

The 5 Axes

Of Change



When we read a book it is not uncommon to forget some of the main points as time goes by. We are often left with the sensation that we enjoyed a certain book, but when we are asked to summarise it or when we try to recapture its teachings, inevitably some of the main essence is gone, hidden somewhere in our memory. This leaves us unable to put all the ideas and concepts of the book to a good use in our life.

To prevent all this from happening, you can use this ebook. In fact it contains an important section of A whole new life, The Axes of Change, in nuggets. A whole new life is an encouraging and transformational guide for living your best, ideal life. It is a book packed with spiritual and practical teachings, hints, inspiration, powerful tools and easy but effective exercises to achieve your best life.

You can see this ebook as your personal reminder for the main points of the Axes of Change- the phases we have to go through when we want to create a positive transformation in our life.

Enjoy!



# The 5 axes of change

*"I will show you the path toward liberation. Know that liberation depends on yourself."*

*-BUDDHA*

Even though we speak of it as if it were a thing, in reality, change is an interactive process that is very complex. It involves many different variables, takes place on many levels and involves the great risk of relapse.

How many times have you sworn to yourself that you would change and maybe did for a short period, but then, seduced by dopamine, you found yourself exactly where you were in the beginning?

To avert this risk and better confront the journey toward transformation, we need a prototype which will indicate as precisely as possible how change works, what the variants are, what the mechanisms involved are and what the activities and phases to cross are. We must understand how to trick the brain's chemistry and make the basic mechanisms of neurology work to our advantage.

you will find a model that will dissect the structure of change and its cornerstones. This work is based on the most recent research of cognitive psychology and, in particular, Neurosemantics and Meta-Coaching<sup>13</sup> of Michael Hall and Michelle Duval, who have dedicated their lives to the study of generative and transformation change. This model has served as a path for thousands of people to successfully navigate the labyrinth of change. Whatever change we want to make, we must go through precise phases.

# 1) Awareness

*“If something external hurts you, it is not the thing that disturbs you but it is what you think about it.”*

MARC AURELIUS

Most of the functioning of our psyche occurs in the unconscious without our awareness. If we do not realize that we need to change and if we are not aware of our thought patterns and what limits us, change will never happen. Awareness is decidedly the foundation of change. It is with awareness that we can separate the experience of what happens from the interpretations and meanings that we give them and from the reactions that we have.

In some cases, this is all that is needed to make a big change. To bring forward the dysfunctional parts of Matrix, individualize the damaging beliefs, understand the arbitrary meanings and toxic interpretations that we have attributed to something or someone, and we are brought to change.

In the end, actions and moods stem from thoughts, and, since we are thinkers, we can change things as soon as we become aware of them. The mere fact of being aware of our moods changes them; passion becomes compassion, anger become decision, fear becomes action and confusion takes on a life of clarity and so on.

It's not rare then that these moments of intense awareness lead to some real awakenings. These are the moments in which we have a realization, in which we spontaneously realize that something has always been there, right under our nose, but our blinders had prohibited us from seeing it. Gestalt calls it “Aha! Moments”, the best definition I can imagine. Awareness comes from our mind's capacity to observe and reflect, to come out of the situation that we are in for a moment and take stock of where we are. When we direct this observation internally, we enter the function of auto-reflection – the exploration of our thoughts, actions and moods. But often we are so busy that our attention is continually elsewhere.

## THE QUESTIONS OF AWARENESS

- what am I feeling/thinking right now?
- what do I need?
- what do I want?
- what interpretation am I giving to this event?

## 2) Motivation

*“One can choose to go back toward safety or to go ahead toward growth; growth must be chosen continually and fear must be won continually.”*

ABRAHAM MASLOW

Often, knowledge by itself is not enough to sustain us during the whole process of change. Knowledge has an extremely important role during the process of change but often it is only the beginning, not the end. This is why it is important that other phases are also used. The development of motivation is innate: we tend to distance ourselves from anything that gives us pain and go toward things that give us pleasure. The axis of motivation is a dance between the drive toward what we want and an escape from what we don't want. We act either because we are attracted by the joy of the vision or because we are prodded by the intolerance of pain. In fact, sometimes, we need a strong anti-vision that prods us to say “enough is enough”.

As soon as we establish an objective, we also decide that the present state is different from what we desire and the space between the two states becomes evident. We change because we want something, we desire new experiences, we are inspired by our dreams, we are captured by a vision or we begin to believe in it and invest time and energy. Or, we change when we have suffered enough, we can't take any more, we are obligated, we have no other choice or no other exits. Which of these cases sounds like you? Are you part of the club that is pushed by the whip or the one that goes toward the carrot?

### **QUICK SELF-MOTIVATION KIT IN FOUR QUESTIONS**

If you want to increase motivation regarding an action to take or a specific objective:

- What will happen if I do it?
- What won't happen if I don't do it?
- What will happen if I don't do it?
- What won't happen if I do it?

### 3) Decision

*“Not everything that we confront can be changed, but nothing can change if we don’t confront it.”*

JAMES BALDWIN

From zero to ten, how determined are you to change? The decision comes when we make a commitment to ourselves. That moment is the very center of the transformation. And, with a decision, we say no to the old and yes to the new, giving ourselves permission to change. In general, all this happens after understanding, through reflection, that we are worth something better and that other possibilities exist.

