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TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

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Change has been the subject of research and debate for many years, with questions encompassing the kinds, properties, processes, and causes of change. Psychologists have usually studied small incremental changes, like the successive approximations of a learning curve. Sometimes, however, human change happens on a grander scale, altering not only behavior but also the individual's fundamental identity or personality. *Transformation* is change that is radical in scope, whether it occurs suddenly or gradually.

The potential for transformation of self, usually but not always in a positive direction, is central to a Judeo-Christian understanding of human nature. Vibrant examples of sudden, mystical, permanent, and radical change are found in both Jewish (Moses) and Christian scriptures (Paul). In religious contexts, such transformational change is often termed *conversion* (although the same term is sometimes used to describe a shift in religious or denominational affiliation). Transformational change occurs, however, both within and outside religious contexts, with similar characteristics (Miller & C'de Baca, 2001). Conversion experiences fascinated early psychologists, including William James (1902) and G. Stanley Hall (1904), and remain a subject of substantial psychological research (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003).

Conversion is often differentiated into passive versus active types. In the passive type, the person has little sense of being a causal agent and may experience being acted on by forces beyond the self. This was the case for both Moses and Paul, and in theological terms such experiences are often understood as the product of divine intervention. Perhaps more common are turnabout transformations (*metanoia* in Greek) in which the person takes a more volitional and decisional role, and which in Judeo-Christian language is usually described as repentance. Both psychologically and theologically, however, the distinction is not so sharp. James (1902) understood transformational changes, whether sudden or gradual, instigated or uninvited, as a process of integration with one's "higher self," or in theistic terms of conscious contact with God (Barnard, 1997). Other scholars describe transformation as a culmination of a person's deep search for significance (Pargament, 1997), meaning (Fowler, 1993), and knowing (Loder, 1989). In Judeo-Christian thought, volitional acts of repentance are not readily separated from the graceful acts of God.

Radical change is not unknown in psychology. Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) differentiated first- and second-order change, and Piaget (1970) defined two interactive change processes in cognitive development. Case studies of unexplained, sudden transformations have been reported by psychologists (e.g., Barlow, Abel, & Blanchard, 1977). Yet psychology has lacked a unifying theory, or even consensus terminology for transformation. Consequently, what has been a central and familiar concept in religion is seldom found in the index of psychology textbooks.

The purpose of this chapter is to define and describe transformational human change from the perspectives of both religion and psychology. First, we ask "What is it?" considering natural language definitions of change and transformation. Next, we outline common properties that comprise a transformational experience and describe how change occurs as a multileveled interaction between process and structure within a developmental frame. We then describe a developmental process of transformational change, including antecedents, a radical shift in deep belief and focus of attachment that accompanies and completes a transition, and finally, the resolution or completed transformational change that includes movement from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional frame of time and space.

Concepts of self and self-and-other, as systems, are organizing constructs for theories of transformational change. Elements of conflict, human searching, power, will, surrender, acceptance of human limits, and recognition of "other" are all central features of religious and psychological perspectives. We seek here to bridge contemporary religious and psychological views, drawing particularly on the example of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), a peer support organization with roots in both psychology and religion (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976).

DEFINITIONS OF CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1981) defined change as small change: "to make different in some particular, but short of conversion into something else." In contrast, definitions of transformation involve conversion: "to change completely or essentially in composition or structure" (Webster's, 1981). Transformation is radical discontinuity, sometimes occurring suddenly, at least in appearance (Bien, 2004). It is a shift, not of approximation, but to something different, such as ice to water (Miller & C'de Baca, 2001); it is a shift in form, as well as in content and process.

Transformational change can be an event, a process, and a result. It can be slow and cumulative or rapid and abrupt. As an event, it is a radical rupture: the moment of the shift from ice to water, or the moment of clarity that forever changes one's perceptions and experience of self. Many Christians identify a moment of *metanoia* (turnabout) at which they were "saved." Many in AA similarly recall a turning point that changed them forever, the moment of deep awareness of having lost control of drinking and a subsequent "spiritual awakening" (Forcehimes, 2004). Even when there is a transformational event, it is a developmental process of change, before, during, and after (Brown, 1985, 1993).

