

Chapter 5 – Wind Watching

“Like the wind, problems can sometimes be seemingly invisible—while the effect or outcome is not. “Watching meant waiting; and sometimes the wind could come like a fury— from what direction, I cannot tell you to this day...”

What is the wind? You can feel it, but you cannot see it; well, you cannot see it, but you can feel and see its effect. You might have a gentle wind that cools you on a humid day, a fair breeze that makes the trees sway, or a tempest or fury that can knock you out-of-the-way. What is true about the later is that, in the experience or even leading up to it, you are not usually if ever aware or prepared for what to expect and endure—whether it be a dramatic change in places, people or problems.

In the real sense or knowledge of foul weather, we have the benefit of the most elaborate and expensive meteorological advancements; yet, how many occurrences do will still see (or experience) where readiness was somewhat off? The actual experience of one of these hurricane-force gale winds may offer some further lessons in the way of preparedness or readiness. Yet it is human nature that, with the *on-again off-again* of actual severity or potential, some may be lulled into idleness or annoyed by the “fire-drill” process.

There is seldom a moment of idleness with small children and babies: someone is getting sick and someone is getting well; someone is sleeping and someone is not; someone is hungry and someone is well, you know. The simple truth is that the wind is much more than the *pit-patter of little feet*; but is the collection of sights, sounds and situations that can happen in a moment, a day or over many days—why even over a lifetime. Like the variety of the wind, change can come in a trickle, a steady pour, or a deluge; and when and how it does come is not something that we can lay claim to—as it just happens with or without our preparedness or readiness.

The response or reaction to the inevitable change in the course of our lives is important. Sometimes it's just an inconvenience, while other times the wind or change may result in re-building from the damage and loss. One of my favorite music artists, John Denver, writes in his song, "Windsong" the following selected description of the wind:

...The wind is the bearer of bad and good tidings
 The weaver of darkness, the bringer of dawn...
 The wind brings the rain then builds us a rainbow...
 ...The wind is the twister of anger and warning...

Selected verse from this song describes some of what I find true or characteristic of the winds of change; and at the risk of missing much in the artist's concept, the wind is goodness and badness, light and darkness, and the harbinger an enabler of anger and it's potential.

The response or reaction to the inevitable change in the course of our lives is important too.

On the analogy or use of wind to describe change (or changing roles) is also the child-like curiosity to understand what causes wind in the first place. Using the convenient *Ask Jeeves*, I found a Web site that explained it with such simplicity:

If there wasn't any wind, there would be little or no day-to-day change in our weather. Wind is air moving horizontally. It is created by large scale differences in the air's density. This forces the air to move toward regions of lower pressure. If you stand with your back to the wind, an area of low pressure would be off to your left and the high pressure off to your right. The greater the differences in pressure, the stronger the wind...

If "real" or actual wind is caused by two differing air masses or degrees of pressure, can it **not** be said that the analogous "change" is too. Change does not occur without some impetus or cause does it? What's more, change may also involve the willingness to do so—the will to want to change or to allow change to occur. Sometimes our individual or human-will may not have much to do with the change—as we may want one thing but endure or accept another—but our individual or personal reaction and response is central to the benefits or blessings of change.

In one or more of the movies capturing the old sailing ships of the Royal Navy, the crew or voyage experience “the doldrums” or a period of complete idleness or stillness. Obviously such a weather condition is unfavorable for a sailing ship and, waiting for the doldrums to blow over, the crew can become very testy and anxious. Dead-in-the-water is both idleness of the air and of the hand and minds of the crew. In one of those movies, *Master and Commander*, Captain Aubrey replies to this condition (of the doldrums), “I can harness the wind, but I’m not its damn creator”. Once again, wind or change cannot be created or caused by us alone, but it is something that we can harness—or at least try. Even the most severe of these conditions bring opportunity, benefits, and blessings if we believe in the providence of God.

The most dramatic and destructive of winds was indisputably divorce; as the tempest tore apart my family leaving a path of destruction that goes well beyond the marriage and the experiences of my children. This unprecedented “storm of the century” is one that has not been forgotten—and never will! There were many cool breezes and even sporadic northeasterners that tore away at the shores; but this one storm was the one that is beyond reconstruction or recovery.

