

Community comment
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A change in the weather

They say the only constant is change. Minute to minute, hour to hour, day to day, week to week, month to month, year to year, things change. We change as people, we change as a culture, we even change ever so slowly as a species.

Change happens to our personal lives as a matter of external influences like getting a disease or being involved in an accident. We tend to adapt to these external pressures and live with the results. But internal forces can bring about change as well. We can meet someone and make the decision to get married. We can choose to be trained for a new job. If the job pays more, we can make life style choices that fit our new situation.

Change happens in the environment as well. There is seasonal change that is a predictable pattern of events or there can be changes caused by external forces. A great fire, for example, can cause changes in plants and animals that live in any given area. Some of this can happen in the pattern of normal succession, or there can be changes so extreme that whole new species can invade and become the new normal.

Since man has been present, he has been getting better and better at managing his environment. At first we were nomadic and hunted for animals that we could eat and picked fruits and other plants that supplemented our dietary needs.

Then we slowly learned to manage what plants we could grow and store for later use. We learned to domesticate some animals that we could use for many purposes. We used milk from some and killed others for hides and meat. We learned to store the meat for later use like the plants. This allowed us to settle in one area and develop communities. Given enough time, we created cities and countries. We invented tools along the way that made life easier and less risky. We learned to use the wheel and animals to move around more safely and move goods to new places.

We continued to make improvements through the use of more sophisticated tools. At one point, a few hundred years ago, we learned to use new power sources to fuel our progress. Along came mass production, new things that made life even easier were developed and larger and larger communities were built.

But, along the way, there were by products we created that began to foul our air and water. We lost soil through erosion. But we live on a big world and thought we couldn't really harm it. It, by the way, doesn't care what we do. The world will adapt to the change caused by the pollution we create. It will change.

The problem is, we need this world and it's natural gifts for our well being. We are changing our climate. The evidence is overwhelming. The recent hurricanes are a small reminder of the changes that we are causing.

We cannot continue to ignore our responsibility to each other and to future generations.

It is not too late to affect the severity of climate change on our lives.

We can change! And we must!

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.