



Does Your Paradigm Need Shifting?

Galatians 3:24-25: (NASB) ²⁴*Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.* ²⁵*But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

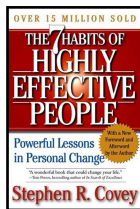


Happy New Year! It is 2011 and it is a new beginning - at least for the calendar anyway. What is your year going to look like? Do you have any changes planned? Is this the year that you will finally - well, you know, is this the year that you will finally - (now fill in the blank...) With a new year usually comes a review of what *has been* and a preview of what we would *like* to have happen. My question to you is this - along with your thinking about changes with your job, your home, your car, your weight, your habits etc., are you thinking about changes in your Godliness - are you thinking about how you can finally really make your faith be stronger and healthier? Stay with us as we talk about our thinking - how it works and how to elevate it to a higher spiritual level!

Questions for Consideration:

1. What is a "Paradigm," and what is a "Paradigm Shift?"
2. How do we plan proper and productive paradigms for our potential purposes?

1. What is a "Paradigm," and what is a "Paradigm Shift?"



(Source: Explanation of a "paradigm" by Stephen R. Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.)

Page 23: ...For our purpose, a simple way to understand paradigms is to see them as maps. We all know that "the map is not the territory." A map is simply an explanation of certain aspects of the territory. That's exactly what a paradigm is. It is a theory, an explanation, or model of something else.

Page 29: ...The term "paradigm shift" was introduced by Thomas Kuhn in his highly influential landmark book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn shows how almost every significant breakthrough in the field of scientific endeavor is first a break with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms.

For Ptolemy, the great Egyptian astronomer, the earth was the center of the universe. But Copernicus created a paradigm shift, and a great deal of resistance and persecution as well, by placing the sun at the center. Suddenly, everything took on a different interpretation.

So a paradigm is our map, but because we write out the map, it may not be as accurate as we would like it to be.



The New Year's Resolution Song - Become a Better Person, by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

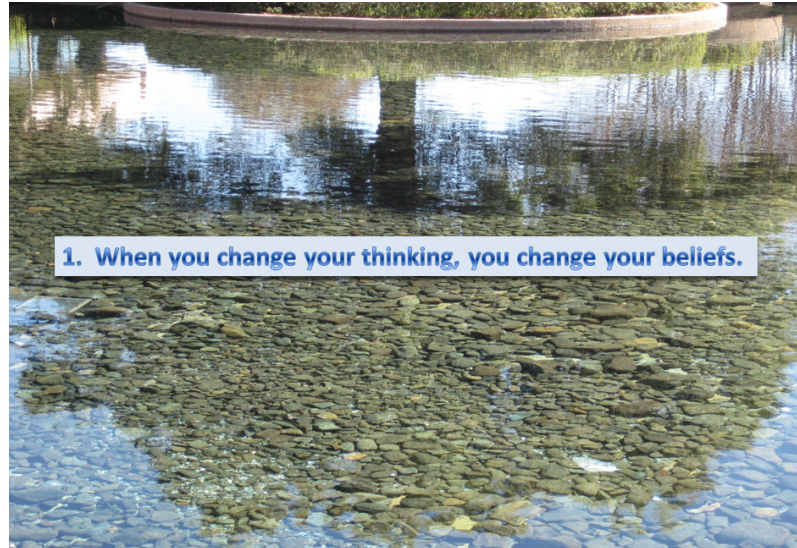
- *Working out, losing weight, reading more, watching less, learning all the rules for chess, becoming so much smarter in general... eating fish not fingernails, volunteer to save the whales, becoming a better guy in general...*

We want New Year's resolutions to be a paradigm shift, but are they often just a disappointment?



2. How do we plan proper and productive paradigms for our potential purposes?

John Maxwell, well known author and leadership mentor, laid out six steps for a life-changing experience. We will use these steps as a basis for our conversation:



Acts 10:9-14: (NASB) ⁹...Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; ¹¹and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, ¹²and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³A voice came to him, Get up, Peter, kill and eat! ¹⁴But Peter said, By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.

Peter's paradigm was firmly set. His life-long dedication to the Jewish Law was entrenched and immovable. Even with a vision from heaven, Peter won't do what has been instructed.

Acts 10:15-16: (NASB) ¹⁵Again a voice came to him a second time, What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy. ¹⁶This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky...

