

Reinvention is a useful thing

As any school child knows, the lowly caterpillar will someday grow into a beautiful butterfly (or maybe an ugly moth).

At any rate, the caterpillar "reinvents" itself -- it changes form and enters a different stage of its life.

While we humans won't ever grow wings, emerge from a pupa, and fly away, we can still change form and enter different stages of our life.

It's called **reinvention**.

As we go through our lives, most of us will wind up thinking of ourselves as one particular thing -- we're an accountant, or a teacher, or a salesperson, or a manager, or a firefighter, or a jet pilot, or a ski bum, or whatever.

Whatever we are, that is the way we tend to see ourselves -- and define ourselves.

That's all good -- until we hit some sort of upheaval, some sort of sea change in the world around us.

Think of those souls who were buggy whip makers, or whale fishermen, or whatever else you want to point out. At some point, they had to make a change in their life -- they had to reinvent themselves, not only into a new position, but also into a new way of thinking of themselves.

It's easier for some people than others -- they are the people who learn to think of themselves as more than just the position they currently have. They are the persons who think of themselves in broad terms, based on the individual abilities they have, or may develop.

Not all working abilities will convert over to a new industry, but it's surprising how many things we've learned in one industry will convert to knowledge in another -- with a bit of learning, and a bit of reinvention.

The keys are to read widely, learn extensively, network intensely, and come to

view yourself as a problem solver with many talents in many industries. Sometimes, we may need more formal training, while other times, informal training will be enough -- but whatever path you choose, avoid placing yourself into a "box," where you come to think of yourself only by the past experiences you've had.

Some years ago, I wrote a piece called "[Me, Inc.](#)" Among other things, it suggested that we should think of ourselves as a company, with many services and products to provide. As times change, we change our product mix, and perhaps our customer -- but at its core, our employers are still ourselves -- we're "Me, Inc." Some products will pay better than others, some will provide more self-satisfaction than others -- but we are people who can provide multiple products, to multiple customers, without having to shoehorn ourselves into a little box of a life -- without having to settle for being buggy whip manufacturers for the rest of eternity.

Reinvent yourself -- and let it be a constant mechanism to keep your life up with the high pace of change.

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