



Leadership Living

the MasterPoint™ Series for the ascendant professional

by Tim Herd

Fluxing fortunes



Change happens:

- High in the upper atmosphere, the jet stream shifts subtly to the south.
- Suburban sprawl invades the woods in northern New Jersey.
- Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank are fired from their jobs in a home improvement store.

Opportunities arise:

- Certain of their data, savvy AccuWeather forecasters pool their funds and invest in citrus stock before a freeze reaches central Florida.

- Black bears near the Delaware Water Gap learn to raid backyard birdfeeders and garbage cans. They discover the ease of preying on pets and breaking into kitchens for food.
- Misters Marcus and Blank co-found The Home Depot chain of retail stores and become billionaires.

Cycles come and go:

- The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was a product of an eight-year drought, relentless wind erosion, and economic depression that settled on the American Great Plains. After the rains returned in 1941, dust storms ceased, crops thrived, and prosperity returned.
- Many speculative dot-coms bubbled briefly in the late nineties before spectacularly failing. Fashion apparel retailer Boo.com burned through \$135 million of venture capital in an attempt to capture brand recognition and market domination before profits. Unfortunately, the profits failed to appear before the capital vanished, and the company liquidated after just 18 months.

Have a bad day? It'll pass. Have a good day? It'll pass. Such is the temporal nature of all things.

The leadership issue in such fluxing fortunes, however, is not that change happens, but rather, when it does, how do we react?

Consider the raccoon: one of the most adaptable of all animals, it freely chooses among almost any kind of shelter or food or habitat and gets along famously. The omnivorous rascals eat just about anything—bird eggs, berries, snakes, crayfish, small birds and mammals, even roadkill and refuse. And as owners of paws with semi-opposable thumbs, they're able to get the lid off your trash can anytime they want. Changes in their environment happen all the time, and the raccoons are ok with that.

But consider the plight of the dusky seaside sparrow, whose last survivor died at Walt Disney World in 1986. Like all other creatures, it had needs that were met by its habitat, but when its habitat shrank and changed, and other land uses crowded in, the poor sparrow couldn't adapt. It refused to cross any barrier, even if that barrier was merely visual, such as a highway or a power line, and effectively doomed itself.

Those who anticipate and embrace change, and who are able to adapt to its nuances, are those who thrive while others dive.

No one is immune to change; it finds us from all quarters. Some changes are manageable, others are beyond our control, yet all, by their very nature, are temporary. Those who anticipate and embrace change, and who are able to adapt to its nuances, are those who thrive while others dive. Pluck your opportunities while they're ripe, and enjoy their fruit while conditions last.

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Anticipate change. Remain flexible and open to new opportunities, and things may go better for you.

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Leadership trainer Tim Herd is a career executive with extensive service in both private and public sector enterprises. He was the founder and CEO of America's first fully mobile environmental education center, and has been nationally recognized for his "commitment and exceptional contributions to the stewardship of America's natural and cultural resources." As an international speaking professional, Tim brings his observations, humor, and insights from nature, culture, business, and everyday living to help maximize our personal and productive best.

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