Imagine one storm front that lands, decimates, and departs; then before reconstruction can *make a dent*, another comes right behind...followed by another and...; well, I think you get the concept. Divorce is like that (or has been like that): it is not one storm—if only that were possible—but a recurring, relentless fury that will not bend, but instead, will break and burst everything in its path and peripheral. This cyclic weather pattern is without the calmness and clearness that usually follows such extreme change, but continues such that no calmness or clearness is possible. Where there seems to be such relief or recovery, it is overshadowed by an endless, dark sky and foreboding sense that nothing has or will change for the better. In addition to the sheer strength and staying power of this storm is that it is not seasonal or subject to such patterns.

Such a storm (or storms) would only be possible where there is a continuum or ever-growing disparity of degrees of pressure; of good and bad, light and darkness, anger and its potential. If this disparity did not (or does not) relent—but grows instead—than the storm is only strengthened and the frequency multiplied. A storm of this nature actually feeds on its fury and frequency; that like some great conqueror or commander, each episode and event only strengthens its power and prowess for conquest at all cost.

With a somewhat shift in the wind right now, let me begin to associate this mega-storm to the matter of divorce and of marriage. In his book, *The Custody Revolution*, Robert Warshak describes one or more conditions that involve custody and parental visitation:

Then there are some divorced mothers who would do everything possible to keep their ex-husbands away from the children. Often the motive is a wish to punish the father by denying him access to his children. In some instances, the mother may fear for her children's safety – for example, when the father is likely to abuse or kidnap the children. But in many cases, the divorced woman's own hurt or anger clouds her assessment of her ex-husband's worth to the children.

Not only are men (or non-custodial parents) often vexed by such conditions but, as Warshak explains, so are their parents or the grandparents of the children:

Grandparents are the forgotten victims of modern divorces. Too often, the father's parents lose all contact with their beloved grandchildren. Much of my mail is from grandparents who are desperate for information about how they can retain meaningful involvement with their grandchildren after a divorce.

I have offered a simple explanation of the wind: the source of wind, the general categories of wind (from my experience and perspective), and the association of wind to change with goodness, badness, etc. What I have not done as of yet is concretely applied the abstract association of wind to divorce and marriage.

I do not think that anyone stays the same over a length of time; as they live and experience life, they have to change one way or another. Ideally, a person or persons change for the better; that life, whatever it brings, enables betterment over bitterness. While it is dangerous and reckless to make such broad-brushed assertions, the point is that each juncture in this journey of life offers the ultimate direction of one or the other; either a life of betterment or a life of bitterness.

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For a Believer or Christian, this life depends largely on the willingness or decision to forgive others; and similarly, to accept God's forgiveness for the wrongs we have done to God and others. I could elaborate on this matter, but the basic understanding is that we are to forgive just as we have been forgiven. When we forgive, the consequences may not depart but the condition of bitterness will...over time. Though we live with (or deal with) the consequences, we can find some degree of peace (or release) through this will to forgive; but when we live without forgiving—and hold on to our anger—the bitter, strong fury of winds will continue...and even escalate.

When we live without forgiving, or when we have unresolved anger toward others, the tempest will be tempted—even pressed—to spawn at any time for reasons undetermined and unresolved. This series of storms may have actually begun long ago; long before the divorce and the marriage but, even as far back as childhood and adolescence. The truth is that we learn much during these formative years and, with what is modeled, we can ideally segregate as healthy and unhealthy—as constructive or destructive and so on. I am not saying that such is easy; **on the contrary, I think it can very hard for several reasons.** The possibility remains however that, because our parents are not perfect and sometimes are far from it, we should attempt to examine and eliminate those behaviors that are found to be destructive or divisive—that lead to a damned relationship rather than a decided marriage.

To remind the reader, the environment in which she grew-up was absent from a father in any true sense. What's worse is that the natural and step-father were both alcoholics; and, while the second eventually quit in lieu of death, he continued to be a destructive and divisive man. In both relationships, the mother was seemingly tolerant. Not that this action was necessary to survive, but it has some negative consequences—not the least of which a very dim view of men, fathers and anything masculine.

The children (the five daughters) were each subject to some level or experience of this sometimes described co-dependent relationship; but for my ex-wife, the effect was amplified by virtue of her family order and the unfortunate and unreasonable marriage of yet another addict. If the natural father was harmful enough, the step-father was much more. He not only accepted the figurative baton from the first, but he used it to beat-up members of the family who knew him for what he was...and was not.