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Various lists of characteristics of transformation have been compiled, but across conceptions two properties are relatively consistent. Transformational change is a discontinuous shift that is radical in scope. Often, but not always, it is also a permanent change.

Discontinuity

Theorists define *discontinuity* as a distinguishing feature of transformational change. James (1902) differentiated the incremental "educational variety" of change from transformation (conversion). Koestler (1967) defined a perceptual and linguistic process of "bisociation" to describe the radical change that occurs in the "perception of a situation or event in two habitually incompatible contexts that requires an abrupt transfer to different rules or logic." These frames of reference converge, usually with surprising suddenness, to compose a meaningful unity. Bateson (1971) described transformation as an opening within the self rather than a closure.

Transformations also occur at larger system levels. Philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1962) described the limitations of "development-by-accumulation" or incremental change. Scientific revolutions, he asserted, have been char-

acterized by surprising discovery that leads to an unexpected shift in baseline theory, or paradigm. "Each of them necessitated the community's rejection of one time-honored scientific theory in favor of another incompatible with it. Each produced a consequent shift in the problems available for scientific scrutiny and in the standards by which the profession determined what should count as an admissible problem or as a legitimate problem-solution" (p. 6). Scientific revolutions involve a transformation in worldview. "Led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments and look in new places. Even more important, during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before," a "switch in visual gestalt." "What were ducks in the scientist's world before the revolution are rabbits afterwards" (p. 111).

Discontinuity also characterizes religious thought regarding transformation. Theologian James Loder (1989) described a "logic of transformation" similar to innate grammar. Change cannot be determined while inside the bounds of a particular system. A break occurs, like that of a radical perceptual shift between figure and ground, resulting in an entirely new perception (gestalt). This is a structural change, the self-level equivalent of Kuhn's paradigm shift. Transformation "occurs whenever, within a given frame of reference or experience, hidden orders of coherence and meaning emerge to alter axioms of a given frame and reorder its elements accordingly" (Loder, p. 4). Premises are transposed, leading to "systemic interconnectedness."

Convictional knowing is also a discontinuous transformational event. At the center is a nonrational intrusion of a convicting insight. Like the "aha" when puzzle pieces come together, insight comes like the reversal of figure and ground. Miller and C'de Baca (2001) described this as "the insightful type" of quantum change.

Radical Change

Transformation involves a change in essential structure. Milton Rokeach (1973) characterized it as the sudden reorganization of personality, including the reorganization of reality experience. Carl Jung, an early observer of AA, described these radical changes for alcoholics:

> They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these [people] are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them. (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976, p. 27)

The idea of a quantum leap into the unknown is central to existential thought. Yalom (1980) described an ultimate vacuum within the human psyche, and the individual's defensive efforts to ward off knowing or experiencing this void. Anxiety about death—the ultimate void—is central to the

human condition. Yalom also saw paradox as central to transformational change. The individual leaps into the void, the space of unknowing, as the route to finding "knowing" and the internal peace that accompanies it.

These rapid turnabouts are different from the usual incremental changes that characterize people's lives. Quantum change is a "vivid, surprising, benevolent, and enduring personal transformation" involving a "shift in perception and the realization of a new reality" at a deep level (Miller & C'de Baca, 2001, p. 40).

Permanence and Movement

Less clear is the permanence of transformation. A circular definition is that impermanent change was not "true" transformation. Some psychological theories depict oscillation between alternating, stable states (Apter, 1982; Bateson, 1971; Watzlawick et al., 1974), a perspective consistent with at least some strands of Judeo-Christian thought wherein conversion is not irreversible. Indeed, *apostasy*—the loss of a prior faith perspective—is a longstanding subject of study and can occur gradually or abruptly (Spilka et al., 2003). Both Jewish and Christian scripture provide examples of individuals and communities falling out of (and back into) harmony with God.

Of interest, however, is the fact that these large, radical, and sometimes sudden transformations often are permanent. Convictional transformations that were lifelong, although not without internal struggles, are amply illustrated in both Jewish and Christian scriptures. Furthermore, some people who had transformational experiences report knowing at the time that they had passed through a one-way door through which there was no going back. Most "quantum changers" nevertheless describe an ongoing process of opening and evolving, set in motion but not completed by the initial transforming event (Miller & C'de Baca, 2001).

