

## *A Gathering Chicago*

One sunny Sunday in Chicago, several former classmates, who were good friends in school, gathered for lunch, having attended their high school reunion the night before. They wanted to hear more about what was happening in each other's lives. After a good deal of kidding, and a good meal, they settled into an interesting conversation.

Angela, who had been one of the most popular people in the class, said, "Life sure turned out differently than I thought it would when we were in school. A lot has changed."

"It certainly has," Nathan echoed. They knew he had gone into his family's business, which had operated pretty much the same and had been a part of the local community for as long as they could remember. So, they were surprised when he seemed concerned. He asked, "But, have you noticed how we don't want to change when things change?"



Carlos said, "I guess we resist changing, because we're afraid of change."

"Carlos, you were Captain of the football team," Jessica said. "I never thought I'd hear you say anything about being afraid!"

They all laughed as they realized that although they had gone off in different directions—from working at home to managing companies—they were experiencing similar feelings.

Everyone was trying to cope with the unexpected changes that were happening to them in recent years. And most admitted that they did not know a good way to handle them.

Then Michael said, "I used to be afraid of change. When a big change came along in our business, we didn't know what to do. So we didn't adjust and we almost lost it.

"That is," he continued, "until I heard a funny little story that changed everything."

"How so?" Nathan asked.

"Well, the story changed the way I looked at change—from losing something to gaining something—and it showed me how to do it. After that, things quickly improved—at work and in my life.

"At first I was annoyed with the obvious simplicity of the story because it sounded like something we might have been told in school.

"Then I realized I was really annoyed with myself for not seeing the obvious and doing what works when things change.

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"When I realized the four characters in the story represented the various parts of myself, I decided who I wanted to act like and I changed.

"Later, I passed the story on to some people in our company and they passed it on to others, and soon our business did much better, because most of us adapted to change better. And like me, many people said it helped them in their personal lives.

"However there were a few people who said they got nothing out of it. They either knew the lessons and were already living them, or, more commonly, they thought they already knew everything and didn't want to learn. They couldn't see why so many others were benefitting from it.

"When one of our senior executives, who was having difficulty adapting, said the story was a waste of time, other people kidded him saying they knew which character he was in the story—meaning the one who learned nothing new and did not change."

"What's the story?" Angela asked.

"It's called, *Who Moved My Cheese?*"

The group laughed. "I think I like it already," Carlos said. "Would you tell us the story? Maybe we can get something from it."

"Sure," Michael replied. "I'd be happy to—it doesn't take long." And so he began: