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The Attitude of Change

As I reflect on my last 2 years on the Grand Council, I wondered what I would be speaking to you about today. Maybe it would be on 'Read your red book', but you have heard that before. Or maybe it would be on the Audit, but most of you already learned about that during your training sessions. So, I thought of all the changes we have been through in the Women of the Moose as well as what our future holds. How are these changes affecting you and your attitude? Change and attitude seem to go hand in hand one way or another. So let's go to the dictionary for some help:

Change is defined as, "to make a difference in something or to give a different position, course or direction." Attitude is, "a mental position, feeling or emotion toward a fact or state. A negative or hostile state of mind."

What a whirlwind of change life has been the last few months! We have been forced to adapt to uncertain and ever-changing pandemic regulations, distancing guidelines, and safety precautions. We have had to cancel travel plans, avoid visiting with loved ones, close our Moose homes and stay at home.

How has this situation and all these changes affected you? Did you accept change or did it put you in a hostile state of mind? We deal with life changes all the time but sometimes change is scary and unwanted. Think about it -- Your age – this is gradual, so you may not even think about it much, until maybe when you reached one of those mile stone years. Your appearance – now this is something you may have control of but not always. You might accept changes like weight fluctuations, gray hairs or wrinkles or you could fight them every step of the way. Some appearance changes may not affect you but may affect how others perceive you. Employment changes - it can be a new job, a new boss or new responsibilities. Or often a welcome change: retirement! Getting married, becoming a mom or the loss of a love one are huge changes.

Everyone is different and accepts changes in their own way. Some changes happen over a period of time, others occur unexpectedly, but changes are a part of our lives and our attitude impacts all of us. Change can be hard for some people to except. However, keep in mind that change is a part of growing as a person. Staying progressive and ambitious in today's society requires the will and the skill to adapt to change. Being willing and able to adapt doesn't mean you have to alter who you are at your core, instead it means you recognize what is relevant and valuable. Think of a chameleon – to survive in a changing environment, a chameleon changes colors but doing so doesn't change the fact that it is still a little green lizard.

While some of you may not agree with all the changes being proposed to the Moose Fraternity, we need to be able to cope with the change in a positive and respectful way. Remember, Moose International and our experienced leaders are looking out for the long-term future of Mooseheart and Moosehaven and would not do anything to jeopardize their future or yours. One of the reasons organizations fail is because they fail to strive for better and don't evolve to meet the needs of their members and prospective members. Our organization sets the bar for others – Moose leadership continues to ask questions, research member opinions and desires, fuel curiosity, focus on the future and strive for excellence. As a result, the One Moose concept was born. I encourage each of you to consider the bigger picture and educate yourself about all aspects of the proposal. The more you know, the better you will feel about changing. *Psychology Today* recommends seeking alternatives when change is looming; be prepared. Change is constant, so seek coping skills to enhance the positives of changing times. Acceptance is not always easy; process your feelings and understand the objective. Embrace your feelings about the specific change you are facing. When changes are confusing or overwhelming, ask for help. More specifically, reach out to members of the Stand As One Committee, well-informed supporters and staff for answers.

This past summer I went thru a life changing event myself. Without going into much detail, an emotional, medical scare can be one of the hardest changes to adapt to. Acceptance is not an easy option. Processing the news and the resulting changes can be overwhelming and strips you of your strength and positive attitude. You think you know how you would react or how you would handle something, until it happens to you. I went thru so many emotions; my attitude changed so many times. So, believe me, I intimately know that change and attitude indeed go hand in hand.

I survived. I adapted. I took responsibility for how I dealt with change. I had to identify my emotions and work through them. By embracing your feelings, it is easier to grow and move on. The following skills helped me on my journey – maybe they will help you too.

Understand the change. Before the time comes for you to accept this change learn why it is necessary for old things to go and new things to come. Educate yourself about the change and how it directly affects you. Consider and ponder how the change will be implemented.

Put the change in perspective. It is easy to get overwhelmed by change and let it take control of your emotions. Get into a more positive mindset by asking yourself, “Why am I upset or worried about this change?

What is it that I believe will happen as a result of this change? Are these thoughts and beliefs accurate and realistic and are they worth worrying about?” Or, try making yourself a pros and cons list.

Changes are a chance to grow. Change can be a powerful motivator to help you achieve your goals. Look on the bright side. Use this as an opportunity to rediscover a new zest.

If you're having difficulty processing the changes being proposed to our fraternity, I encourage you to use some of these steps to help you to accept it. If we do not change and adapt, we become stagnant and bored. We eventually fade away; members stop coming into our Moose homes, donors don't support our endeavors and prospective members aren't interested in our cause. We can't let that happen.

Have you ever thought about the changes the kids go through when they come to Mooseheart? They have to adapt to a new environment, adhere to a foreign set of rules, and engage with family teachers and peers they never met before. The kids that accept the changes thrive and become better people. We too can adapt, evolve and positively accept the changes coming our way.

Attitude, in my opinion, is sometimes more important than fact. How we manage the past, our education, our finances, our failures and our successes projects the kind of person we are or want to become. Attitude is more important than our appearance, our skills or what other people think, say or do. Attitude can make or break our Lodges & Chapters, a person, a home. We have a choice every day to embrace a positive attitude.

We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is decide how we will live, grow and continue to exist in a changing world. I think life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. So, it is up to each of us to take charge of our attitudes. Be kind. Smile. Be respectful. Make choices so the future is a better place. Take care of yourself and one another. And remember your attitude is a choice.

As my last 2 years on the Grand Council comes to an end, I would like to thank Barbara and the Women of the Moose staff for this opportunity to serve on the Grand Council and for their support. I have learned so much.

To Grand Regents Mary, Wendy and Kim, you have made these last 2 years very informative, fun and rewarding. I will treasure our memories and friendship.

To the International Boards, it has been an honor to serve with you and I've enjoyed the time we were able to share.

To Grand Council members with whom I have served, what can I say? You are a great bunch of ladies! The memories, conversations and our friendships will always hold a special place in my heart.

To the coworkers of the great state of Virginia, my chapter South Norfolk Chapter #947 and my sister chapter Portsmouth #966, thank you for all your love and support. You have always had my back and were there when I needed you. You all have been amazing.

Thanks to my mom and dad for being a part of this great fraternity and for bringing me up in the Moose. I have made so many friends in my journey and promise to continue my dedication to Mooseheart, Moosehaven and to my chapters. Love you all!