



Metaphors of Transformation

The Butterfly Effect is a powerful metaphor adopted by Career Dynamic as its signature theme as it illustrates the process of career transformation in key areas.

The Butterfly Effect

In 1979, at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist from MIT, presented a paper on the dynamics of weather systems. The title of the paper posed an intriguing question: *“Does the Flap of a Butterfly’s Wings in Brazil Set off a Tornado in Texas?”* The principle he advanced in this seminal paper was that predictability on a global level was as uncertain as quantum theory had shown it to be in the micro-realm of subatomic particles.

This principle came to be called the “Butterfly Effect,” and it exemplifies yet another of contemporary science’s departures from the neat and tidy world of Newtonian physics. In Newton’s scheme of things, equal and opposite reactions are the rule, but with the idea of the Butterfly Effect, small initial causes can produce momentous consequences.

The Butterfly Effect is thus a powerful metaphor suggesting that the same principle can work in our lives.

As a concrete example to illustrate this, consider the image of the civil rights pioneer, Rosa Parks, sitting quietly on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. That was the first day of December, 1955, an otherwise ordinary day—but not for long. When ordered to yield her seat to a white man, Rosa quietly and steadfastly refused. This was a courageous act, true enough, but still, it was action on a small scale. And yet, as the many entailments began to unfold, it would trace the slow curve of an upward spiral that would ignite the career of Martin Luther King, Jr., and change forever the consciousness, and the conscience, of a nation.

Rosa’s demonstration of the Butterfly Effect shows that even a modest beginning can have the potentiality to result in revolutionary change. This is a model for all of us to ponder in terms of personal and planetary transformation.

The Butterfly Metaphor

The stages in the life cycle of a butterfly reveal an archetypal fourfold pattern: egg, larva or caterpillar, pupa and finally imago, the adult butterfly. This process of metamorphosis or transformation can be compared to the life cycle of the butterfly and is mirrored in our career decision making model stages of evolving clarity about self and future.

Extracts from: Metaphors of Transformation. www.hyattcarter.com/butterflies.htm