Reflection is part of the axis of decision, the careful evaluation of the pros and cons, but also of the resolution and determination without which we will remain blocked in the world of hypotheses. To take a decision is equal to taking a new direction. This upsets the old stability that kept things in their place and often means renouncing certain secondary benefits (power, privilege, prestige...) If we neglect reflection prior to the decision, we’ll find ourselves acting impulsively to events without thinking. And we won’t always be happy with the consequences.

On the other hand, if we remain blocked in this phase, we won’t stop weighing, evaluating, thinking, analyzing and reflecting – without ever being ready for action. The more time passes, the more we are paralyzed and the more we risk giving up on the change. When we implement the decision phase in a balanced manner, every evaluation is designed to generate the most decision-making power and to prepare us for action.

#### **THE QUESTIONS OF DECISION**

Write your answers in a page of your diary. Repeat the same questions for every objective of your vision.

- What are your strengths?
- What do you think of your strengths? How do they make you feel?
- What are your weaknesses? What are your challenges?
- What do you think of your weaknesses? How do they make you feel?
- What are your opportunities? What will happen if you get what you want? What is at stake? What are the pros? What do you want to have happen?

-Why is this important to you? Why do you have this objective? What does it represent for you?

-What are the threats? What are the challenges? What are you afraid might happen? What's the probability that it will happen? And if it happens, what will follow? What is the worst that could happen? What is the most important thing in all of this?

-What will you lose if you don't change, if you don't reach your objective? What will happen if you choose to not change?

## 4) Creation

*“An action is a thought that comes to life.”*

PAOLO COELHO

After you understand what to improve and have generated the energy to do it to the point of making a decision, you need a specific plan to bring about the change. It is a step that must come from within us, in our way of thinking that is then to be brought out by our behaviors. It's a change from inspiration to experimentation. This phase is divided into two parts: the inner creation and the outer creation. While the first means planning, brainstorming, thinking of options, possibilities and strategies, the second part is pure action.

### **The inner creation: thought**

During the process of change, when we continue to face difficulty and resistance in the external world, the first thing to do is to strengthen the internal part of our creation – we must update our system of beliefs by giving it new frames and new meaning to events.

### **The external creation: action!**

Whether this is our case or not, we must begin to translate these new beliefs into concrete actions and behave in a way that reflects that which we want to become. What is our next step?

If our plan foresees action, this is the moment to start. And don't fall into the trap of waiting for the right moment to start because it will never be right! Often the problem for many people isn't that we don't know what to do, but it's not doing what we do know. Only by taking action can things change.

### **THE QUESTIONS OF CREATION**

(Review the questions of the seven steps.)

- When you think of your vision, which of your beliefs are useless?
- If you could change one belief, which would it be?
- Are you absolutely sure about the truth of that belief? Are there moments in which it is not true?
- When did it start? How has it been validated? How could it be proven wrong?

- What would be more useful for you to believe and think instead?
- What are the beliefs of people who have reached objectives similar to yours? What do they believe? Who is like what you want to become? Imagine being able to have their beliefs. What would change? How would your relationships, your moods and your behaviors change?
- Have you ever felt that way? When?
- What could you start doing today to become what you want to become?
- What resources and help will you need? Who could help you?
- What new capacities will you need to develop?
- What will you do tomorrow? The day after tomorrow? In a week? A month?

## 5) Solidification

*“An object will remain in uniform motion in a straight line unless acted upon by an external force.”*

Newton's first law

For change to last in time though, the new beliefs and behaviors must be reinforced and solidified. What happens if this phase is skipped? It is very probable that the results obtained will not last and that the old habits will return. Bruce Wexler, internationally renowned neuroscientist and author of *Brain and Culture*, affirms that to have success in change, it is necessary to have a big dose of concentration and an intense and uninterrupted repetition of the new behavior because usually it means fighting deep programming. Our brain, in fact, is programmed to save energy for the important functions like breathing and coordination of movements, and because the old habits require less energy, they tend to return.

To accomplish this, constant reinforcement of the neuro-connections is necessary until they become the preferred circuits and the old dysfunctional automatic ones, used less and less, shrink into small lanes. It is at this point that new habits are formed and that we are not so at risk of relapse. The fact that, in order to solidify change, it is necessary to create new habits is not a new concept. Aristotle sustained that virtues were the result of good habits cultivated over time. William James, the father of American psychology, at the beginning of the last century, wrote that habits are fundamental components of human psychology.

### **QUESTIONS OF SOLIDIFICATION**

- How much do you have to practice a new way of thinking/behaving before it becomes automatic? Are you willing to do that?
- Have you associated pain with not doing it?
- What are the rewards for each of your small successes?
- How could you improve your results even more?
- Do you have the support of others? Who?
- If you don't have the support of others, how could you create it?
- If you do have the support of others, is it the type of support that you need? If it isn't, what type of help would you like? Have you clearly asked for it from the people around you? In what other way could you communicate it even better?

# Thank you

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