Issues of permanence and movement are key to understanding the process of change for members of AA (Brown, 1985). The acceptance of loss of control of one's drinking as permanent rather than temporary is an early step in transformation within AA, relinquishing a hope to return to drinking and self-control. In this process, many people do move forward and backward, with oscillation between drinking and abstinence, until they achieve stable long-term sobriety. Here, then, is a picture of oscillation that eventually leads to permanent positive change.

Many early philosophers believed in forward movement toward an ideal, although Plato regarded all movement or change to be a degeneration from an original, perfect state (Popper, 1966). Theorists of the "third force" human potential movement in psychology, such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, endorsed a view of human nature as naturally moving in a positive, growthful direction. Theories of religious development or maturation similarly define transformational change as an expansion, always a move toward

higher levels of consciousness and integration with the sacred (Pargament, 1997). Movement for people in AA involves an expansion in consciousness, with an increasingly deeper and wider capacity to know and experience reality, of self and other, without permanent regression to limiting defenses (Brown, 1985).

Yet there is at least anecdotal evidence of transformations that in most structural respects mirror positive quantum changes yet leave the person in what most would agree to be a worse state (Miller & C'de Baca, 2001; Nowinski, 2004). Psychodynamic and developmental theorists highlight physical and emotional trauma or unresolved internal conflict as precursors of a transformational change that moves backward, reducing consciousness, breadth of thought and action. This negative direction of change requires an increase in defenses and a reduction in adaptive function. The individual is locked into an internalized state of repetitions and defensive efforts to control symptoms (Herman, 1992; van der Kolk, 1987). Psychodynamic theorists might argue further that an individual can move out of one closed system of severe conflict into another, via the creation of a delusion. The individual shifts the locus of an internal conflict to an external source, determining, for example, that there is a persecutor who must be kept at bay. This shift from internal to external may reorient the internal world at the level of a transformational change, as conflict is quieted and directed outward. Many would not consider such formation of a delusion to be a move toward health or greater expansion in consciousness, even though the deluded individual is in a sense "resolving" the conflict and "escaping" from a closed system.

A DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Development and Change

The idea of development as a process of forward movement and maturation is ancient. Hegel described a "world of flux" that is in a state of emergent and creative evolution. Each of its stages contains the previous ones, from which it originates, and each stage supersedes all previous stages, approaching nearer and nearer to perfection. The general law of development is thus one of forward progression (Popper, 1966).

Development is a key construct in world religions as well (Fowler, 1995). Through both incremental change and transformation, individuals and humanity are meant to move progressively toward a state of perfection. The concept of *perfect* bears a bit of exegesis here. In modern usage, the term implies an immaculate and error-free state. Viewed in this way, the charge to "be perfect, even as God is perfect" (NIV, Matt. 5:48) sounds impossible. The Greek verb *teleo*, derivations of which are translated as "perfect," has

rather different connotations. *Telios* is the finished, completed, mature result of development. The acorn is perfected in the oak tree. It is the same root as the dying word of Jesus: "It is finished."

The idea of development also became an early cornerstone of psychological theories of human behavior, with the influence of Darwinian evolution on Freud and other stage theorists. Developmental theory evolved to include a distinction between process (movement) and structure, the "interrelation of parts as dominated by the general character of the whole" (Webster's, 1981). Both religious and psychological theorists define process as continuous movement within a certain "character of the whole," whereas a change in structure is discontinuous and radically alters the whole. Process involves motion, and structure involves the form or the container. Psychologist Althea Horner (1990) further defined structure as the "psychological self," including somatic experience, affect, impulse, perception, and thought. She noted that the mental structures of self and object representations develop in a manner similar to Piaget's (1936/1952) theory of the interaction between process and structure in cognitive development.

