

## *Chapel Address — Change*

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Ngabo, and for those of you that do know me, my name is either Engee, or Engine, or Ngabu, or Engabu or any other accidental nicknames in my ever-growing list of accidental nicknames. I'm a new student here, even though I don't feel very new anymore considering that I've been studying at Shaw for a few months now. The topic I really wanted to share with you today was something I learned to appreciate over the winter holidays and now hopefully you will too: change. Now I'll be honest with you, before this winter holiday, I hated anything that took me out of my comfort zone, change included. And I don't even use the word hate that often, because as many of you know, I don't hate; *I detest*. But before this event, I really, really loathed change.

Now, I can talk about change in the generic form, but I think, at this point, I need to be firmly specific about how life and experiences here have allowed me to come to terms with some of these events. Recently, another brave student talked quite passionately about losing a family member and I felt compelled to let her and others know that she is not alone. I too, lost my dad a few years back and at that point, change became an immovable part of my life. It also cost me strong relationships and bonds I shared with people and I used to think change was a concept used only to hurt people's lives and families. If I may be honest, I believe this negative take on change is what I felt when I first got to Shawnigan, not because I didn't like it here, but because I had formed strong connections with the people back in Vienna and had to leave them behind. Thus, I somewhat failed to really make my first few weeks here worthwhile. And I apologize.

Now, as some of you may or may have not noticed, I like to talk a lot. To be more specific, I like to rant. So over the past week or so, I've been complaining on and on about how boring my winter holidays were. There was, however, one event that saved most of it. During my family's stay at my friend's house, they took us to their local church and while there the preacher introduced the audience to a man with an interesting past. This man was a Nazi General back in World War II and was the secretary general of the racially intolerant Ku Klux Klan some 30 years ago. So, he walked on stage and told us his story. And he said that one night, while asleep, God told him to go to Kenya.

The following day, the man packed his bags and headed for Kenya where, by the way, he had no connections. He had no idea why he was going there and I don't know if any of you have been to Kenya, but for those of you that have, you will know that there are coloured people *as far as the eye can see!* Now, over the last 20 years or so, this formerly controversial man built hundreds of houses, churches, shelters, etc, not only in Kenya but in bordering countries as well. What really inspired me was the fact that a man full of hate for certain people could have transformed or *CHANGED* into a man of so much love, so much compassion, and so much character that he was willing to give up his previous long-standing family beliefs to help those he hated (and eventually grew to love and tolerate).

Change is something we cannot fear, but respect. It is something we cannot avoid, but accept, providing we have had input. But most of all, *change is not discretionary, it's mandatory*. You may change the way you look at life, you may change the way you look altogether, you may change the way you feel about that certain someone or, who knows, they may change the way they feel about you. And sometimes it sucks, I know that. Trust me, I do. Change isn't always welcome and certain changes seem not to be fair. But believe me when I say everything happens and changes for a reason and those reasons eventually turn out for the better. You can't ask anybody around you how, when, or why. You can only watch, act and adapt.

There was not much for me to do over the holidays afterwards, so I sat down next to a bowl of Froot Loops around one in the morning and reviewed how change had positively affected life in general. I thought about how change brought us advances in technology and in medicine—how people changed their ways of thinking to come up with the incredible concepts of complicated constructs. For example, Thomas Edison changed his train of thought to come up with the light bulb and the Wright Bros. changed their way of thinking to build and construct the world's first aeroplane and the list goes on....

Then, I scaled it down a notch and thought about how change had positively affected me as an individual. As a matter of fact, I think I'd like to share a few of the enhancements I've experienced since I started attending Shaw with you. Since I've been here, I've grown quite a bit taller (not that one would have anything to do with the other; I just thought I'd mention that). I've been more attractive (cough) attentive in class (laugh it up, you know it's true). Evidently, my jokes have also got a lot better. But more importantly, by coming here, I got a chance to meet a group of buildings, students and teachers that would eventually turn into my new home, new confidantes and new family. And I promise I will change life for you, as you have changed life for me.

*Thank you*