


The Butterfly Effect

1-6

It's been said that the flutter of a butterfly's wings on a dusty savannah in Africa, can set in motion a chain of events which can lead to a Hurricane taking aim at Florida's coast.

Now that may seem a bit far-fetched, but let's see if we can visualize such a thing....

Let's say that a butterfly spreads its wings and startles a bird. The bird taking off could rouse the flock, which in turn could start a stampede among a herd of zebra. The dust that rose into the air from the pounding of thousands of hooves could get caught up in a jet stream and carried out over the Atlantic. There, high up in the atmosphere, the dust particles and water molecules could play their role in helping to form an 'invest'; or tropical depression. From depression and tropical wave to storm warning - the next thing you know there's a hurricane bearing down on Florida's coast.

So - the next time you find yourself at Home Depot stocking up on emergency Hurricane supplies, you can blame it on those damn African Butterflies. 

2-6

Of course meteorologists will tell you that the forming of a hurricane is much more complicated, and entails several other elements. However, I just wanted to illustrate the concept of how seemingly minor events can have far reaching consequences.

Scientists have some pretty fancy terms for this effect - a chaos theory, deterministic chaos, or even a cascade event. But no matter what we decide to call it, we can see the examples of a butterfly effect all around us. We can see examples of the effect in scripture (where some may refer to it as the hand of God); we can see it in nature, and among nations. We can see it being played out in society, in our communities, and even in our personal lives.

Ever since man's original fall from grace in the garden, we've been looking for something, or someone to blame when things go wrong. Adam claimed, "It was the woman you gave to be with me, she gave me of the fruit and I did eat of it." In one smooth move, Adam managed to blame it on both God and the woman. "And Eve? She said, 'It was the serpent. He tricked me and I did eat.'"

3-6

Many of us can now blame original sin on Adam and Eve, and it was they who set in motion a chain of events that, perhaps, led Bruce Jenner to say, "Call me Caitlin."

The Aesop is, The Butterfly effect has been setting things off long before Queen Latifah made that movie. But far too often, by the time we begin to notice the results, we're in the midst of some catastrophe.

Many people say that the extreme weather events that greet us each day on Good Morning America are the results of global warming; that the greenhouse gases and burning of fossil fuels could be causing climate change, and shifting weather patterns. Although we might not all agree on the causes, we can clearly see the effects as wild fires burn out of control on the west and homes are washed away by floods on other parts of the country.

In 1914, a little known duke was shot in Sarajevo, a place that many had never heard of - but most agree that his death set in motion a chain of events which led to WWI. That war merely set the stage for WWII, which, by the time the smoke had cleared, left the United States and the Soviet Union

4-6

Facing off as Cold War Enemies.

In 1979, The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. We found an enemy of our enemy to be our friend. Our C.I.A. backed, a TAN ARAB in flowing robes to confront the forces of The Soviet Union - WAR by PROXY. We provided intelligence, training and weapons in that 10 year conflict. During that time, we helped him and his mujahadeen (Holy Warriors) to recruit 3 students and to build a base of operations which attracted and trained fighters from all across the Arab world. - 10 years later, The Soviet Union retreated.

Unfortunately, The Arabic word for student is 'Talib', and we've now come to know them as The TALIBAN. The Arabic word for 'The base' is AL-QAEDA And that TAN ARAB man who we helped to pull that organization together became known to the world as OSAMA bin-LADEN.

In 1955, A Secretary would refuse to give up her seat on a bus, and a little known preacher would help organize a boycott - Sometimes a mundane event can lead to a dream, as it did in the case of Rosa Parks and Dr. King. But, far too often, what we get is chaos.

5-6

Rodney King made a decision to hit
 the gas rather than get pulled over,
 and it wasn't long until Los Angeles
 went up in flames.

What I would like us to consider
 is this - No one wakes up one day and
 says, "I want to set in motion a chain
 of events that will lead me into the
 Valley of the Shadow of Death, or into a
 double-digit prison sentence. So why is it
 that so many of us have found ourselves
 in that Valley? Or with so much "time" on
 our hands?"

If we can recognize the fact that
 a negative chain of events can so easily
 be set in motion, then shouldn't the
 opposite be true? Shouldn't it be possible
 for us to set in motion a positive chain
 of events? And shouldn't we make
 every effort to do so?

The same way that it doesn't
 take all day to recognize something,
 it shouldn't be all that hard to figure
 out when we're walking in darkness,
 playing in the shadows, or following a
 false light - It shouldn't be that
 difficult to figure out when we are
 on the verge of setting off a
 negative chain of events.

6-6

Like a pebble in a pond whose ripples reach for distant shores, your actions will set in motion a chain of events that may impact your family, the community or society. They could have an impact on the nation, or even touch the world.

Now - we might not be able to stop a hurricane from forming, but we can begin taking control of our lives. We can begin striving to set forth a positive flow of events into the lives of those around us, rather than leaving a trail of destruction.

We can't control our destiny. We can't control what may be happening 5, 10 or 15 years from now. We can only control ourselves, and that, one act at a time. But each act becomes a brick, and it's with those bricks that we will lay the foundation upon which our lives will either rise or fall.

What we need to realize is that each "act" or action, is preceded by a thought - so let us think clearly, and act wisely. After all, we have a lot more to work with than some damn African Butterflies. ^{us}

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