

AVOID THE OUT OF ORDER SYNDROME by Jack E. Albright

“Order in the court,” is a familiar phrase to all who have been in a court of law. Most formal meetings are called to order as a matter of routine. Classes in school are called to order; church members call themselves to order as the worship service begins. We live in an orderly society and are taught as children that we are to act in an orderly and appropriate manner.

Is it possible for well-mannered, well-educated adults to do and say things that are out of order? Joan Borysenko, PHD thinks so. Her article in Prevention Magazine carried the title: “You’re Out Of Order— a guide to making the right choice at the wrong time.” Her main thrust concerns people from forty to sixty who may be considering major changes in their life such as having children, getting married/ divorced, changing professions or moving across country. These major changes concern not only the individual who makes the change, but also everyone who will be affected by it.

She offers two guidelines: “When making an out-of-order life choice, put it through some tests. When such choices are made from an authentic desire to grow and serve, we thrive in spite of the challenges. Doing what’s right for you, even when other people think you’re nuts is an awesome experience. But when bucking the norm comes from careless or ill-considered choices, being out of order can be hurtful to you and those closest to you. Take a clear-eyed look at what motivates your choices—before you leap—is the key to making sure they’re healthy.”

Counselors will usually ask a client who is considering major life- changes these two questions: Are you being drawn to this change because it will make you a better person spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically? If this is your motivation for change, the outcome will likely be favorable.

Is escaping your motivation for change? If you typically change because you feel the situation is insecure, painful or unfair, you will likely be disappointed by another change. “Escape change” often indicates that a person is insecure and unhappy. New geography does not change who or what we are.

Borysenko suggests helpful hints to consider before you leap: Take your time. How difficult would it be to reverse your decision? If it is not reversible, how would it change the course of your life if the outcome becomes undesirable?

Get data before making your decision. Seek the counsel of others who have made similar decisions. They have likely paid a sad price or received great rewards. They’ll help you evaluate the pros and cons.

Assess the risk. Selling a house or a car will not be as risky as moving to another town or state. Ending a romantic relationship is not as risky as getting married or divorced. Since no man or woman is an island unto himself or herself, it is only fair to assess what our decision will do to those we love and our associates. Will the ripple effect of our free and independent action create a tsunami to those for whom we are responsible? There is no stopping the waves of blessings or destruction once the tidal wave begins.

Honor all your emotions. Become aware of the positive as well as the negative feelings you have about your possible change. Carefully weigh all the emotions in a scale and make an honest evaluation.

Unbiased counselors can help with this process.

Borysenko closes with a powerful suggestion: “If your mind says “go” but your gut says “wait,” let them catch up with each other before making your leap.”