

BERGER**WHAT'S IN!**
Paint your Imagination

Umbrellas... the heat waves are back on its full swing and nothing can be handier than these "contraptions" to beat the sun.

Reminiscence

THERE is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged, to find the ways in which you have altered."

-Nelson Mandela

The world is changing constantly, and along with it, so are we. Sometimes, people change so much over the years that when they return to where they had previously been, they are surprised, even alienated, by what they see and feel. During such situations, most people become very much aware of the otherwise inconspicuous metamorphosis that they undergo. Different people have different types of reactions. Some take this experience as a shock, while others find it a most pleasant feeling of refreshing reminiscence. But in most cases, it comes as a surprise, whether good or bad.

My father went through a similar feeling a couple of years ago. As a young boy, he had gone to a boarding school in Lower Topa, which is situated in the hills of Murree in Pakistan. Years later, after my brother and I were born, he would tell us of his childhood experiences there. He gave us such intricate details of his classrooms, the dining hall, his dormitory and football fields and basketball courts that we could literally imagine where every table, desk and bed was situated. My father's turn to feel the way he did, came when he received an invitation to a school reunion celebrating the golden jubilee anniversary of his school's establishment. My parents went to Pakistan and there

my father experienced something he had never felt before. After his return, he told me of the pleasant feeling he had when he saw that his old school was exactly as he had left it almost forty years ago. Even his bed, which was situated in the far end of his dormitory, near the window, was in exactly the same place. He had spotted it out instantly, out of all the rest of the furniture. The tables, the desks and everything else stood in their original places and it overwhelmed him when he realized that he was the only one, so drastically altered.

Sometimes, even people can also be responsible for bringing about such feelings within us, especially when we meet someone very close to us who we have not seen in a very long while. I know I felt this way when I recently met one of my oldest friends after a period of almost twelve years. When we were young and used to be neighbours, we were inseparable. We even thought alike! When the time came for her to move to a new home, which was another country altogether, I thought, as young and naïve I was then, that my life would end there! But, I learned the hard way, as do many people that life does go on and that we, as humans, can adapt to almost any changes, be it physical or psychological. So, as the years passed by, we both discovered, over the infrequent phone conversations that grew even less frequent with time, that we had both grown into very different people, although we did harbour the same love and

affection for each other as we did when we were children. Almost everything, from our favourite colour to favourite food had changed. We both reacted to these changes with mild surprise and sometimes even a little frustration, but continued to respect each other, regardless, by frequently reminiscing the wonderful years of our childhood together. When she finally returned home last month, after so many years, as ecstatic as I was about looking forward to seeing her, I also mentally prepared myself for a little disappointment, in case I found my friend

too different. But, from the very moment I saw her, I was pleasantly shocked to find that she was still the same as ever! Even though we had lived apart for so many years, with her growing up in a totally different environment, she still reminded me every bit of my childhood friend. However, that pleasant feeling also reminded me of the fact that I had changed drastically and had transformed into an altogether different person, while she had most certainly not! All this while, I had been worrying about and preparing myself for this encounter, and halfheart-

edly expecting to meet a different person. But little did I know that I was the one so drastically transformed!

Such overwhelming emotions are not rare and they often come to us through reminiscences. If we learn to see and feel a little differently, we will all feel the changes that we go through, which takes place in every one of us. It is only after returning to these special places that remain unchanged, that we become aware of the ways in which we have altered.

By Farina Noireet

lifestyle

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