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March, 2018

Topic: Change or Time

### **Retreat to Change**

I just spent a weekend at a Men's Retreat. I was tender in the heart for three days from the deep connections I had made, as well as from a discovery about myself and the resulting change that occurred in me.

My family moved every three to four years. My father changed jobs or was promoted and off we went to a new city. I followed the pattern myself, until recently. I realized from a process in the Retreat that I sub-consciously held that it was okay to move on and give up relationships because there would be another city and another group of friends. Or more accurately, acquaintances, because I never kept up with old friends. Out of my consciousness. I have no childhood friends. Have to leave behind a dog? We'll get another one, in the next city. They are just pets, not part of the family.

It is a painful realization, a deep sense of loss. Was I trying to protect myself from potential sadness, fear of being alone? As an only child, I did feel alone, and as an adult I would jump to another relationship upon the ending of a current one. Yes, the move or loss of relationship was better out of mind.

I saw that my pattern of behavior was set in childhood and that I acted that way to protect myself. It was a shock and release at the same time and I and couldn't help but smile.

I smile also at the fact, despite all the work I have done on myself through workshops, men's initiation, and spiritual seeking, that I finally tap into something that had been running me for a good part of my life. Proving once again the old spiritual adage, there is always "more east to go."

I was able to let go of the pattern after getting married to someone with four sisters and being called uncle by my nephews and nieces. It anchored me into the incredible joy of being part of a clan, and I gorged myself on relationship and blood love and being there for each other.

For example, one time my wife and children were stranded in Toronto visiting a sister. We were living in North Carolina, so I drove up to Philadelphia and in the meantime a brother-in-law drove halfway down from Toronto and another brother-in-law drove half way up to meet them and bring them back to Philadelphia.

My children grew up not only in this nurturing environment, but within others such as Waldorf schools and a Rudolf Steiner intentional community. My children have enduring relationships from those experiences.

I am so happy that my wife and I were able to provide that for them. Not surprisingly, when looking at my children, there has always been an ache underneath for what I lost out on, and the men's retreat brought it home for me.

Thankfully, the weekend ultimately lightened me up. That is a change I like.