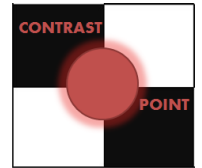
The necessary answer to be able to change his paradigm was a command three times with an explanation, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." This would lead to important, world-changing instructions. His paradigm could begin to shift because he now saw a road that opened for him.


Acts 10:19-20: (NASB) ¹⁹While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them myself.

The ME Application: For change - real change - paradigm-shift-kind-of-change to happen, it *must* begin way on the inside, with our thinking. This is completely opposite to what we are used to, which is get the idea, like the idea, decide to implement the idea - all in a space of about 3 seconds! It's like making hasty New Year's resolutions that quickly fail.

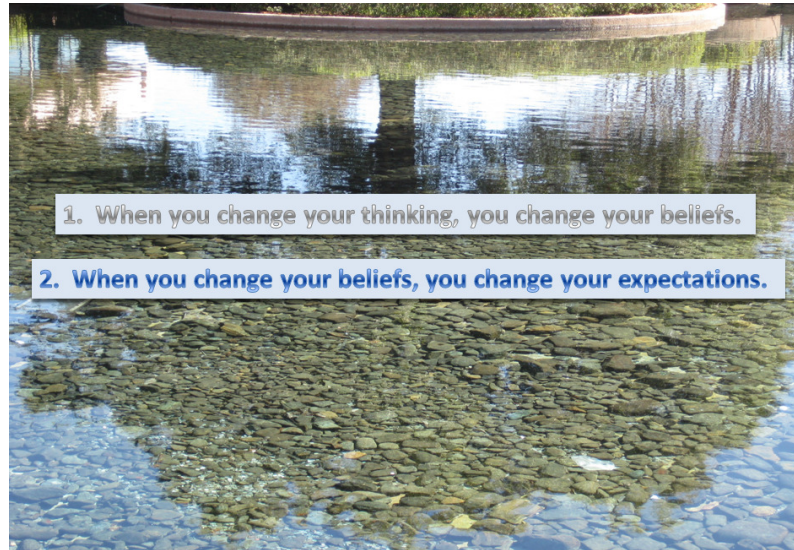


This would not have been easy for Peter, which brings us to our **CONTRAST POINT** - the difficulty we have with the little changes we attempt in our lives:



 **The New Year's Resolution Song - But Not This Year!** by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

- *But not this year! After all these failed resolutions my future is clear!*



Mark 9:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰They brought the boy to him. When he saw him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. ²¹And he asked his father, How long has this been happening to him? And he said, From childhood. ²²It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him...

A dire situation is brought before Jesus.

Mark 9:22-23: (NASB) ²²...But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us! ²³And Jesus said to him, If you can? All things are possible to him who believes.

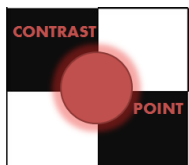
The challenge for this man was to adopt a paradigm shift, a new belief that would bring a new expectation.

Mark 9:24: (NASB) Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, I do believe; help my unbelief.

Something was in his way; the frailty of hopelessness and the frustration of doubt. His faith was finally rewarded.

Mark 9:25: (NASB) When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.

The power of faith: Jesus commands and it is so!



 **The New Year's Resolution Song - Just do what comes easily!** by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

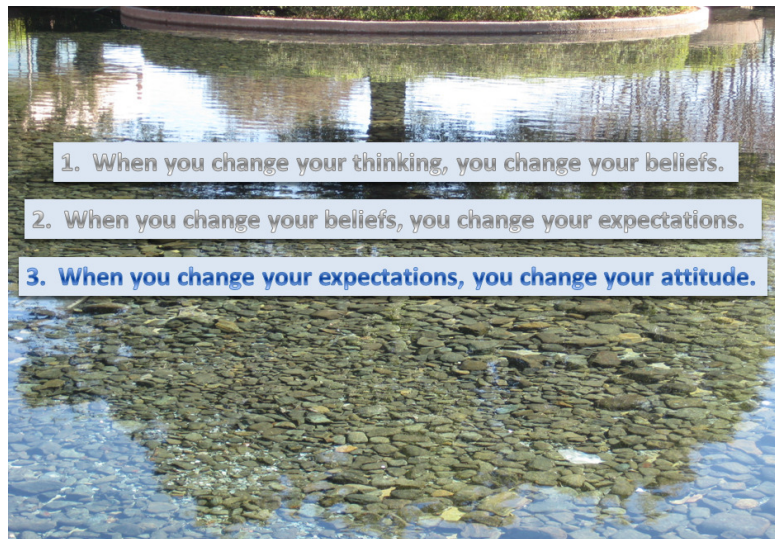
- *Just forget those resolutions you know you that you are never gonna do and commit to things that come easily to you, like eating at least one value meal a week - or put the correct shoes on the correct feet - just raise the bar to walk effortlessly underneath!*



