

OOUF October 13th, 2024 – Terry Barrett

Nonresistance in Times of Change

What do you resist?

Carl Jung said, “What we resist persists - and will grow in size. This is the law of non-resistance.

The Fall Equinox has come and gone. The earth was tilted so that the sun shines evenly. There is an even amount of light and dark. It’s a time when we can experience a sense of balance. The temperature is not hot, but it is not cold yet, either. I realized the car I drive is a Chevy Equinox. It made me pay attention to what the name was about. I hadn’t really thought about it in the two years since I got this car.

We are living in a time of change. It’s easy to want to resist change. It can bring out the fear in us. The International Day of Peace happens on the Fall Equinox. The International Day of Peace celebrates the power of global solidarity for building a peaceful and sustainable world. It originates from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. It is a specialized organization of the United Nations with the aim of promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture. It was founded in November of 1945.

When I began to work on this talk, I thought of a movie that seemed like a perfect example of someone who knew how to practice nonresistance. Forest Gump tells the story of his life to the people who sit at the bus stop with him, waiting for the bus to come.

Forest had been a young boy who didn't have a high IQ. But he did have a mother who loved him unconditionally and made sure that he had opportunities. Forest also had a good heart, and he used it to set excellent intentions for himself and the people he knew and cared about.

(Journey) - On his journey from a young boy, Forest was bullied. He was different. Forest told people how smart his mom was. He listened to her, and he shared what she taught him. People called Forest stupid. But Forest had affirmations that helped him stay centered on his way. He shared his mom's words; "Stupid is as stupid does." "Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're gonna get."

As a young boy, the doctor decided that putting braces on Forest's legs would help his back straighten. Forest looked very different than other kids in these braces that seemed to lock the movements of his legs. The boys bullied Forest in very threatening ways. His friend, Jenny, was there when the boys came after school and started throwing rocks at him. The stones hit him in the head and the face. One rock hit him square across his eye and knocked him over. Jenny told him to run. "Run Forest, run!" Forest didn't resist the boys. He just listened to Jenny and ran. The braces on his legs connected from his shoes to above his knees and made him move like the tin man. But as Forest began to run, he found his way. Do you know what I mean when I say he found his way? I mean he connected to that place within himself. He put his attention on running instead of being afraid of those boys. His legs began to bend, freeing up his movements, and the braces broke away. Then Forest began to "run like the wind." The boys never caught him, not that day, not ever.

Forest became a very fast runner and ended up running for the college football team, which is how he got into college. He met President Kennedy and did many other amazing things

in this story. The story of Forest Gump isn't based on a true story, but when we practice believing we are worthy of receiving the good we want, we practice feeling grateful before we can see it in our experience, and there is no resistance to the good that comes to us.

In Forest Gump, Jenny was his friend throughout his life. Forest said "we were like peas and carrots" together. But Jenny had old beliefs and experiences that got in her way. Things were complicated for Jenny as she resisted those limiting beliefs that she carried with her.

Forest had a simple way about him. That simple way didn't minimize his ability to love and be present for others. It did give him the ability to focus on changing what he could change and accepting what he didn't have the power to change. Like when Jenny came and stayed with him for a time. He couldn't make her stay longer, so he enjoyed the time together and dealt with his sadness when she left.

Forest loved Jenny completely. But Jenny could never live in that love with Forest. Jenny spent her life resisting. She resisted the childhood that left her without her mother at five years old, and an abusive father. She resisted the war. She resisted the whole and healthy person that was her divine right. She couldn't stop resisting. Jenny couldn't believe that she could have the good life she hoped for. Jenny finally introduced Forest to their son and she married Forest. It was a good day for Forest but it was bitter sweet because by then, Jenny had been diagnosed with a virus that she believed would take her life. A year later, Forest was alone to raise their son and grieve the loss of his dear life-long friend and love.

The story of Forest Gump is a story about triumph over belief. He didn't have some of the obvious benefits of a normal IQ and a father to grow up with. What he did have was the

ability to make the most of what was given to him. He didn't resist his good and his good didn't resist him. At one point in the story, Lieutenant Dan, his commander in Vietnam, had become the captain of the shrimp boat that Forest bought and introduced Lieutenant Dan to. The shrimping industry was a very successful venture, just like his friend Bubba had told him about when he was in the army.

