



Dear Friends,

For the past two years, Kathryn and I have been using refurbished coffee machines for our ritual morning caffeine hit. Our kids have generously donated to us their used machines and grinders so that we can enjoy good quality coffee. Previously, we drank coffee brewed in a pot on our stove top, Italian style, with grounded coffee rather than our own grinded beans. We thought that was good enough. However, it didn't take long to get used to drinking "café-quality" coffee.

A few months ago, the latest of the refurbished machines stopped operating. We were devastated. How would we survive without the machine-made coffee we had become so accustomed to each day? With some reluctance and in desperation, we removed the coffee pot from the cupboard and re-commissioned it into service.

It took some adjustment reverting to the old way of making and drinking coffee. I especially found it hard. So, I began to agitate for a new coffee machine. Kathryn was unsure. She wanted to explore whether we could get the old machine repaired before buying a brand new one. But as it soon became clear that was unlikely to happen, we finally decided to make a call and purchase a new machine.

What I haven't disclosed thus far is that Kathryn was the sole barista in our marriage. I find coffee machines and grinders challenging to use. Truth be told, I didn't work very hard to learn to use them. I simply relied on Kathryn who had mastered the art of making an excellent coffee.

So, in deciding to buy a new coffee machine, I determined that I would learn how to use it and make coffee. It helps that the new machine has a built-in grinder, and is much easier to operate than those we had in the past. I also wanted to use the new machine because I recognise that it is good for me to have a go at new things.

The reality is, I am constantly having to learn new things. In a sense, that's life. For example, I became a grandfather last year. That is a new experience for me. I am in the process of learning to be a grandparent. That involves relating to a grandchild for the first time, as well as adjusting my relationship to my own children and their spouses as they are now parents.

Additionally, I was asked recently to sing in the church choir being assembled for the carols event. I really didn't want to do it. But I decided to join in because it's good for me to have a crack at new things.

I want to choose to do new things not only because, "that's life." I want to do them because as a disciple of Jesus Christ, I am above all else, a learner. Having a go at new things ensures that I keep seeing myself as a learner rather than an expert. There are no experts in the Christian life. There are mature Christians. But every single believer is a disciple. A follower. There is only one expert. That's Jesus.

"New" is what Christians are and "new" is what Christians do.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation: The old has gone, the new is here!
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

If you are a Christian, you are a new creature in Christ. You are called to a new way of being. You are to live a new way. What is that new way? This is what Jesus, the expert says:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (Jn 13:34-35)

God Bless,
Mark Adams