

When the Road Changes

An Essay on Seasons, Soldiers, and
Sacred Work of Adaptation

Jeffrey E. Hansen, Ph.D.

Change is one of the few things in life that never asks our permission.

If you live in Arizona, you already understand this in your bones. One day the temperatures press toward 100 degrees, and the next you are stepping outside wondering who turned the desert into a walk-in freezer. Seasons shift without apology. Trees release what they no longer need. Caterpillars dissolve completely before they ever become butterflies. Everything in creation moves through cycles of death and rebirth, shedding and becoming, holding and releasing.

So do we.

Holdfast and AnchorPoint have been in a season of change. New faces, shifting roles, new demands, and new expectations. And I want to be transparent with you. Change has not been easy for me either. As many of you know, I will be stepping down as Clinical Director. It is a significant shift in my own story. And, truth be told, this old dude has wrestled with whether I could adapt yet again.

Before I go on, I want to say something important. I have been blessed with many meaningful and rewarding professional experiences in my forty-year career, but this season with all of you has truly been among the very best. The trust you extended to me, the space you allowed me to grow, and the privilege of walking with you through such sacred work, those gifts have meant more to me than I can say. Thank you for letting me serve in this role. I will carry that gratitude with me into whatever comes next.

But part of growth is learning to loosen your grip on the status quo.

Nowhere have I learned this more clearly than on a motorcycle. When you have ridden through enough seasons and terrains, heat, rain, snow, good pavement, black ice, you learn quickly that the road changes faster than your preferences do. A dry surface becomes slick. A warm day turns cold. A familiar curve behaves differently because of dust, wind, or water. If you do not adjust your lean angle, your counter steering, your posture, your mindset, you crash.



Oddly enough, the worst thing you can do in uncertain conditions is to tense up. That instinct to hold tight to what feels safe is exactly what makes the bike unstable. Survival requires staying loose, responsive, and willing to adapt in real time.

Change asks the same of us.

The Soldier's Way of Seeing Change



I have also learned this lesson from soldiers. Soldiers grasp intuitively what the rest of us tend to resist. The battlefield does not negotiate with your comfort. The terrain will not adjust itself to your expectations. The mission rarely unfolds according to your ideal conditions.

And yet soldiers rise, shoulder their packs, and step forward, not because they feel ready, but because they have learned that

standing still is rarely an option.

They move with a practiced humility, alert to shifts in the wind, responsive to sudden commands, aware that everything can change again in a moment. For them, adaptation is not an advanced technique. It is the rhythm of survival. It is the wisdom of accepting that rigidity breaks before it bends.

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Their courage is usually not dramatic. It is a quiet exhale before stepping into uncertainty. It is a prayer whispered behind tired eyes. It is the steady decision to move forward even when fear is trying to turn them backwards. Their stories carry a deeper truth. Those who thrive are not those who avoid change, but those who learn to lean into it with faithfulness.

And is that not exactly what God invites us into. He does not promise unchanging circumstances. He promises unchanging presence.

"Be strong and courageous, for the Lord your God goes with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6

"Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing." Isaiah 43:18
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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding, and He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5 6

God does not remove the shifting ground beneath us. He steadies our feet as it moves.

Growing Together in This Season

As I transition out of the Clinical Director role, we welcome Julie Nave into that position. She is a gifted, capable, deeply committed leader who brings strengths I simply do not carry. You will be in excellent hands. And I will continue walking with you, teaching, guiding, supporting, but in a different way.

Change is not failure. Change is not loss. Change is invitation.

I often told my doctoral students; be the age you are. Do not pretend to know what you do not. Do not hide your immaturity. Grow through it. Do not cling to old forms. Let new ones develop.

The same is true for us as a staff. If you are young and learning, embrace it. If you are seasoned and stretching, trust the process. If change feels unsettling, name it honestly and bring it to prayer.

Adaptability is not weakness. Flexibility is not compromise. Change is not the enemy when Christ is leading.

We are, in our own way, like riders navigating changing roads. Like soldiers responding to shifting terrain. Like trees shedding what no longer serves. Like butterflies emerging from the dissolving of old structures.

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And the same God who presides over every season of creation presides over every season of our lives.

We do not walk into change alone.

We walk with one another.

We walk with courage.

We walk with humility.

We walk with faith.

And most importantly, we walk with Christ, who changes us so that change cannot break us.

