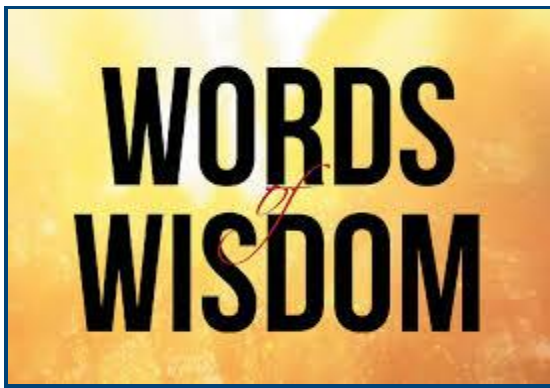
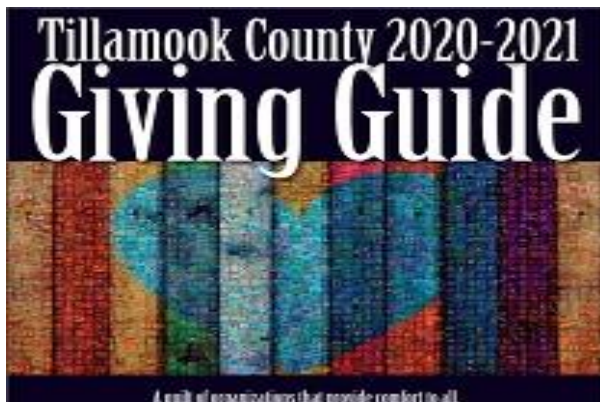


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WORDS OF WISDOM: Embracing Change

September 22, 2021 Commentary, Neal Lemery, Words of Wisdom





by Neal Lemery

Change is in the air. The rains have returned, leaves are turning, and autumn is here.

Some change is welcome. Yet, I resist many changes. The old ways of thinking are comforting and soothing, predictable. I'm set in my ways, determined and often obstinate. I most always am thinking I have all the answers, I know all the facts, and I've always reached the proper conclusions.

People I agree with have also miraculously reached these same conclusions.

I can blame my attitude on age. But I was at least as stubborn in my younger years. Part of who I am and how I navigate life can be traced to genetics, and part on the times we live in.



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This is an age of contrariness, obstinance, and too often, argument for argument's sake. That feistiness is often wrapped in the blanket of divisive politics and thinking that one's own theology and morality should be everyone's correct thinking.

There should be no surprise that our sense of current affairs, that focus on egotism, has persisted throughout human history. Heated politics has always dominated our country's public forums.

The chaos and uncertainty of the pandemic has shaken our desire for stability and "normal". Our fears, assumptions, and problem-solving skills have been deeply shaken by the unpredictability, this "facelessness" of

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cause of this invisible and increasingly fatal infestation. The pandemic seems out of control. Many resist what others, often experts in the field, say are useful and life-saving practices. The issues don't lend themselves to resolution and harmony.

All this argument increases our society's divisiveness, making humankind's informed responses less effective. I am reminded of Lincoln's phrase: "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

And, real change requires that I deeply examine my own thinking, my own analytics, and look to correct my thinking and be better informed. I need to be more of a citizen and pay less attention to my ego.

I am but one person. But I can make a difference in this world.

This change of seasons brings us new tasks and new opportunities. We are being called to action, to bring new tools and new viewpoints to old problems and old thinking.

Angela Davis writes: "I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."

Each of us is an instrument of change, a presence in the world for real fundamental change. It starts inside of each of us, and can then spread to friends, families, the institutions we are part of. Politics and society don't change unless and until we as individuals change. It starts with each of us, almost on a cellular level.

The opportunity for real change is here and now. It starts with me, and with you. Now.

What we need — facts, methods, organizing, communication — are literally in our hands. Change takes time, commitment, and persistence. We each and collectively have all of this, in abundance.

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson.