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## Why Defying Transitions Provide The Leading Opportunities For Prosperity And Growth

George Bernard Shaw once said “Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

Intensely provocative experiences of transitions are often challenging and difficult, they offer individuals opportunities to change but can also become stifling and hostile. However, overcoming the adversity hindered in these transitions, growth and a state of enlightenment can be reached. These notions are reciprocal in J.C. Burke’s novel ‘The Story of Tom Brennan’ and Megan Washington’s letter ‘To the Best Present I Ever Received.’ To enter the broad world, characters must confront the inevitable changes to their worlds head on, to overcoming the obstacles and barriers, or be paralysed by the indecision and transformation.

The process of transitions can affect the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual development of the individuals involved. Jane Burke’s novel ‘The Story of Tom Brennan’, has utilised a diverse amount of literature techniques to a great extent to further intensify the message that without change, progress is impossible. Initially, Tom is unable to come to terms with his new reality, as his feelings of guilt and responsibility for Daniel’s mistakes are emphasised through the use of bold font and repetition in “Daniel Brennan was an accident waiting to happen. An accident waiting to happen.” Guilt also creates an obstacle that prevents his family from reaching out to others, displayed in the recurring references to silence, “some silence for our private guilt”. The hyperbole in the rhetorical question, “that night was etched into the bones of my skull. What could I do?” exemplifies Tom’s inability to move on and detach himself from the obstructive memories of the accident. The strength of those memories is further revealed in “the bad thoughts that always surfaced and suffocated [me]”, as the sibilance creates a feeling of suffocation, with the personification bringing the brutal thoughts to life. Tom’s feelings of alienation from the boys in his new town are exposed in the repetition and accumulation, “Every joke, every laugh, every slap on the back reminded me I was an outsider”, as his downcast view shows how he feels cut off from the others, preventing him from effectively transitioning into his new town. Therefore, it is clear that individuals may experience emotional obstacles during transitional phases, hampering their ability to adapt to their new life.

Similarly, experiencing challenges is an inevitable process of life. Courage, determination and relationships are needed to transition into new chapters of the same life, achieving individual growth and understanding. These notions are explored in Megan Washington’s letter ‘To the Best Present I Ever Received’ which demonstrates to a large extent, how the experiences undertaken and relationships formed by the persona offer a sense of growth and change as she shifts from the city of Brisbane to Melbourne. Throughout her time in this town, both her positive and negative experiences consisting of “my first credit card in 2007, my first panic attack in 2008, my first broken heart in 2009, my first solo gigs” conveys the significance of these experiences as well as the changes they came with through the use of cumulative listing and ellipsis coupled with the repetition used in ‘my first’. Along with this, the use of time highlights a sense of growth and change over the years as she undertook a number of experiences in this town. The relationships formed by the persona is also highlighted in ‘to my friends’ and the changes these relationships brought about is shown through the use of jargon and second

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person narration in “for kicking my arse and making me (...) do things I want to, but lack the courage for.” This shows a strong shift in attitude as well as a sense of bravery as a result of these relationships. Consequently, as the persona ventured into a new phase of life, to another city, her experiences and relationships allowed her the chance to grow and transform. Thus, Megan Washington was extremely successful in demonstrating her point of view that confronting transitions produce crucial opportunities for success and personal development.

Additionally, transitions may be challenging, confronting, exciting or transformative and may result in growth, and a deeper understanding formed of their self and others. This notion is expressed in Jane Burke’s novel ‘The Story of Tom Brennan.’

Likewise, Megan Washington’s letter; ‘To the Best Present I Ever Received’ celebrates the necessity of introspection in order to actualise transitioning, thus, catalysing the understanding and inevitable growth of an individual. The ‘crack in the wall’ is used as a symbol to represent the persona’s time in this town. Once the crack reaches the floor, her ‘time in this town will be over’ and that she must move on into the next chapter of her life. Cumulative listing as well as second person narration as she speaks to the ‘city of Melbourne, and the people who dwell in it’ is utilised in “I met you (...) with a terrible stutter, a curious mind, a tiny ukulele, a fear of playing piano in public” to highlight the qualities the persona possessed before and as she first moved into the city. However, after years of living here, she states “And I will leave you, as me. A songwriter, a smoker, a swearer. A sadder, smarter, older, stranger, stronger (...) woman.” The contrast between ‘a fear of playing piano in public’ and ‘a songwriter’ displays a sense of built courage and growth. Along with this, the difference between the qualities she held before and after her move, demonstrates the transformative impact the city had on her. Overtime, through the persona’s experiences and relationships, strength, bravery, new knowledge and a deepened understanding of herself is acquired. This is seen as she is able to completely perceive and understand herself now as a ‘sadder, smarter, stronger woman’. Thus, the experience of venturing into a new phase of life granted the persona the opportunity to change, grow and transform into a renewed individual despite the confronting challenges involved.

Finally today, J.C. Burke’s novel ‘The Story of Tom Brennan’ and Megan Washington’s letter ‘To The Best Present I Ever Received’ both demonstrate to a great extent that transitions can be experienced as individuals undergo new phases of life. These changes, initially may be confronting but ultimately transform an individual through the the experiences and relationships established throughout new phases of life which may allow a sense of growth for the individual.

Transitions are an essential part of life. They can be initiated by loss, adversity, or a persistent sense that there is something more to life... something lacking... something missing... Will we get stuck in old patterns - in resistance - that exacerbate the situation? Or will we be able to move through those transitions in a conscious manner that transforms and renews us?