The ME Application: To truly change my beliefs, I need to know what they are and upon what they are based. Is my Christianity based on a solid foundation of Biblical evidence, personal study, prayer and experience; or is it based on how I feel when I am at church? If my belief is a feeling, then it needs to be changed!

Philippians 4:11-13: (NASB) ¹¹Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

The Apostle Paul's strength didn't come from him internally alone, it came from God through Christ within him.



1 Peter 4:12: (NASB) *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;*

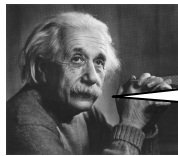
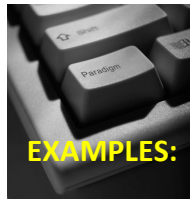
The early church was surrounded by miraculous events, the newness of Jesus' resurrection and the twelve Apostles. Massive numbers of people flocked to Christianity and all seemed to be as positive - as it could be - so when the fiery trials came, they needed to be put in perspective.

1 Peter 4:13: (NASB) *but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

Rejoice under fire now, so in the long run you will be rejoicing on the final victory of Jesus. There is a paradigm shift: Don't look at a trial as a trial, look at it as an opportunity to rejoice in a growth experience.

1 Peter 4:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴*If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

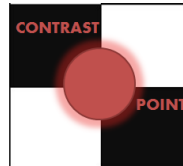
It is a BLESSING to be reviled for the name of Christ!



"You can't solve a problem with the same mind that created it."
-Albert Einstein

Matthew 9:16: *No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment...for the rent is made worse.*

2 Peter 3:13: *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*



The New Year's Resolution Song - Settle into a Comfortable Spot, by "Rhett and Link," YouTube.

- *Settle into a more comfortable spot - hit the snooze, rollover then repeat, make large purchases then lose the receipt. Just raise the bar to walk effortlessly underneath...*

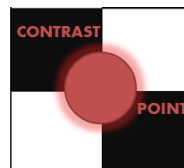
The ME Application: What am I expecting, not only from life, but specifically from my own Christianity? Am I looking for all of the abundance and none of the effort? **Is my Christianity an entitlement or a privilege?**

Matthew 5:38-41: (NASB) ³⁸You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. ³⁹But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. ⁴¹Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

My expectations should now lead me to an attitude of tolerance and giving. Jesus is really requiring of us a paradigm shift.

Matthew 5:43-45: (NASB) ⁴³You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

The ME Application: My expectations should now lead me to an attitude of love and forgiveness.

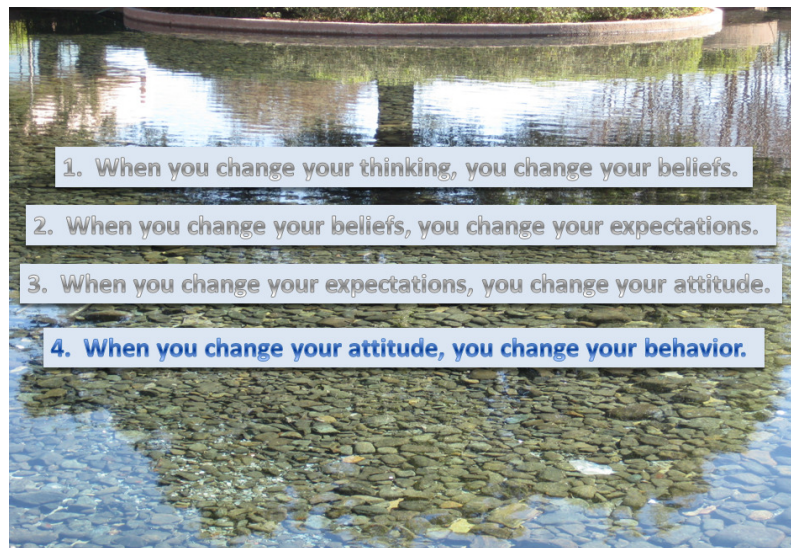


We all suffer from a malady that keeps us from many positive changes and experiences in our lives. That malady, that human frailty, that detour in the road, is called procrastination...