Piaget (1954/1968, 1970) saw an innate developmental potential for humans to move in their thinking from the concrete to the abstract. He outlined two kinds of normal, interactive processes of change in cognitive growth that form the structures for people to fulfill this potential naturally. The first involves continuous movement in thinking, a logical, incremental process of incorporating information into an existing cognitive frame, without a change in that frame, which he called *assimilation*. The second involves a radical shift in cognitive frame, or structure, which he called *accommodation*. These integrated processes together move the individual from early sensory-motor levels of cognition to concrete operational, to formal abstract capacities as a child matures. Piaget's theory illustrates how processes of stability and conservation (no change, or incremental change) and transformation are interactive.

Change theorists Watzlawick et al. (1974) defined a model of change that similarly reconciles "the strange interdependence of opposites." They distinguished between first-order change, which is continuous within a given system in which opposites are not a concern, and second-order change that is discontinuous, radical, and involves a resolution of conflictual opposites. With first-order change, the structure remains unchanged, similar to Piaget's assimilation. Second-order, transformational change always involves a next higher developmental level, a move that entails a shift, jump, or discontinuity that provides a way out of the current system, changes that same system, and lays the foundation for a new system. They also suggested that second-order change is usually viewed by the person as

> something uncontrollable, even incomprehensible, a quantum jump, a
> sudden illumination which unpredictably comes at the end of a long,

often frustrating mental and emotional labor, sometimes in a dream, sometimes almost as an act of grace in the theological sense. (p. 23)

It is a new way of thinking that cannot be familiar or understandable within the logic of what would be a continuous first-order change.

This is similar to Loder (1989), Kuhn (1962), Koestler (1967), and Rokeach (1973) who all noted that factors seemingly remote, even in space and time, may generate coherent insight and new understanding, what then becomes a new gestalt and perceptual reality. Most of the quantum changers interviewed by Miller and C'de Baca (2001) experienced it as coming from outside the self, rather than being self-initiated or controlled. The transformed individual finds, or is found by, meaning that occurs outside of personal control, outside of the person's closed system of meaning (Fowler, 1993). It is "clearly a transcendental phenomenon. It is something to be found rather than to be given, discovered rather than invented" (Frankl, 1984, p. 62).

A Self-System

The interaction between process and structure within a developmental frame is central to systems theory. *Cybernetics* is the interaction between continuous movement within the same frame or structure and radical discontinuous movement that changes the structure of the system. These processes work to establish and maintain a dynamic equilibrium within the self (Bateson, 1971).

A self-system is open or closed according to freedom of movement to grow from lower to higher levels. A closed system is locked into a competitive, polarized struggle of opposite premises, with no opportunity to resolve the conflict. An open system has opportunity for growth because the premises of the system are complementary rather than opposing. Parts of a whole can coexist and together promote growth that is greater than the separate parts. The internal shift from an oppositional to a complementary view of self and world can be a radical psychological and spiritual change. Such a shift operates within the 12 steps of AA, to move from drinking to abstinence and the maintenance of sobriety (Bateson, 1971). The individual acknowledges loss of control and seeks help to deal with this new reality.

Cybernetics theory accents the necessity of structural change (i.e., a shift from a competitive to a complementary frame) in the self-system to achieve a transformation. The system that is locked in a status quo is closed. Movement to resolve the conflict simply reinforces it and narrows the scope of the system. The resolution of a blocked system involves paradox: The recognition that the dichotomy of the conflicted system cannot be willfully changed except by reaching outside the boundaries of that system. In essence, it must involve a recognition of "other." The shift in internal structures of thought involves a rupture and discontinuity in the current system.

In AA, one accepts loss of control and invokes a higher power (often God), outside the self, for help.

Transformation—as an event, a process, or a result—is developmental. A conflict or discontent occurs for an individual within that person's first-order process and self-system. The conflict leads to an arrest in natural movement, which can become the status quo, or the conflict can be a preparation for radical change, which often involves a crisis, moment of clarity, or turning point. This crisis sets in motion a shift in structure, which moves the individual from a two-dimensional, closed self-system to a three-dimensional, open frame, from an individual related only to self to an individual related to self and other. The new structure provides a different way of seeing and interpreting the self and world that forms the foundation for new growth and development. This is quite descriptive of the shift in perspectives reported spontaneously by quantum changers (Miller & C'de Baca, 2001).

