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Lillian Caraballo

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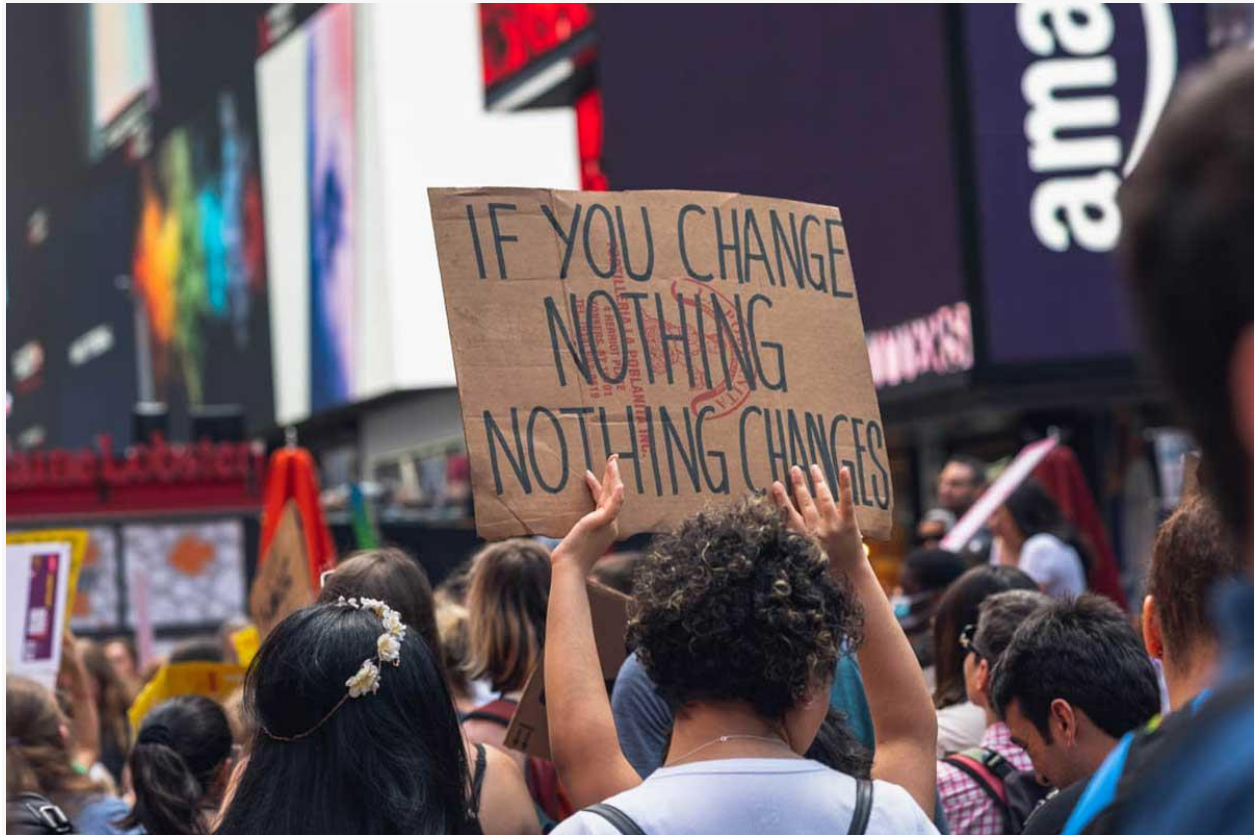
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## The World is Changing — and I’m Ready to Evolve With It

By Lillian M. Hernandez Caraballo  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Whatever is happening now in society will happen with or without us. We might as well try to be part of it, to influence it.



(Photo by Santa Maria on iStock)

“What a long year this week has been,” someone I know posted to Facebook.

I’m guessing she had an exhausting day. One so draining that she felt as if she had given more time than she had available to give in a single day.

She is not alone.

Many people have expressed how emotionally spent they feel lately. Some say they feel hopeless. Even memes have grown rather dark, as each day we wait for the next bout of disastrous events to be announced. A lot of us check our social media and phone news apps just to see “what now.” However, if you’re a first responder, public servant or a journalist, you don’t get to just ignore these things.

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The events of the year 2020 will be taught in history classes, no doubt. It kicked off with heightened world tensions, colossal wildfires, and devastating earthquakes, and has moved on to a pandemic, civil unrest and demonstrations. This may be the largest human-rights movement in history. The aid and solidarity have been inspiring, the deaths and violence have been heartbreaking, and the entire experience has been taxing. Oh, and there’s a 21,000-ton oil spill in Russia that recently occurred above the Arctic Circle.

So, yeah ... If you’ve made it this far, congratulations. You may just get to participate in the 2020 U.S. presidential election, which has polarized most voters.

All of this has been enough to get some of us to take extreme measures. Whether you chose to disconnect from social media or mask up to join a protest, whether you are working from home in your pajamas or lost your job and are wondering how you’ll make your next rent payment, our lives are changing. The world is changing.

And I don’t have much to say about it or have comforting words, solutions or meaning. I’m just trying to digest it all, the same as everyone else.

Some say it’s a matter of cosmic balance. Others talk of doom and the apocalypse. Many see these events as inevitable results of decades, even centuries, of ignoring systemic national and global issues. For others it’s just nature, a natural order of things; not a grand master plan but a reason.

Whichever belief system you subscribe to, you’re probably like a lot of us filled with a certain level of uncertainty. Will we restore back to normal, or will there exist a new “normal” after all this? Is there a power shift? If so, is that necessarily a bad thing, or is that OK?

These are deep questions, and these issues are not monolithic. They require analysis, philosophical and intellectual dialogue that is nuanced and well-informed.

But I do know one thing: Everything ends. Everything dies. And this, too, shall pass.

When it does, whatever happens is our next chapter. How we rebuild will be up to us. I would suggest perhaps a willingness to strip ourselves of any preconceived notions, maybe learn to embrace whatever vision others have of a right, just and safe world.

Whatever happens, it's happening now, and it will happen with or without us. We might as well try to be part of it, to influence it. Whatever it is, we're going to have to figure this one out together.

For now, be kind. Be open. Let's progress. I'm ready to evolve.

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