

Are you prepared for change?



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Is change difficult for you? I'm talking about the changes that come with the different seasons of life ... your last baby, your child's last year in school, your last child leaving home. There are so many "lasts" and somehow those changes seem a little harder than other changes in life, don't they? Do you mourn what has passed or is passing and adjust well or not so well to changes? As you age, do changes get easier or more difficult for you? How do you handle them?

Are you grateful for each moment and live it to the fullest ... maybe even more so when you know it's the very last time you will experience it? Do you soak in everything with a desire to create a deep memory that you can go back and revisit when it is over? Do you adjust gracefully, knowing that change is inevitable and we are called to be content in all circumstances?

What I have learned is that no matter who you are, what your age, or what your circumstances, change is hard. I have been doing my best to adjust well but it is so hard and sometimes, I'll admit, graceful is not the way have I adjusted. There has been so much change in the last year of my life and though I am desperately trying to soak in each moment, I find my heart breaking just a little with every change, especially the "lasts" that come. And I wonder, how might I do it better?

This year is my daughter, Briella's (and last child's), senior year. My goodness, there are so many "lasts" happening right now that I think my heart might burst if I didn't make sure to revel in all the goodness happening at the same time.

You see, Briella is a soccer player and has been playing soccer with the same girls for many years. So many years in fact that those girls don't even need numbers on their jerseys because I know who every one of them is by the way they run and play. I know their nicknames, I know their parent's voices, I know what little phrases are said by which parents, and I can even predict who is going to holler encouragement during certain plays.

"Way to go number 3!" (Abby #3)

"Challenge Sammie!" (Sammie #8)

"Good step Lou!" (Liz - #4)

"Good job Em!" (Goalie, Emily #99)

"Great hustle Chloe!" (Chloe #11)

"Go Wheels!" (Olivia #1)

"That's your ball Bails!" (Baylie #7)

"Great job Ry" (Rylie #15)

"Go B (or Bri)" (Briella #9)

These are shout-outs I will never hear again – another "last".

But now, let me tell you about some firsts and the goodness that is keeping my heart from bursting by dwelling in the sadness of the lasts.

It's the first time our Byron Lady Bears have defeated Lourdes in many years, allowing us to take repossession of the trophy these rivals pass to the winner each year. This was a goal of our Lady Bears for the 2021 season and it was amazing to experience the win!

It's the first time our Byron Lady Bears have become the HVL (Hiawatha Valley League) conference champions and Section 1AA champions. It's the first time, in the twenty-five years of the Byron soccer program that the Byron Lady Bears made it to State! More goals our girls achieved as an incredible team.

It's the first time our Byron Lady Bears have ever been to the State Tournament



Photo credit to Julaine Fix

Banquet to celebrate all of the AA top teams and top players in the state. It's the first time our Byron Lady Bears all dyed their hair pink as one more way to solidify the memory of all this goodness of this season.

And finally, it's the first time our Byron Lady Bears have played a top state team, one of the most difficult in the state with four state players. Even though our girls lost that game 0-2, they played with all of their hearts and more fiercely than I have ever seen. It was a victory to behold.

At the end of the game, I had so much pride for their accomplishments and the way they played that I had nothing but joy in my heart. And then I saw them crying with big sad tears streaming down their faces and hugging everyone in sight—each other, their coaches, and every parent present. I thought to myself, "Why are they crying? They should be so proud because they played so well."

Well, there are moments in life that I need a new perspective and I got one from my favorite girl on the team when she said "it's the end of our season, mom".

In that moment I learned what I said at the beginning—no matter who you are, what your age, or what your circumstances, change is hard. This was change and it was a last. And though they all played amazingly well, it was a moment of loss—not just the loss of the game but the loss of their time playing together.

All of this has me wondering—is there a way to prepare for change? Perhaps if we prepare, might it become easier?

We'll come back to this question as it concerns change in our lives. But now let's consider a different change—the change of seasons and how we might prepare to make them better.

What's your favorite season? When we leave that season do you feel a bit of loss for what was and dread what is to come?

Summer is my favorite. And though I welcome the colors of autumn, a different wardrobe, and cute boots, I find myself dreading what is to come—the long months of winter. Can you relate?

Since there isn't anything we can do about it, do you know good ways to prepare for it? I'm still working on that, but I do know great ways to prepare our vehicles for winter. And since I am here to help with matters of the automotive world, perhaps I can encourage you to get prepared for winter before the snow starts to fly.

Here are my top winterizing tips:

Assess your tires

How do your tires look? Is the tread adequate for the snow and icy roads to come? Is the tire pressure within specs?

Your tires are extremely important for winter driving. They are the only things that connect your vehicle to the road and having worn tread can lead to diminished

performance in handling your vehicle as well as stopping.