A calm breeze may be enough for a weak, insipid man who bends or breaks to her will; and if he doesn't show any signs of distress from the light breezes, she will devise something else. Turning to a much admired and respected source in the complexity of this modeling, Erwin Lutzer writes in his book, *Why Good People do Bad Things*, the following on control:

There are three levels of controls: Some want to control others in personal matters; others want to control them to selfishly protect themselves from personal pain or to exalt themselves. For many, controlling other people and circumstances is their only source of personal significance. Some forms of control could be labeled a nuisance; others should be labeled a sin, while some kinds must be called evil.

He continues in this type or subject with:

...A controller is never satisfied; for every event must continue to be controlled...he will create a new crisis so that he will have something to control...They find it hard to rejoice over another's good fortune and hard to forgive.

I am not saying that this behavior is in-excusable, and I'm not suggesting that my observation and experience is right-on either; but what I am attempting to prove is that *the orange* (most definitely) *falls close to the tree*.

Can I support my claims with scientific or medical evidence? No, I can not because I'm neither have the experience or the education to do so. As a once-husband, the observation and experience will be further supported in the coming pages and chapters in more detail; and will in the form of my description of court appearances, affidavits, testimonies, and legal documents and discourse.

How much of a crisis does the controller need? Would they be willing to lie under oath, to falsify documents, and to implicate their children? Oh, yes...yes, indeed!

Several years prior to the divorce, my wife (at the time) and I were in marriage counseling. We had been referred to a counselor by our pastor at the time, and with mutual agreement, entered the second of two periods. At the same time, I was involved in a men's Bible study at the same church; and aside from the general study, we shared some of our personal problems or other concerns. Please understand that what was shared was heavily prefaced with confidentiality and discretion; and to my knowledge, none of the personal discussion was shared beyond the room save for prayer requested from the church...or other.

Periodically, I would *open-up* about my marriage, our relationship and the counseling. I remember one man's discussion of a bad employment experience; he said that he could never do enough to please his employer (or manager); that no matter what he did, the manager seem to *raise the bar* another notch or two. In the sum of this experience was the realization that "the ledger" had only one side or that—no matter what he did—it was never enough. Sometime during this realization came the certainty that he could not last, but would have to move-on. Even long before sharing his testimony with us, he had moved-on and, as he said, for the better.

Can I support my claims with scientific or medical evidence...the observation and experience...

The testimony of the other man, while applied to employment, reminded me much of my marriage; a relationship where no matter what I did or how much I try, it was never enough. The most poignant indication of this dilemma was in the repeated and sometimes frequent use of the “D” word; yes, “Divorce” became the lever by which control could be resumed and the spouse relegated to a life of impassable performance and daunting demarcations or boundaries. But such a dilemma, however accepted or endured, is a symptom—and not a cause—of the essence or root of the problem. At the root is *command and control*—whereby, the one is willing and able to use such devices to wield and maintain apparent control over the other.

Far from the true meaning of love is the abuse or articulation of power. The testimony of “bad employment” may be understood under the auspices of a Type-A personality or actions of the ultimate authoritarian. Furthermore, this behavior or relationship is periodically profiled in politics and government—whether from the overtures of a tyrant or from the covertures of a democracy or legislature. But a marriage is ideally a balance of mutual authority supported by ever increasing love and respect. When authority is out-of-kilter (on either side), respect *goes by the board*; and, as far as love, disavowed love for another has been preceded by dissipated love for self.

Many of us have heard about or seen the character that I describe above; the spouse – typically portrayed as a man – who berates his wife for anything whether real or imagined. His demeanor is usually someone who is visibly unhappy or unsatisfied; and may even show signs or expressions of regret for which blame and responsibility is always pointed to someone else. For this character, with all his disappointments, is a deep anger that manifest in either (or both) covert and overt measures of command and control. He may actually create a crisis as an illusive way of offsetting his insecurities. Lies and deception are all within his means if necessary for *command and control*; as often the route for rationalizations, *the end justifies the means*.

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I'm not sure if the other man's testimony (of employment) pertained to this type of character; but I am sure that in my varied employment such characters exist. What's more, I am certain that—by experience and observation—my ex-wife befell such a character (a behavior or disposition) as particularly apparent during and following the divorce process.

On the matter of employment and relationships, I remember a statement (or advice) of a career counselor though it be some twenty years ago. He told me that there are those (in the workplace) who will “shit on you” for no reason in particular; interpreted and “cleaned-up”, his statement means that some people will hate you almost as much as they hate themselves. As to the “why”, I do not know in particular. Envy, jealousy, or raw wickedness are some potential reasons (or causes); but in general, I must say again that I lack the “experience or the education to do so”; and all I have left is the personal experience and observation from wind watching.