

Hello fellow dancers,

I've been writing about growth and seasonal cycles. Last month focussed on maintenance. After maintenance comes, guess what, more maintenance. With plants, we also have a harvest, finally getting to enjoy those tomatoes and certainly the berries.

Plants don't need much coaxing to move to another phase. Indeed, we often want to keep plants from bolting, from going to flower before we want them to.

With people, it can be a different story. Habit has inertia which can keep us doing what we have always done. Change is such a tricky thing. Often it is forced upon us by changing circumstances. Other times, we may choose to overcome inertia and change without outside provocation.

Sometimes we plant the seeds for change that may not bear fruit for months or even years. I have recently been noticing many opportunities to give myself permission to change. A simple example is what I have referred to as my normal breakfast, which I would eat about 340 out of 365 days. Lately, however, that has been changing and I'm branching out. This is shocking! Who am I if I let myself change?*

By opening our eyes to new possibilities we may discover something we like even better than the known. A historical example for me was wallets. I really liked the kind of wallets with little plastic enclosures for cards. However, as time went on wallets with this feature became scarce. Finally in desperation I purchased one of the newer kind, with slits for cards. To my amazement, I liked it even better.

I am reading a book entitled [A Fine Balance](#) by Rohinton Mistry, set in India in the 70's. One of the characters says "Please always remember, the secret of survival is to embrace change, and to adapt." A friend active in the Red Cross has as her motto "Semper Gumby" -- always flexible.

We can become rigid in our ways, not wanting to try anything new or to deviate from our routines. Yet, new pleasures and experiences await us if we overcome this inertia. For example, even if we habitually avoid congested roads and highways, it can be worth driving through traffic to spend time in a beautiful place enjoying activities with friendly people.

I'd like to encourage each of you to try something new. This can be as simple as taking a different route to an accustomed destination, or trying a new food, even dancing with someone new or trying a new kind of dance. Of course, it could be something more challenging such as a new course of study or travel to a foreign country.

NFDI's board changes a little each year since our annual cycle includes fall elections. If you decide to try something new and run for NFDI's board, let us know right away. You will have about a week to send in a bio and a photo before the deadline of September 10th. In October's Northwest Folkdancer, bios and photos will be published. Look for your ballot in the mail in early November and please vote as soon as you can.

Some events of note I'm looking forward to this month include a Balkan Dance Party benefit for Northwest Folklife Friday, September 7th and Oktoberfest, a community dance in cooperation with NFDI on Saturday, September 29th. See the Special Events calendar for further details. Perhaps attending these would be something new!

*? is a punctuation mark called an interrobang which combines the meanings of ? and !.