Preparation for Transformation

If transformation is a developmental process, then in some sense one should be able to "see it coming," at least in retrospect. Certain antecedents can set the stage for a radical, discontinuous change, but they are often clear only in hindsight, and they do not automatically lead to transformation. The time preceding transformation can involve both preparedness for change and a state of arrested movement. Most developmental theories of change suggest that the roots of change lie within these preceding stages, so that preparation, conscious and unconscious, is inherent to the process. Loder (1989) suggested that

> there is an innate structure in human nature that responds to transformation wherever it appears, even in pagan mythic systems. One may be personally well-prepared for an existential transformation by having suffered irreversible losses for which transformational narratives suggest an undoing. (p. 152)

About half of Miller and C'de Baca's (2001) storytellers reported having been unhappy, often desperately so, prior to the surprising event that preceded their quantum change. Some "hit bottom," whereas others held a victim identity related to experienced traumatic events. Some felt trapped, with no way out, whereas others felt locked in aimless wandering with no sense of purpose. The most common precipitating event for transformation in this group was prayer.

Scholars of human change in both religion and psychology have posited that the heart of transformation involves a change in self, and that what is changed is a self in conflict. Preparation for transformation may involve conscious spiritual "seeking" (Pargament, 1997). A spiritual seeker is unsatisfied with the status quo and aware of a sense of insufficiency, actively pur-

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suing resolution through attachment to, and incorporation of, the sacred. From a psychological viewpoint, preparation for transformation suggests elements of discontent such as conflict, deficits, or arrests in development. It is noteworthy, however, that about half of the quantum changers interviewed by Miller and C'de Baca remembered no conscious distress prior to their experience, which seemed to come uninvited "out of the blue."

Putting together the pieces considered thus far, in a state of preparedness for transformation or conversion, the individual encounters some conflict or limitation that cannot be changed by will (Soper, 1951). The awareness of limitation creates a crisis or turning point that can set a transformation process into motion. Familiar ways of being and responding do not work to resolve the crisis, and in some sense the individual must reach outside the current self for help.

Acceptance

Often in American psychology in general, and clinical psychology in particular, emphasis has been placed on control. Implicitly, the individual is the agent of willful change and self-control. Clinical interventions are often directed at strengthening self-regulation in an effort to gain or regain control. The same approach is not unknown in pastoral counseling as well. American psychology has been criticized as fixated on control and on the power and independence of the individual (Pargament, 1997; Worthington & Berry, chap. 8, this volume).

Judeo-Christian views of human nature suggest some alternatives. The self can be construed not as an autonomous entity but as self-in-relation, and yet more than the sum of its relations (see Evans, chap. 4, this volume). Both Jewish and Christian anthropology understand the person in horizontal relation to the larger community and in vertical relationship to God. Denial of and separation from those relational ties is a quintessential characteristic of sin.

This view of self clashes, of course, with the American cultural ideal of development as moving from dependence to independence. Commenting on the cultural relativism of the concept of dependence, Neki (1976) contrasted U.S. obsession with independence and the developmental norms of more communal cultures, including his native India. The alternative norm, he suggested, is to develop from dependence to dependability, and then with aging to cycle naturally back toward dependence. In a culture in which there are only dependent and independent individuals, who is dependable? Neki's relational anthropology viewed dependence as a natural developmental process rather than a state to be escaped as quickly as possible in adolescence and then shunned as shameful throughout the rest of life.

In this context, transformation can be understood as a developmental process, moving from a closed (self-sufficiency) to a more open system. A

first step in this direction is recognition and acceptance of limitation of the self, which can come as a "hitting bottom" crisis or may emerge gradually over time. The limited and incomplete nature of self is taken for granted in religion, wherein the individual exists in conscious relatedness to (and dependence on) other people and to what Jung (1953) called the "higher other." Willingness to "surrender" and be subject to that higher other is fundamental to religion (Rambo, 1993).