A tread depth gauge is handy for quickly checking the tread depth but if you don't have one, no worries. Grab a penny. Insert it in the groove on each of your tires in several places (as they can be unevenly worn) and assess. Lincoln's head will be upside down and facing you for this test. If you can see his whole head, it's probably past time to get your tires replaced for winter because the top of Lincoln's head indicates 2/32 of an inch is left in tread.

The minimum legal limit for tread depth is 2/32 of an inch. This does not mean your tires are safe (especially for winter). But it does mean they are at their bare minimum legally and you should not delay in getting a new set installed.

Not only is it important to have good tread when driving on the Minnesota roadways, but tire pressure is also important. Underinflated tires or varying pressures from tire to tire on your vehicle could negatively affect your vehicle's performance while driving. It's important to check the pressure as the temperature drops (specs are typically written on the inside of your door panel) at the beginning of winter as well as periodically throughout winter because each ten-degree drop can mean a pound of loss in air pressure.

As always, our mechanics at Babcock Auto Care or any other great shop would be happy to check your tire pressure and assess their condition as well as help you choose new tires that are best for your driving habits and your vehicle.

Test your battery

When is the last time your battery has been tested or replaced?

Batteries hate cold weather. Chemical reactions in the battery that make electricity slow down as the temp drops makes it more difficult to produce maximum power to start your vehicle. This is particularly true for older batteries.

So, if it's been a while since your battery has been replaced or if you've had any issues with it recently, now is the time to have it tested at Babcock Auto Care or another quality shop so your vehicle can start well all winter long.

Check your fluids

Is your washer fluid full with the right fluid for the freezing temps to come so you can see well under any condition? When's the last time your oil was changed? Do you get it changed on time, every time? Are you maintaining the rest of the fluids in your vehicle and getting them exchanged with fresh fluids regularly—transmission, coolant, power steering, and brake fluid?

Winter is tough on our vehicles in many ways. But oftentimes motorists forget about the importance of fluids and how they can run thicker or freeze in cold temps. All fluids are important in some way—from how well you see (washer fluid) to how well your engine starts and runs (oil) to how efficiently fluid runs (by being clean and

without freezing by using proper fluids) in the other systems to best perform, keeping your vehicle healthy.

If that little sticker in your windshield says it's time or close to time for an oil change (based on time or mileage), this certainly is the perfect time to get it done and have the other fluids assessed by our mechanics at Babcock Auto Care or another honest shop. If it's not time or you perform oil changes yourself, it good to consider when the last time you checked the rest of the fluids and do so if they are due to be changed.

Evaluate your brakes and blades

Do your brakes stop your vehicle well? Or do you have concerns with how well they are functioning or with sounds you hear while braking? Do your wiper blades properly clear your windshield for best visibility? Or is it time for a new pair?

With snow, ice, water and slush on the Minnesota roadways, you must be able to see clearly and stop well. If your visibility is impaired at all with wipers that don't work well or your ability to stop is hindered by brakes that don't stop well, your safety and the safety of your loved ones and others on the roadways may be in danger.

Our mechanics at Babcock Auto Care or another trusted shop would be happy to perform a brake inspection for you and assess your wiper blades in order to advise you what may be needed to improve your visibility or stopping in the coming months.

These are my top tips for preparing for the change to winter that is to come. Now back to: is there a way to prepare for life changes that are to come? A way that might make them easier?

What is true is that change is hard. For everyone. Especially the "lasts".

What is also true is that God makes ways to experience change in better ways—not by preparing, but by living in the moment, reveling in the goodness, and soaking everything in so that we can revisit our memories. And He gave us great things to help us in these moments of change.

God gives us tears—even Jesus wept. Tears allow us to grieve and get it all out. Tears also have a way of bonding us together ... like with our soccer girls as they grieved the loss of their season—with each other and all who were there to hug.

God gives us hugs—two arms to wrap around each other. He even gives us the people to hug—people who understand because they've been there, people who are going through the same thing at the same time, people who are natural huggers because they know the compassionate warmth a good hug can provide.

God gives us prayer—the ability to come to Him with an outpouring of our hearts so that we can feel His love, His peace, and His understanding in times of change. He tells us in His Word: To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. Ecclesiastes 2:1 (KJV)

God even gives us change—a way to make us grow and become stronger in difficult times (especially the "lasts"), a way to give us new perspective and be more compassionate for what others are going through and love them well, and a way to make us more grateful for what was.

In the upcoming seasons of change, may we prepare our vehicles well for winter and may we be grateful for all we have been given—tears, hugs, prayer, and even change. Because it is in that change that we grow the most, love the most, and are the most grateful. So let us all praise God and give Him thanks for all of this in this month of Thanksgiving.



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