Procrastination Everything, CBS News Fast Draw with Josh Landis and Mitch Butler

- *When you're too stressed about finishing something, you are more likely to procrastinate. You could procrastinate yourself to death with medical problems.*



Remember the Apostle Paul before his conversion? "Saul of Tarsus" had to readjust his attitude and behavior dramatically. He fasted and prayed for three days. Ananias also had to have a major paradigm shift, as he wanted to stay far away from Saul!

Acts 9:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Here I am, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord said to him, Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.

Ananias is obviously a Christian and is given a vision with a very specific task to accomplish. His "here am I Lord" answer tells us that his attitude was already in line with doing what Jesus would instruct him.

Acts 9:13-14: (NASB) ¹³But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to your saints at Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.

Notice how Ananias answers that Saul had done much harm to Jesus' saints and continues to do so. (Ananias must be thinking, "Are you sure this is the right person?!") His paradigm, though set to follow Jesus' instruction, came to a point of resistance because it was so out of what he expected.

Acts 9:15-16: (NASB) ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake.

Jesus answers the instruction and gives good reason for Ananias to experience a full paradigm shift. The roadmap of his life was already set to do the will of God.

Acts 9:17: (NASB) So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ananias now does what he would NOT have done - "Brother Saul!" A DEFINING MOMENT for both of them! Normally he would have hidden from Saul.

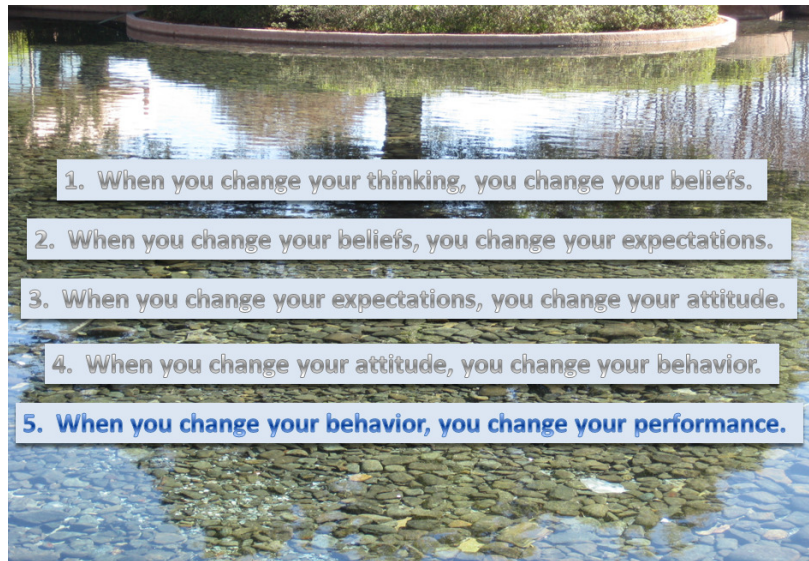


Because God loves us so much, we can see outside our paradigm of finite circumstances and be open to infinite possibilities of transformation.

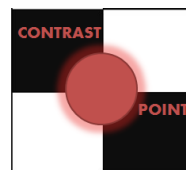
John 15:16: *I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.*


The ME Application: Is MY attitude giving my behavior an opportunity to show the depth of my Christian life, or is it making my behavior just like everyone else's?

Romans 12:2: (NASB) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*



Funny thing about procrastination - it is definitely a behavior that dramatically affects performance.



 **Tales of Mere Existence - Get my stuff done! Lev Yilmaz, YouTube**

- *Oh, the small and innocent beginnings of procrastination! A clean desk will help me get all of my stuff done.*

Behavior-influencing performance is where the “rubber meets the road.”



Let's go back to the account of Ananias and Saul.

Acts 9:18: (NASB) *And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;*

Saul did NOT procrastinate - he is healed and then he is immediately baptized!

