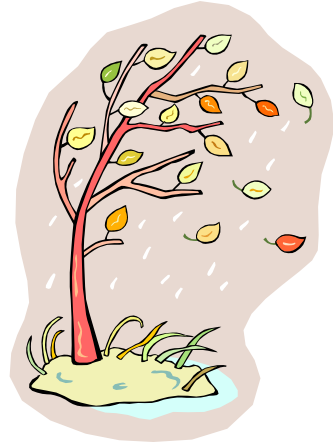


MORE THAN A LEAF

Outside my house a few last leaves are dangling from the maple tree across the street. As I look upon this simple sight, I think about change and the complicated, love/hate relationship we have with it. We need change because it is the breath of life, and we want it – but only on our terms.



Change is as inevitable as the falling of the leaves in autumn. There is nothing we can do to stop it. Change is life and from particles to planets life is always moving. We are quite successful at creating the illusion that, in our relationship with change, we have the upper hand. We believe we need the illusion because it's what allows us to have a sense of control in our lives. Without control, we have no structure. We have chaos instead, and we don't get much done in chaos.

Most of the time change co-operates and does what we want it to do according to the schedule we set up for it. We love change and welcome it when it acts this way. But, it doesn't always.

From time to time it decides to remind us who is really in charge. The reminders are often far from friendly or gentle. They yank us away from what we know, hurl us into the unknown and leave us floundering for control. Change, under these circumstances is not welcome. We fight it with all we've got.

Sometimes we cling like the leaves and fight out of fear of where the winds will take us next. Sometimes we're so deep in a rut we can't imagine what might exist outside it. Sometimes it may be that something bigger than us knows we need the fight because in the end it will bring us more light.

Sometimes we fight because we can't bear to give up the illusion of the upper hand. Meanwhile leaves turn yellow, seasons change, life goes on. Investing energy in trying to hold on to a past that has changed into a different present is futile. It is much better spent on healing the wounds of the past and making the present shine.

As fall completes its change to winter and the last leaves let go and flutter away, think about the changes happening in your life. Remember that unlike the leaves, you have the ability to choose your next step, no matter what blows your way.

Most important of all, remember this. You do have the upper hand. It's in the choices you make, about your relationship to change, and about the life you want to create. The illusion is all in the way you look at it.

