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## Butterfly Effect

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 that can lead to a hurricane bearing down on Florida's east coast. Now, that may seem farfetched, but let's see if we can visualize such a thing.

Let's say that a butterfly emerges from a cocoon and spreads it's wings. That sudden movement could startle a bird in to flight. That bird could cause the whole flock to take off, and start a stampede of nearby 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 form an invest, or depression. From depression and tropical wave, to storm warning. The next thing you know, there's a hurricane taking aim at Florida's east coast. So the next time you find yourself at Home Depot stocking up on hurricane supplies, you can blame it on those damn African butterflies. :-)

Meteorologists might scoff at the simplicity of that analogy, and scientists have some pretty fancy terms for this effect-- a chaos theory, cascade effect, or deterministic chaos. But no matter what we decide to call it, we can see evidence of the butterfly effect all around us. We can see it in scripture (where some might call it "the hand of God"). We can see it in nature and among nations. We can see it played out in society, in our communities, and 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 that 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 both God and the woman. And Eve? She said, "It was the serpent. He tricked me and I did eat." So now, most of us can 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 fact is, the butterfly effect has been setting things off long before Queen Latifa made that movie. But far too often, by the time we begin to notice the effect, we're in the midst of some kind of catastrophe.

Many people say that the extreme weather we see each day on Good Morning America is the result of Global Warming that greenhouse gases and the burning of fossil fuels could be causing climate change and shifting weather patterns. Now, we might not agree on the causes, but we can clearly see the effects when wildfires are burning out of control in several western states, and homes are being earned away by floods in other parts of the country.

In 1914, a little known Duke was assassinated in Sarajevo- a place that many had never heard of, but most would agree that his death set in motion a chain of events which led to World War I. That war merely set the stage for WWII, which, by the time the smoke had cleared, left the United States and the U.S.S.R. facing off as the last remaining super powers.

When the U.S.S.R. invaded Afghanistan in 1979, our C.I.A. used to back a "tall Arab man in flowing robes." We provided him with weapons, training and intelligence. We also helped him to develop a base of operations and recruit students and Mujahedeen to overthrow the "infidel invaders." 10 years later, not only did the Russians withdraw, but the conflict likely contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union. As it turns out, the Arabic word for "the base" is al-Qaeda the word for student is Talib, from which we get the word Taliban, and that tall Arab man in the flowing robes was Osama bin Laden.

In 1955, a seamstress and secretary for the N.A.A.C.P., would refuse to give up her seat on a bus, and a little known preacher would organize a bus boycott. So sometimes a cascade event can produce a dream, as it did in the case of Rosa Parks and Dr. King, but far too often, what we get is chaos. For example, 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.

But gentlemen, what I want us to consider today 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 to 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, the opposite must also be

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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 sunshine, gentlemen, it shouldn't be that hard for us to figure out when we're walking in darkness, playing in the shadows, or on the verge of setting off a negative chain of events. Like a pebble in a pond whose ripples reach for distant shores, your actions will possibly 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 is preceded by a thought so let us think clearly, and act wisely. After all, we have more to work with than some damn African butterflies.

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