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Why You Don't Change (2 of 2)

Find doors. Open and pass through them.

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*“It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive,
but those who can best manage change.”*

— **Charles Darwin**

Trust Ignorance

You're not going to allow yourself much internal change if it destabilizes you. Giving someone else the power to change you won't work, because they can only change you externally. If the change is going to affect your mind, then you've got to make it. Deep change often goes against your nature.

Imagine you're standing inside an airplane, next to a small, open, oval door. Outside the wind tears past with a deafening roar of air and engine. Beyond and below is 10,000 feet of empty air... and you will jump into it.

If you've never done this before, then no matter what you tell yourself, no matter how firmly you believe, you will be less than comfortable. To let go means jumping out the door. "Getting a better grip" means falling into space.

You will jump if you've been trained to jump. If everything is successful, your instincts will start to change and you'll see things differently. You'll pay attention to different details and develop a different kind of thinking.

This has some similarities to a therapeutic situation, though therapy doesn't have the same kind of optimism, activism, and focus. The rewards and the risks won't be as obvious. Therapy is not known for its thrills, and you will be less committed to the jump. In therapy, no one can guarantee that your 'chute will open, but you also would not expect a long fall.

The Leap

Taking a psychedelic is like jumping out of an airplane, and many are attracted to psychedelics for this reason. As laws and norms change, people feel less endangered, and they're attracted to the potential for change.

Psychedelics are set to become the next fad. Public sentiment always gravitates toward achieving next to nothing, and the current fashion for mind expansion will be no different. In spite of the dilution that's certain to occur—how long before we have MacMicrodose tea?—psychedelics offer growth to those who take them seriously.

Psychedelics are not guaranteed to open a new reality. From the history of religion, sports, arts, and trance, it's clear that this reality can be found without chemicals if you work hard enough. The focus should not be on how you get there, nor should it be on getting there by one way or another. The focus should be on becoming something new.

All methods of "getting there" involve getting out of who you know yourself to be, getting out of your head. This is dissociation rather than disconnection, because disconnection is not enough. When you're disconnected you're still ego-centered, you're just out of touch. But when you dissociated you're a different person with a different ego. That's what dissociation means, becoming a separate self.

You open your mind from a normal state of mind. This is the idea behind meditation, athletic, artistic, and religious trance. It takes time to learn and usually lacks the chaotic spectacle of a psychedelic experience, although even that is available without chemicals if you know how to do it. There is nothing quite like completely losing control.

Take It

I endorse the psychedelic experience. Alternate realities offer fruitful doorways whether or not they're chemically induced. Even though psychedelics can tear reality from your grip, if you want to get the most out of the experience, forfeit control voluntarily. Do not go passively into the new dawn.

Dreams are a similar excursion, though you don't usually agree to them beforehand. Dreams are more enlightening when you take a hand in fashion them. Dream integration is much like integrating a psychedelic experience. If you take more time to integrate your dreams, you'll be more adept in integrating your psychedelic experience.

Hypnotherapy can take you to a new reality. Normal therapy is a kind of hypnotherapy, though the hypnosis is shallow. Even something as simple as agreeing to think differently requires a new reality. The trance you enter might be nothing more than optimism or relief, but you have to consciously invite it. If you don't participate, it doesn't stick.

Reality is a psychedelic experience. Even in your most level-headed reality, change is possible if you invite it. Control is good, better control is better, but complete control is bad. You want the potential for change; give yourself that opportunity. There must always be some chaos.

Psychedelics make you change, meditations invite you to change, and everyday life should not prevent change. Keep loose the knots that bind you if you want change to be a part of your everyday life. Practice landing on your feet, but don't expect to.

Limits

Counselors build rapport so their clients will take action. As a client, you'll find yourself in front of a door and you'll be asked to jump. The jump you're asked to make is usually safe as this is the nature of a good collaboration. Rarely are you asked to leap into the unknown. If you don't feel safe, don't do it.

Transitions and rearrangements are part of being understood and understanding others. Most of our relationships and many of our thoughts deal with putting things together. Life is a process of repeated joinings and splitting offs.

For most people, one major change is enough for the moment. People are willing to change when there's the prospect of reward, a cessation of pain, or the easing of anxiety.

These junctures occur over and over and, at some point, you'll move outside your comfort zone and stop, at least for a while. We do a lot of back-tracking and we tend to stop at the same point in our efforts to go forward. Stopping is your decision, but I encourage you to push outside your comfort zone. Be a victim of your own ignorance.

A certain amount of negotiation, explanation, and reframing is required to get a person to a point of change. Once that step is taken, new negotiations, energy, and considerations are necessary for the next step.

We are wired to find simplicity attractive and lassitude comfortable. To change successfully, don't limit yourself to small questions and small goals. Make growth relaxing and keep working toward it. Breathe into it. Growth benefits from new ideas and exploration. Don't take vacations.

In hypnosis, as in dreams, boundaries are more fluid and one goes farther. In a positive hypnotic state, less stands in the way. Expansive hypnotic states feel more real than normal; they are hyper-real.

I prefer doing hypnosis over normal-state talk therapy because people are more open in hypnosis. It seems they have more courage, or they're more trusting. Major change through hypnosis is often comfortable and relaxed, like falling asleep. It requires focus, but not struggle.

Need

Most of us operate from our intellect and live in our heads. If we're feeling trapped, then we might come out of our heads to deal with an issue. We do so with reluctance. In Western culture intellect rules.

If you're stuck in your head you're called an analytical resistor. I try to cajole analytically resisting people from their shells. If they're lucky, they drop their intellectual shell long enough to receive a new idea. If the idea "feels good," they take it back into their shell.

Even in hypnosis, analytical people resist relaxing intellectual control. I often do hypnosis in the cracks of attention when a client's intellect is resting. It's not that I want control, it's that I want to liberate emotional perception from intellectual illusions.

I've had clients who wanted to make great progress but were only willing to take small steps. With these folks I spend most of my time setting up for the professed goal of major change. You can hear the unspoken logic of caution, hesitance, or fear, as if they are getting dressed for adventure only to retreat the moment they step out the door. "I'll just see how it feels now. If it feels safe, I'll consider more steps later."

These are the clients who enter trance briefly. They can tell it's a state of change and they don't feel comfortable. The overriding desire is to retain control, even at the expense of going nowhere.

Change

If you think one small change is all you need, then you have limited yourself. Small changes have small results. Significant changes are extensive, though you may not appreciate them for their lack of drama. Changing yourself sounds small, but it has repercussions.

For many people, change generates stress and resistance. People associate change with discomfort and they associate inertia with comfort. For many people, change is as unnatural as jumping from an airplane. They would prefer fun, and fun is supposed to be safe. While most people won't admit it, what they'd prefer is to be sedate, average, and entertained.

Change is not linear or regular; you rarely appreciate what's involved. If you insist on living in your head and insist on safety, understanding, and control, then you'll be "on ice" until your next encounter with confusion.

Be of two minds: one analytical and the other emotional, but don't let either control you. Many states of mind are the opposites of analytic, such as the states of being active, passive, curious, exploratory, pensive, joyful, fearful, or confident. Find states that offer drive, states in which you're passionate. If you make passion a way of life, change comes naturally.

Find a rhythm that alternates between being analytical and emotional. Make that the rhythm of life that makes change the norm and not the exception. Changes may not always feel positive, and you don't want to insist everything seems positive. Serious problems do not yield to any formula. Make trial and error a habit. Experiment, explore, don't get hung up, and don't regret your mistakes.

