

2nd January, 2008

CHANGE IS A LUXURY

DEAR DIARY, my friend Mavis is having to make life changing decisions at the moment. The four very important corners of her life need a new broom to sweep clean and we were talking about making a choice to do one thing or another.

Mavis said one of the most profound things to me in that three hour conversation. She said being in a position to make a decision to make a change is a luxury.

Mavis and I met each other through our job. We shared the same feelings about some of the policies that were in place at the time. We were both frustrated because we were powerless in terms of making a change for the better. We realised we were working at a place which stifled who we were, even our laughter was frowned upon; nothing verbal was said, it was just the disapproving look. We stood no chance of growing productively within the workplace. We were paid very well and that kept us working there far longer than we liked, but eventually, at different times, we both resigned with no job to go to!

Myself and Mavis were in the luxurious position to be able to make a drastic decision about our careers without promise of employment elsewhere.

Now when I look at all the changes I've been able to make in my life instead of feeling sorry for myself for some of the things that have happened to me, when I reframe the same situation and apply the fact that I had the ability to change the course of my life because I had the luxury of being able to make a change, it makes me feel blessed and happy with who I am.

I think about when I was very young and my children were both in nappies and I decided to terminate the relationship I was having with their father because he made my life a misery. I had the luxury of being able to make a change. I was not in a position where if he went, half of my life, would disappear too. I was able to make that change and still plough through life and even see a light at the end of the tunnel. Some women are not fortunate enough to do that. They're in a relationship or marriage where they see no way out. They have no light at the end of their tunnel. They haven't got a job so that they can stand on their own two feet. They have no family or friends to help them keep hold of their freedom and sanity. Their self confidence has been ripped to shreds and their dream life has turned

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

into a nightmare. Some women are physically abused and they have to stay, not knowing when or where the next punch will be.

About 10 years ago, I had a part time job in a lovely little office in a converted house. The company consisted of six staff and I was a team secretary. It was one of my best jobs until Emma was employed. She took an instant dislike to me. Emma made it very clear to everyone that she didn't like me and she did an excellent job of getting a lot of people on her side. At the time she started, the company lost two people who I was close to; one of them was the woman who employed me so I was on my own. So after a year of being in the best job in the world, it turned sour the day Emma came with her ugly ways.

She started asking me to do things that were not part of my job description like clean equipment so you can imagine what our relationship was like because we were always in disagreement because of the things she expected me to do.

Initially, Emma's nastiness didn't both me, it seeped in slowly because I still liked my job, I just didn't like her, but months down the line, one day I called my friend at lunchtime and was explaining Emma's behaviour and I started to cry hot, angry, temper tears and that was it for me. I cleared my drawer when I got back from lunch and told one person who worked there that I was leaving the following day. That same afternoon, I had a blazing argument with Emma. She cried to the Manager and they took Emma's side because by then I was the black sheep of the office. I had developed a bad attitude so it came as no surprise that I was no longer popular. I came into the office the day after the argument and told the Director and the Manager that I was leaving that morning and I had only come to the office to tell them face to face and that was the last I saw of them. They didn't look too surprised; in fact I think they were relieved. I no longer fit in and the place was no longer harmonious. I lost respect for the Director and Manager because I thought they would be able to see through Emma.

I was not afraid that I had two children in nursery and no job to go to. I was in debt, had rent to pay, an old banger of a car which had a tendency to break down every time it went over a stone. I made a choice to have faith and in the end I was taken care of. When I got a better job within two weeks, it reinforced my thinking that if I feel the need to make a change, I must do so, regardless of how afraid I might be.

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

The luxury of change applies to issues that are big and small. I have the luxury of wearing shoes, boots, sandals or trainers all depending on the weather and how I feel. There are some people who cannot change footwear according to a whim or weather.

The list goes on and on:

- ❁ I can eat chicken or lamb.
- ❁ I can choose to walk or drive.
- ❁ I can have still water or a glass of red wine.
- ❁ I can watch TV in bed or the living room.
- ❁ I can have a beauty treatment or not.
- ❁ I can use the house phone or the mobile phone.
- ❁ I can have breakfast in bed and choose what I eat and who makes it for me.
- ❁ I can choose to phone my sister or my brother or my mum or my dad or a male friend or a female friend.

I still can't choose to do all of the things I'd like to do, but for now, I'm so grateful that my life isn't dictated by not being able to make choices. I have no idea what tomorrow will bring, but I celebrate the luxury of change today.

August Mayfield