

STYLUS

Scratching Beneath the Surface

stylus n. an instrument of metal, bone, or the like,
used by the ancients for writing

TRANSFORMATION Challenging Webster

by Nina Durfee

What is transformation?

That's the question posed by my coach mastery facilitator to me and five of my classmates. The meaty definition from *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (1996) is "change in form, appearance, nature or character." As is often the case in questions with some degree of philosophical bent, six pupils provided six separate answers. For fun, I'll share them here.

1. "Change that comes from growth." To the point and concise (can you tell it comes from my techie colleague?), this definition covers a lot of territory. By including the phrase "from growth," the definer takes away the option of change that comes from, say, decay. Technically speaking, is decay not transformation as well (according to Webster)? Perhaps, but clearly not in the mind of this definer.
2. "Evolution." Again, this implies growth. Evolution in the context of inner growth implies positive progress. In the scientific (Darwinian) sense, evolution implies flexibility, adaptability, changing in order to perpetuate being.
3. "Profound change that is authentic and true." This elevates the nature of change from ordinary and banal. The significance and profundity are, I believe, in the mind of the perceiver. This implies transformation can be experienced internally, without being obvious to those who observe us from the outside. The authentic and true aspect takes away any doubt about pretentious change. In other words, change that *is* observable by others may not reflect what's really going on inside the one changed.
4. "Change of thinking, expansion of awareness." This takes transformation out of the physical realm. Expansion of awareness is difficult to define. It is purely

experiential. Meditation provides an expanded awareness. Not so much a bigger picture, but the ability to observe from a wider angle. It is not a change of circumstance, but rather a change in observation and experience of the circumstance in relation to itself and in relation to a widening circle of its surroundings.

5. “Transformation is profound but smooth, not contrived.” I share this definer’s experience. In moments when I’ve been aware of personal transformation, I felt the shift as if trudging over rough, snowy territory in cumbersome snowshoes and suddenly gliding on crystal clear ice, smooth and frictionless. This definition expresses the sense of comfort associated with coming into truth, erasing the uncertainty of darkness by bringing in a light that leaves no room for doubt.
6. “Shift from intellectual knowing to internal knowledge.” This is my definition and my experience. For me, transformation comes on the heels of an intellectual understanding – grasping the theory prior to actual experience. Transformation is the shift to *experience*. Before the internalization stage, I sometimes feel compelled to argue the truth of my theory, to explain it in words, to convince others it must be true. Once I’ve crossed over to the smooth sailing of internalization, the need to explain goes away. I *know*, and that is all I need. Perhaps the preliminary need to explain and describe satisfies my smaller, ego-self. Once my inner core Self owns the awareness of the truth, the need to explain, justify or struggle goes away.

The implied common element of these definitions is desirability. Transformation, by this consensus, is a good thing, something we strive for, or at the very least, welcome.

The answer that serves me is based on my interpretation of my personal experience coupled with the differing input of my fellow coaches. How do *you* define transformation? There are no right or wrong answers. We create our own reality.

What reality do you choose? What transformation would you welcome? How can a life coach help you navigate that process?

What insights did this article awaken for you? Share your thoughts by emailing me at lifesculpt@gmail.com.