There is a balance here between empowerment to shape that which can be influenced, and acceptance of that which is beyond personal control and limitations. The most familiar expression of this balance is Reinhold Niebuhr's (1943) prayer penned during World War II: "God grant us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other." In slightly modified form, Niebuhr's petition continues to be recited worldwide as the "serenity prayer" of AA. Although psychology has heavily emphasized control, there has been growing recognition of the complementary therapeutic value of acceptance, forgiveness, and letting go (Cole & Pargament, 1999; Hayes, Jacobson, Follette, & Dougher, 1994; Sanderson & Linehan, 1999; Worthington, 2000).

Transformation of the Self

If transformation involves a radical change in self, what sort of change is it? In one sense it involves a loss of self, at least of the self-sufficient, self-centered, self-directed, closed-system self. There is a shift from belief in self-power to connectedness with that which is greater than the old self, with an "other." It is a change from self-alone to self-with-other. In spiritual language, that other is the Sacred, the Holy, or God. This shift from a closed to an open system constitutes a discontinuous, transformative change in figure and ground. It also frees the person from a denial of human limitation that keeps him or her locked in a constant struggle for control. It is a paradox: Giving up control (letting go, surrender) paves the way for greater mastery in life. "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10b, NIV).

The loss of self involved in transformation can be understood more fully as an expansion or opening of self to include (not control) the other. The process of transformational change affirms both the limited self and the "other," to whom an attachment is made and power granted. The individual, in this interactional process, then internalizes the power of the "other" to achieve a more complete self. Religious and psychological theorists describe the process of change following transformation as one of "indwelling" (Loder, 1989) or "internalizing" (Brown, 1985; Pargament, 1997) the other as part of the self (or self as part of the larger other). This is the key to what makes a change transformational: the acceptance of a limited self with power vested in a higher other. It moves the individual from a two-dimensional to a three-

dimensional frame. It shifts the individual from an unresolvable, dichotomous inner conflict to a complementary, relational sense of self, a move that resolves the conflict. "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 10:39, NIV).

Judeo-Christian religion departs from psychology, of course, in affirming the reality of the spiritual "other" as God, experienced as a real presence. As a science, psychology can neither confirm nor disconfirm this leap of faith.

Transformation also opens the self to ongoing change toward wholeness. As in Piaget's (1954/1968, 1970) developmental psychology, change occurs as part of a natural progression, moving toward a more complete whole. The third force humanistic movement in psychology similarly views psychotherapy not as a route to a cure, but rather as a method to help individuals resolve conflict and move past obstacles in a way that frees their capacity for continued expansive growth and fulfillment of natural potential within a new, open system. There are apparent and direct parallels to what we are describing as transformation.

It must be acknowledged, however, that many, perhaps most transformational changes seem to occur naturally or spontaneously, without the guidance of a psychotherapist or other expert. The quantum changers described by Miller and C'de Baca (2001) reported precisely this kind of opening and expansion of self—a realization of intimate connectedness to all of humankind or creation. They also experienced their transformation as unfinished— an open and continuing process that was set in motion at a memorable turning point. Their turning point experiences often included encounter with an unknown "other" presence.

Finally, transformation of the self seems to include a radical change in priorities. As Jung observed (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976), values that had guided the person before are often turned upside down (Miller & C'de Baca, 2001). The transformed person "seeks to give up the 'old love objects,' and the life built around them. In their place, the convert looks for another organizing force, a new 'center of loyalty' " (Pratt, 1946). There is a change in what Tillich (1951) termed the person's "ground of being" and "ultimate concern." A new sense of purpose and direction emerges, similar to the change in structure described by Piaget and by Watzlawick et al. (1974).

THE EXAMPLE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The fellowship of AA (1976) provides a fascinating context within which to study the process of transformation. Its 12 steps describe a program explicitly intended to lead to spiritual transformation, and AA makes claims and promises that are in some ways more specific (and therefore empirically testable) than those of world religions.

The concept of transformation, of radical change in the self, is central to AA's understanding of recovery from alcoholism. It is a mirror opposite of "take-control" approaches, and in this way the designation of AA as a "self-help" program is mistaken. The imperfection of human beings and the fundamental limitations of self-control represent a cornerstone belief in AA (Kurtz & Ketcham, 1994). Early members of AA recounted their experiences of absolute deflation and surrender from their prior efforts to will a change.

