*Wok & Roll by Peter Kwong, (Frederic) Inter-County Leader*

**It is time for a change**

I am a very lucky man indeed, I count my blessings every day when I enjoy my morning tea on the deck, overlooking a beautiful lake. Brought up in Hong Kong, which was then a British colony, I had the privilege of speaking both Chinese and English. Well, I do speak some Spanish, French and Italian, too; but no one could understand a word of what I said. Ha-ha. Oh, life is good.

It is tough trying to keep up with my Chinese, as there are no Chinese radio or TV stations here; and I have to drive for miles into the Twin Cities to get some Chinese newspapers. I don’t even care if they are far-left or far-right, I just want to read something in Chinese. Yes, I can read the internet somewhat, but it is just not the same. I am from the old school, and I love to hold up a paper in the morning and read everything while drinking my hot cup of tea. Spending half an hour to catch up on your culture is simply priceless.

A while back, a good friend sent me an article that was written in Chinese, and I just love it. It was written by Ma Hui, a part-time editor in chief of Tsinghua Publishing House. The title is “I am changing” and I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

**“I am changing”**

“A friend just turned 60 years old. I asked him what has changed? He replied:

1. I am changing. I used to love my parents, brothers, spouse, children and friends; but now I am learning to love myself.
2. I am changing. I learned that I am not God and I cannot carry the whole world by myself.
3. I am changing. I am no longer concerned about my wife’s activities, just let her do whatever she wants to do while enjoying them. Life is short, and the time that God has left us is running out, let her go with the flow! Let her have no regrets in her life also.
4. I am changing. When paying the taxi fare, I no longer wait for the driver to find the proper change, and maybe a little tip to exchange for a smile? After all, he worked harder than I to make a living.
5. I am changing. I no longer say to the elders, ‘You have already told us this many times.’ After all, the stories allow them to regain their memories and relive the past.
6. I am changing. I learned to stop correcting others, even if they are wrong. After all, it is not my responsibility to make everyone perfect. It is more cherishing to keep things peaceful and make others happy.
7. I am changing. I give praise more generously. This not only makes that one person feel better, but it will also benefit others as well.
8. I am changing. I learned not to worry about the creases or spots on the shirt or pants. After all, personality is much better than appearance.
9. I am changing. I learned not to worry about people who look down on me because they don’t understand my value and philosophy.
10. I am changing. I learned not to ruin the relationship with friends just to stick to my own opinions. After all, being alone does not feel as good as spending time with others.
11. I am changing. I learned to treat every day as if it is my last day. After all, one day it might just really be the last day.
12. I am changing, I am doing things to make myself happy. I should make myself happy. This is my most precious responsibility to myself.

“The gray hair has been replaced by dyed hair! Looking back on the passage of life, I notice that my blood is still running with passion. Some friends were called to join God’s kingdom above before they even retired; others were resting on hospital beds as soon as they retired. We are most fortunate, as we are still able to roam around and enjoy life each day. Regardless that we are friends or foes, rich or poor, high-ranking or low-ranking officials, we should all be thankful and grateful, and be contented in surviving another day.

“The tide has slowly washed away the fury and passion of our youth. While experiencing a lot of inequalities of life, we have also learned to taste the difference of fairness, and purities of assorted red or white wines. Put away your own bitterness of sufferings, and share with the world the true kindness and the beauty of yourself. Be respectful to your parents, and share the anguish of your children. Move forward joyfully with a clear conscience.

“At our age, we have already surpassed the old-time scholars with the new high-tech knowledge and information. The whole world is under our fingertips. The world is actually getting smaller and closer. Let’s take advantage of this new modern technology and enjoy these precious moments of freedom.

“My dear friends, we must understand the law of nature, whether you finish sooner or later, the journey must come to an end. So why not associate yourself with happy thoughts, and stop worrying about all the troubled matters. One happy thought at a time, and enjoy each beautiful sunset and everything around. Leave no regrets, and nothing unpleasant behind.”

In the history of mankind, how many kings and emperors have spent their lifetime searching for the fountain of youth or seeking the potion for eternal life? They weren’t satisfied just by controlling all the power and fortune in the world, they wanted more, they wanted to have them forever and ever. The first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, spent his lifetime conquering all the neighboring kingdoms and finally succeeded. Yet he still wasn’t satisfied, being the most powerful man in the world just wasn’t enough, as he wanted to live forever. So, all the fortune and power couldn’t buy him an ounce of happiness. How sad was that?

It is time for a change, it is never too late. Let’s do what we can to help others smile, to see others happy and be contented. But first, let’s start with ourselves. I don’t know about you, but I am changing. Yes, it is about time.