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Change is Constant – So You Better Learn to Adapt

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Change is Constant – So You Better Learn to Adapt

By Traci Evison
UCF Forum columnist
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I recently saw a turtle digging a hole to lay eggs in a neighborhood park that I walk through. This park has a lake but what surprised me about the turtle was the location she decided to lay her eggs. Instead of making the nest close to the lake about 50 feet away, where I would assume it would be easier for young turtles to begin their lives, this turtle was digging a hole a few feet from the street at the edge of the park.

I don't know much about turtles, so after researching I found that it is common for turtles to lay eggs in yards, driveways and near roads because their natural habitats are shrinking. Turtles may return to the site where they hatched, or find a new spot such as your neighbor's garden where the ground has already been cultivated in the spring. Once the turtle lays her eggs, she leaves and never returns to care for the hatchlings. The eggs will hatch in August or September.

Initially this was a scary thought, that baby turtles are on their own when they hatch. But instinct kicks in and they begin to move in the direction toward water. Turtles have been adapting to changes in their environment forever – so this method must work!

I think the same idea – that we must be adaptable – can be applied to any change that takes place in our lives, because change is an ongoing occurrence.

I experienced a change this month and realized that I can either manage the process successfully by embracing and adapting to a new position and location at the university after spending nine years in my previous job – it's hard to believe it was almost a decade – or I can resist the change and experience an unsuccessful transition.

I decided to go with: Change can be a positive thing.

The move was only a few buildings away to the UCF Office of Research & Commercialization, but it did make me pause to reflect on the transition as I cleaned out my desk and gave away items to interested coworkers, such as a colorful collection of magnets that had taken over my overhead filing cabinet. The magnets marked vacation destinations brought back to me as souvenirs from coworker's adventures through the years.

It can be difficult to let go of the "old" in order to move forward with the "new," especially when you are established, comfortable and a subject-matter expert, but it must be done sometimes. Otherwise you may experience stagnation and negativity.

So I let go of my magnet collection and other things, and am in the process of learning new skills, meeting new faces, and trying to remember where everything is in my new office.

It turns out that it has not been as scary as I thought. Perhaps instinct is kicking in like it does with young turtles – and I will find the metaphorical lake I seek.

Or at least the bathroom.

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