The first step of AA, then, involves recognition of personal limitation, described as "powerlessness." This discontinuous shift in self-conception opens a search for help outside the self. In AA, this involves the recognition and acceptance of an "other," a "higher power" greater than the self. Like many spiritual insights, it is a paradox: to find wholeness through an acknowledgment of limitation (Kurtz, 1979). The third step, in essence a prayer, involves asking the other for help. Put succinctly, these early steps might be summarized as (a) I can't. (b) God can. (c) Please do. The conversion reflected in these first three steps is only a beginning and unfolds into an entire "program" for living that places the self in relation and submission to the other.

The struggle of the alcoholic with alcohol represents, within AA, a microcosm of the larger struggle of human nature. A faulty belief in the power of self is the central dynamic of addiction, with the relinquishment of that belief the paradoxical core of recovery. The alcoholic is cornered by the tension of a double bind: needing more alcohol but denying that need or explaining it as something else. Tension breaks and reality wins with the deep acceptance of having lost control (an acceptance of a limited self) of one's drinking. This surrender forms the foundation for transformation (Tiebout, 1944). Bateson (1971) applied cybernetic theory to alcoholism, emphasizing the critical significance of defeat, or "hitting bottom" in AA terms. Surrender "is the first spiritual experience. The myth of self-power is broken by the demonstration of greater power" (p. 3).

But surrender to what? Within AA, belief in an other, a higher power is necessary to facilitate and maintain the shift in personal view. A relinquishment of a belief in self-control paradoxically enables the individual to place the self *in relation* to others on an equal level. Power is vested in something greater than the self and also greater than any other person. Only with the shift to a complementary frame can the struggle for power be transformed. The alcoholic acknowledges lack of power over self, turns the source of control "over" to an abstract, external, "higher power" that the individual defines, and then, through the process of recovery, reclaims and internalizes. Recovery as described in AA is thus a radical process of second-order change.

Brown (1985), following Bateson and Tiebout, described recovery for members of AA as a developmental event, process, and result, proceeding in stages, each with defined tasks. The individual "hits bottom," accepts loss of

control, experiences the death of the old (drinking) self, and separates from alcohol. A process of new growth is set in motion by asking for help, which is a recognition of "other."

The transformation resolves the conflict of control, freeing energy and attention for new development. Acknowledgment of loss of control provides coherence and clarity, and it sets in motion a new search for meaning. At the center is the experience of convictional knowing. The individual "knows" the deepest truth: I am an alcoholic. There is a direct parallel here to the Judeo-Christian confession of sin, recognition of oneself as imperfect, limited, flawed. In AA, this knowledge provides a foundation for new development of the self that involves active reconstruction of the past and new construction in the present. The individual creates a narrative, a new story about the self that incorporates the truth of human limits. The self-system is open and expanding from an ego-centered self-view to a view of self in relation to other, similar to religious theory. "Through an act of yielding, the self becomes part of a new world. The ego is lifted up. The individual moves from an exclusive self-preoccupation to an identification with something larger" (Loder, 1989).

Structural change occurs in the transfer of the belief in self-control to a belief in a higher power. This moves the individual from a first-order effort to regain self-power to an investment of power outside the self, a second-order transformational change. In the ongoing process of development, the individual internalizes and incorporates this belief in something greater so that the self is permanently changed. Although people may oscillate, in the long-term process they strengthen their belief in, and commitment to, a "higher other." They are then changed by this belief as it operates as a new ordering principle for their ongoing growth. The individual has a transformation and is then transformed by engaging in a process of recovery.

CONCLUSION

Transformational change is a real phenomenon, a multileveled event, process, and result, characterized by properties of radical, discontinuous movement and structural change within a developmental frame. Transformation involves preparation, both conscious and unconscious, followed by turning points that lead to, or follow, a rupture in the current frame. This discontinuity moves the individual from a two-dimensional internal framework to a three-dimensional plane that involves a recognition and incorporation of "other." A paradigm of transformation is central to AA that, like Judeo-Christian theology, recognizes the essential limits of self, with ultimate unlimited power vested in a higher "other." The move from a focus on self to a belief in, and incorporation of, the power of "other" constitutes the foundation for radical, transformational change.

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