souls help you celebrate joyful transitions and cope with difficult transitions? Are you challenged by changes at All Souls?

--Compiled by Mary Beth Hatem for All Souls Church, Unitarian