

## Daily Doga Inspirations – Change can be Scary or ... Maureen Ross, MA

Like Spring, a time to blossom. Whether the seasons or a life event / transition, change can be scary, a challenge, and/or an opportunity.

Like stress, it is not the change or stress that throws us for a loop into creepy places. It's how we perceive it at the time. Our body, and this DOES include our dogs, has built in mechanisms for dealing with stress and fear. It involves hormones (cortisol, adrenaline, etc.), a nervous system, gut, and of course, our brain!

When working normally, and when our body and mind are in balance, if we listen and breathe, we can make good choices during times of change. If we have been hurt in the past, or use the same hyper-panic way of coping, then like our dogs, we may go into flight or fight, freeze and appease, or worse, complacency and collapse.

Everyone knows what I'm talking about. Ever had someone die, been mugged or almost mugged, how about a car accident or other trauma? Throughout life, we need to gauge the extent (drama) of the trauma. Yeah, I know that rhymes but that's one of my coping mechanisms. When something unseemly happens that may trigger a past "fearful" and "stressful" event, I ask myself, "Is this trauma or drama?" Breathe.

Whether walking our dogs, on a trip, at work, or driving in traffic – try take at least one deep breath before you flip into panic mode. This means being "aware" of what's happening around you before, during and after. As I share [in 'Awareness Centered Training – ACT'](#)

Remember the Serenity Prayer? It's helpful not only for those with addiction. Have the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, the courage to change the things you can, and the wisdom to know the difference. For me, that takes practice – a lifetime of it. I still have knee jerk reactions when it I'm walking the dogs – or with my husband. So does he! We all do. We've been divorced – so we joined each other with coping mechanisms. We've learn to turn them into friends with benefits because we have strengths the other needs. And, by all means, CLARIFY. It is one of my favorite coping mechanisms. Everyone has a story – and a way of interpreting that story. Clarifying helps to make it meaningful and understanding.

**Example:** Next time you are waling your dog, in that same area where another dog ran through the invisible fence, barking, bouncing ... scan, observe, and perhaps take a different route. If you have no other option but that route (like when being mugged), decide whether to react or be proactive. Proactive would be crossing the street, turning around, being calm, and later, deciding whether to confront the dumb own who lets this happen putting their dog (and yours) in danger.

Breathing in nose-to-navel. Grieving and trauma can trigger us long after. It is our body's way of preparing us. How we react is our choice! This includes with our dogs! Enjoy the Spring.