

ELLE MAY



There are so many platitudes around the idea of ‘change’ these days, it can be difficult to figure out what the word means for you in real life, beyond a naff Instagram inspo post or scary newspaper headline. It’s certainly not something you can control. Think back to this time last year: are you in the same job, or the same home? Are you lying next to the same person in bed at night? Perhaps. Do you still feel mortified you sent that ‘reply all’ email by mistake, or devastated you didn’t get that promotion? Unlikely. Life moves on. For better or for worse, the things around us shift, constantly.

But isn’t it funny how, when one thing in your life is transformed – either by chance or by design – a domino effect occurs and suddenly you can find yourself desperately clinging on to the last remaining raft at sea while everything spins around you like a tsunami? I need to get the Saturn Sisters on the phone to find out if there are some planetary shenanigans at play, because, for me at least, now is one of those times when everything seems to be changing at once.

At ELLE HQ this month there have been departures, breakups, new partners, house moves, radical haircuts (I find this the most difficult to deal with – do not talk to me about Kristen Stewart’s), and we will have a new ELLE editor joining us soon. Spring, of course, is the right time for new beginnings, and as the pink blossom starts appearing on the trees in my street and the Tesco daffodils are put on special offer, I’m enjoying the energy these changes are bringing to my work life and beyond.

Fashion is the perfect outlet for those who embrace this kind of renewal, coming as it does with its own spin cycle of trends and seasons that move at permanent fast-forward. Not to mention the current ins and outs of fashion houses’ creative directors. I welcome the new guard of Maria Grazia Chiuri for Dior, Raf Simons for Calvin Klein, Demna Gvasalia’s Balenciaga and Anthony Vaccarello’s Yves Saint

Laurent, to name a few... and by the time you read this, there will be a slew of other moves and shakes to keep the industry on its toes. The radical new visions of these designers challenge and inspire us at ELLE each month. They certainly make my job fun.

‘Change’ became a theme running through my interview with Victoria Beckham, on page 138, and I was uplifted by her attitude. Victoria told me: ‘Every time we have moved – whether it was Manchester to Spain, Spain to LA, LA to London – I think of it as an adventure, a journey, an experience, and all the benefits that come with that. So, different languages, cultures, environments, people, schools... I have travelled so much and I think change is good. You have to embrace it.’

We talked about her personal evolution, too – developing her confidence, style and sense of self under such public scrutiny and not associating the young woman she was in the Spice Girls with the woman she is now. Imagine having to spend your adult life accounting for every fashion choice you made as a 20-year-old (young millennials reading this: trust me, your time will come). I, for one, wouldn’t know how to explain my tie-dye jeans phase and am very happy the only photos of it are locked deep in a drawer and not just a Google search away.

‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’ the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir wrote in 1949. I like the idea of reframing how we change throughout our lives – not as the loss of one state, but as the gaining of another. We are all constantly ‘becoming’. No one understands this more than our transgender columnist Rhyannon Styles. ELLE has championed Rhyannon for almost three years now, and we have been with her throughout her own process of becoming a woman. We are all thrilled that, on the back of her ELLE column, she now has a book out in June. There can be no change greater than transitioning gender, but for Rhyannon it has been a process of inhabiting her truth. Rhyannon writes about finding love as a trans woman on page 128. Her piece is a great lesson in not letting change throw you off course, because however difficult the journey, staying true to yourself provides the anchor needed to weather any storm. And *voilà* – your next cheesy ‘change’ Instagram inspo quote right there. You’re welcome.

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