

The Flying Trapeze

Sometimes, I feel that my life is a series of trapeze swings. I'm either hanging on to a trapeze bar swinging along or, for a few moments, I'm hurdling across space between the trapeze bars.

Mostly, I spend my time hanging on for dear life to the trapeze bar of the moment. It carries me along a certain steady rate of swing and I have the feeling that I'm in control. I know most of the right questions, and even some of the right answers. But once in a while, as I'm merrily, or not so merrily, swinging along, I look ahead of me into the distance, and what do I see?

I see another trapeze bar looking at me. It's empty. And I know, in that place in me that knows, that this new bar has my name on it. It is *my next step, my growth, my aliveness coming to get me*. In my heart of hearts I know that for me to grow, I must release my grip on the present well-known bar to move to the new one.

Each time it happens, I hope—no, I pray—that I won't have to grab the new one. But in my knowing place, I know that I must totally release my grasp on my old bar, and for some moments in time I must hurtle across space before I can grab the new bar. *Each time I do this I am filled with terror*. It doesn't matter that in all my previous hurdles I have always made it.

Each time I am afraid I will miss, that I will be crushed on unseen rocks in the bottomless basin between the bars.

But I do it anyway. I must.

Perhaps this is the essence of what the mystics call faith. No guarantees, no net, no insurance, but we do it anyway because hanging on to that old bar is no longer an option. And so, for what seems to be an eternity but actually lasts a microsecond. I soar across the dark void called "the past is over, the future is not yet here." It's called a transition. I have come to believe that it is the only place that real change occurs.

I have a sneaking suspicion that the transition zone is the only real thing, and the bars are the illusions we dream up to not notice the void. Yes, with all the fear that can accompany transitions, they are still the most vibrant, growth-filled, passionate moments in our lives.

And so transformation of fear may have nothing to do with making fear go away, but rather with giving ourselves permission to "hang out" in the transition zone -- between the trapeze bars -- allowing ourselves to dwell in the only place where change really happens.

It can be terrifying. It can also be enlightening.

Hurdling through the void, we just may learn to fly.

An excerpt from *Warriors of the Heart* by Danaan Perry