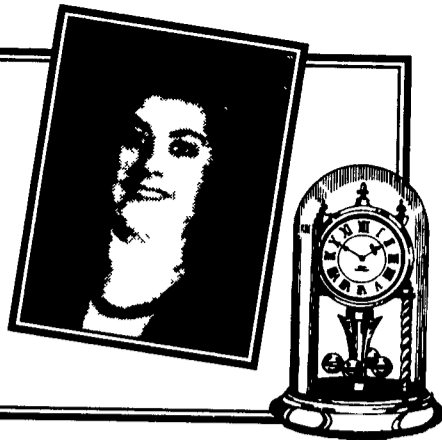


**Taking Time**  
by  
**Rebecca Escott**



**Thinking About Old Pajamas**

A couple weeks ago, I managed to tear through the sleeve of my favorite pair of flannel pajamas. I didn't even know I was doing it. My elbow bent, and the fabric ripped. (After all it is a well-worn, well-loved pair of pajamas!) My husband urged me to discard them and get a new pair, but I'm resisting.

What is it about old pajamas that makes them so hard to part with? As I thought about my dilemma, I also thought about how losses and changes are faced in more serious arenas of a family's life.

Here's what I've concluded: old and familiar. We've grown accustomed to one another. When things are comfortable, familiar, and connected, partings are difficult.

Besides that, I'm frugal. I

could just cut the sleeves off and turn the edge under — the rest of the garment still has life. I wonder how older people feel when they're no longer able to function the way they'd like. Does society tend to discard them for a more useful, fully-functioning model, or are we willing to make adjustments and look at other ways a person can contribute? Does a change make me totally useless as a person, or can I regroup?

This past week, I was also learning about people's temperaments. Some people are slow to adjust, creatures of habit who don't like giving up things they are used to. Other people who split out the sleeve of an old pair of pajamas would rejoice because they could justify a new purchase (after all they were tired of that pair, wanted a different color, and just saw a neat

pair in a catalog last week, etc.) Guess which temperament I have?

So what can this experience teach us about change and loss? First, I need to recognize that it's okay to give up some things. Making a change can be a difficult step, but also a good step. If my frugality gets in the way, I could drop the item off at the recycling center. Of course, I could also choose to retrofit them with my sewing machine and keep wearing them.

I am also reminded that what seems like a little change to one person may be a bigger one to another. I can't tell you how many times my siblings and I urged/forced my Mom to pitch things. At other times we shook our heads in amazement that she was willing to hang on to seemingly useless items. NOW here I am, wanting to hang onto my old pajamas and others are telling me to pitch them. I don't like how that feels.

This is teaching me, once again, to be quick to think and slow to direct and judge. I've found when a person chooses to make the change by himself rather than having the change forced on him, it is a much more positive experience.

Of course, it's not always possible to control when the change happens and what we can do. We don't control when layoffs occur, car accidents happen, children get the flu, refrigerators break down, or grocery stores close. In those cases, it's

good to mourn the loss even if it's only old pajamas. Acknowledge the change creates some difficulty. Ask for help from others if you need it and then step out to adjust to the new situation — one hour at a time, one day at a time.

The old flannel shirt is still in my drawer. I haven't made up

my mind yet about this little change. But whatever happens, I'm going to be more sensitive to others that I encounter who are having trouble making changes in their lives. Maybe someone you love is struggling with a change. Before you jump in with advice, take the time to think of my dilemma. Then speak gently.

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