



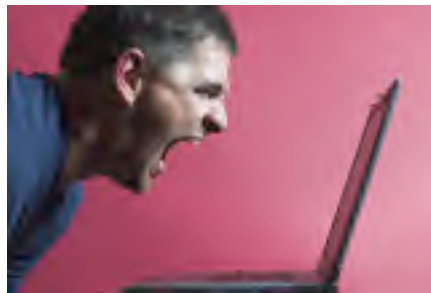
CHANGE YOUR FOCUS CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Dancing with Cyberspace

By Silver Rose

As one who teaches how to cope with our ever-changing world, it was with some fascination that I watched the brouhaha over the recent changes to FaceBook. For those of you who don't use FaceBook, just know that they made changes and many people passionately protested, much of it not nice.

I've witnessed similar cries of protest from my partner Bill whenever Yahoo changes their email program. If I hear a holler of frustration coming out of the office, I know it has something to do with the computer and, more specifically, changes made without his being consulted.



To all of you I say, with love and respect, "Embrace change. It is your friend." If change makes you want to chew the furniture, then the Internet is probably not a good place for you to be hanging out.

I can think of no better arena to practice your skill at *Dancing With Change* than your computer, be it a desktop, a laptop, a notebook or a smartphone. I say that because if you own them, you are likely highly motivated to use these tools and they are (and always will be) evolving quickly and without advance notice.

Those changes made by faceless programmers somewhere out in cyberspace are not designed to drive you crazy. They're actually intended to improve things for you. Of course, we've all heard that the road to hell is paved with good intentions but truly, Oliver Stone and Michael Moore notwithstanding, there are no geeks conspiring against you. The geeks with bad intentions could care less about how you socially network; they're too busy hacking your bank records.

Here is why technical changes frustrate us so much. Think about it: you already knew how to use the program on your computer. It took awhile but you finally mastered it. Now someone you've never met and will never see has decided to "improve" things and overnight the program you knew how to use looks or acts completely different. What you are faced with is a learning curve. And learning curves make us nervous. We feel vulnerable, an emotion no one embraces.

When you're hit with a change, the very first question to ask is, "Do I have any control over this?" If the answer is no, then the next question is, "What do I need to do to adjust?" (Bill's answer to that is, "Use my computer as a Frisbee.")

The good news is that medical science tells us that learning keeps our brains agile. According to Dr. Mehmet Oz: "Education is key to slowing brain aging. Simply put, the more you know, the more you stretch your brain's capacity for learning."

So the next time a program change happens that triggers a negative reaction from you, instead of beating up the developers, post a "thank you" from your future self. After all, the 80-year-old you will, because of them, have an extremely agile brain from continually trying to figure out how to "make this #!?*# thing work!"