When Forest got the word that his mother was ill he ran home, literally he ran all the way home! Later Lieutenant Dan wrote Forest to tell him about some investments he was making for their company. Forest said that one was some kind of a fruit investment, it was named Apple Inc. Lieutenant Dan told Forest they didn't ever have to work again.

We are living in times of change. The world can feel pretty scary when so much change is happening all around us. But you and I have the freedom to allow our good to show up in and through those things that seem scary. We put our attention on what works for us, not against us. I know I have shared it with you before but let me share one of my favorite quotes again. Wayne Dyer said, "What you're against weakens you. What you're for empowers you."

In these changing times, we see science showing up to support this understanding. Joe Dispenza has been working to research and collect data that supports quantum physics. Bruce Lipton teaches epigenetics, explaining that science offers different evidence than we have been given. I'm working on my thesis for the completion of this master's degree that I have been working on for three years now. My topic for my thesis is the innovation of transcendent leadership. The Newtonian physics that we have known operates on a sensory level. We see it, hear it, touch it, taste it, and smell it.

There's nothing wrong with using our senses and experiencing the world around us. But, if we want to change the way we try to improve the relationships we experience with each other and every aspect of our experience, we can begin to transcend our differences. Rather than resisting what we disagree with, we can practice nonresistance by transcending the struggle, by rising above the struggle. This idea gave me a new way of looking at Gandhi's famous words - "Be the change you want to see in the world."

I just read a story about a woman named Elizabeth who worked for twenty years as a military social worker at an organization that sought to reduce family violence, suicide, and other harmful behaviors in military families. When a position for supervisor came up Elizabeth wanted to apply for it. The only problem was there was a woman named Brenda who had worked there longer than Elizabeth and she was not an easy person to deal with. She expected to get the position because she had been at the organization longer. Elizabeth decided to apply anyway, with some encouragement from her husband.

She was met with anger and a very negative reaction from Brenda. Other employees at the organization asked Liz why she didn't wait her turn. The confrontation was very difficult for Elizabeth, but she moved forward anyway. Soon it was down to the two finalists for the position. Elizabeth and Brenda. Brenda continued to spout mean comments and negativity. At the interview, Elizabeth was asked right off the bat, "How would you address conflict within your team?" "With compassion, patience, and transparency" she responded. Elizabeth got the job.

Elizabeth dreaded managing Brenda, who had been continuously critical, negative, and confrontational. She decided to meet with each person in the office one one-on-one in the

conference room. When it came to the final person, Brenda had many negative and critical things to say and then stalked out of the room. Elizabeth walked back to her cubicle in shock, feeling angry and totally insecure.

She sat at her desk with her head down where no one could see her and asked, "God, you brought me this opportunity, so how can I lead someone who thinks so little of me? Then a voice sounded with, "Reflect joy." She wondered if that was supposed to be a message from God. Then it came again loud and clear. She wrote the words down twice. "Reflect joy, Reflect joy." Then it hit her. I don't have to absorb this negativity. As the social worker she was, she could let Brenda express her feelings, and then Elizabeth would reflect something different back to her. She would let her colleagues know that she loved her job and the good work they were doing for families.

Elizabeth changed her whole approach. She took care to be aware of the challenges people were facing. She could show Brenda and everyone else in the office that she considered it an honor to be entrusted with their work and the intense feelings it generates. She 'resisted' the temptation to feel angry or wounded, and she validated difficult feelings and "projected joy, kindness and gratitude." Sometime later, Brenda was moving to a new location. Before she left, she came to Elizabeth, to shake her hand, and said, "Thank you for never giving up on me, and for always finding joy."

When we get right down to it, what we resist persists! Have you experienced that? The things that we put our energy into because we are afraid, or can't seem to tolerate, are what keeps showing up. The main point I want to leave you with is this; We are all in this together. The people and situations we resist are in the mix that where we are. Everything is working

together for Good. But if we choose to try to run the show, we can. We can get in the way of the Good that is in the works. We can let our fear direct the way things go. Or, we can let life happen and stay in the presence of love and gratitude, trusting that it is all working out for our highest good, even learning to rise above the struggles.

When we stop resisting, we can let the good we want, become so real to us that it becomes IRRESISTIBLE and nothing will get in the way.

And So It Is