



Self Improvement:

Three "C"s

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Sometimes life is difficult and we don't know how to cope with it. Strong emotions of fear, anger or sadness well up within and spill out into our behaviours. Others may notice that we are not ourselves but no one seems to know what to do to help the situation.

The reasons for our upset can often fit into one of three categories:

CHANGE is inevitable but it also threatens the comfort of what we know. We can't escape it. No matter where we turn in the world there are changes occurring every day. Technology, politics, business, and work policies are constantly changing. How we view them, however, will affect whether we will be able to embrace and benefit from them. When people lament about the "good old days" I remind them that change can be good. If we didn't have it, for example, we would have to chase our supper with a bow and arrow!

CONTROL or lack of it can be very disconcerting. We cannot control the weather, our employers, or many other things in life. It is therefore very important that we think about what we can control and then take positive action within those boundaries. You might not, for example, like your job. Rather than just being miserable because of it, you could change companies or perhaps retrain in order to enter a different career.

CHOICE is something that we always have even when we don't at first see that there are options available to us. We all like doing things when it is our idea but don't always like doing what others want. It can be particularly difficult to accept the fact that our loved ones sometimes make lousy choices. The thing to remember is that we are responsible only for our own lives and need to let others live and be responsible for theirs.

Before my sister died last year, I marveled at her attitude. Multiple sclerosis had trapped her in a body that did not move. Over the years, changes to her body had been progressively negative. She went from using a cane, to a wheelchair to being totally bed-ridden with absolutely no control over her body. It got to the point that the only thing she could do was turn her head. She couldn't even push the button to call the nurse if she needed help. Despite all this, however, Deb did have choices. Every morning she chose to have a good attitude and those around her were often heard laughing about the things that she said.

Few of us have to confront the limitations and helpless state that Debbie faced. We might think that change is threatening us or that we don't have as much control as we would like. No matter what happens, however, we always have a choice as to how we will respond to life.