Acts 9:19-20: (NASB) ¹⁹*and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,* ²⁰*and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, he is the Son of God.*

Only after focusing his spiritual behavior does he fortify himself with food. Then, again without any procrastination, he proclaims Jesus to the very people he had come to capture! A paradigm shift had to have occurred with the disciples as well.

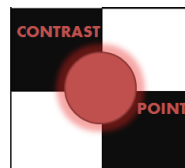
Acts 9:21: (NASB) *All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?*

The paradigm of those listening was confused - they *thought* they knew Saul, but because Paul shifted his paradigm, he was able to do something dramatic.

Acts 9:22: (NASB) *But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.*

All of the changes up to this point had been primarily internal, but this change in Saul's behavior showed the world his authenticity, for he was now fully and immediately engaged in Christianity because of God's power and influence.

Meanwhile, back at the procrastination ranch:



 **Tales of Mere Existence - The Grocery Store, Lev Yilmaz, YouTube**

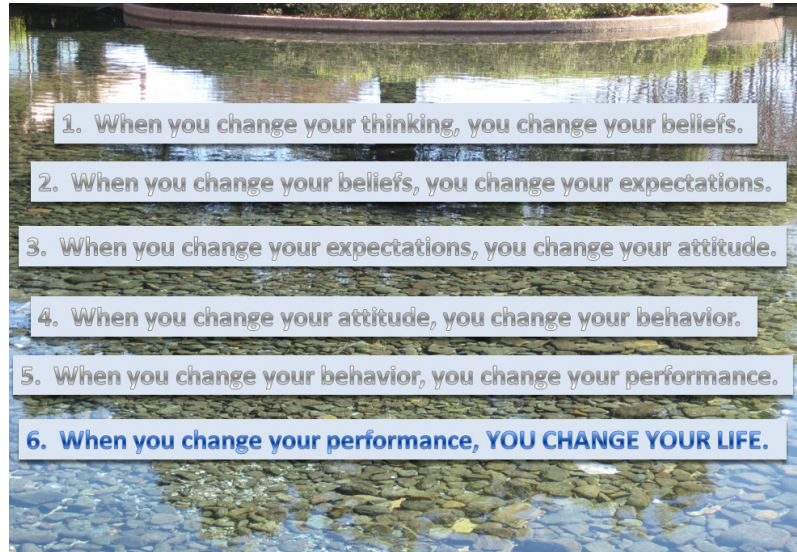
- *I didn't want to be hungry while I got my stuff done...*

So the procrastination goes from one distraction to the next, only this distraction is bigger.

The ME Application: Do I so easily get distracted that changing my Christian behavior continually gets pushed back or replaced by the "everything else" in life? We tend to put the tangible things in front of the intangible.

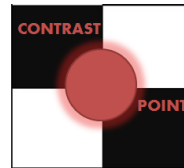
Philippians 1:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰*according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.* ²¹*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

Here is how to battle procrastination: "With all boldness"



Here we are - we have arrived at the final life changing step!

Yet, for many of us, we are stuck in the vortex of pain - known as procrastination!



 **Tales of Mere Existence - The Hardware Store, Lev Yilmaz, YouTube**

- *I had to get some oil from the hardware store and didn't want to be distracted by a squeaky chair while I got my stuff done...*

Isn't it amazing how something we have learned to live with (like the squeaky chair) absolutely and suddenly needs our attention at the precise moment we are supposed to be focused on the task at hand?

Saul escaped that vortex of pain by acting immediately on his convictions - he was shown the right way and he took it without looking back.

A new paradigm produces a new life:

Acts 9:23-25: (NASB) ²³When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, ²⁴but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; ²⁵but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

In a matter of days, Saul's paradigm shift has placed him on the other side of the equation. Instead of being the predator, he is now the hunted! Now it is he who flees for his life.

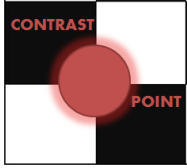
Acts 9:26: (NASB) When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

Just because we shift our paradigm doesn't mean others will. They, just like us, need solid reasons to go through that whole process.



Acts 9:27: (NASB) *But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that he had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.*

Fortunately for Saul, not everyone was afraid. Barnabas weighed the evidence and recognized the hand of God and was so thoroughly convicted that he brought Saul before the Apostles.



Tales of Mere Existence - I'll do it tomorrow! *Lev Yilmaz, YouTube*

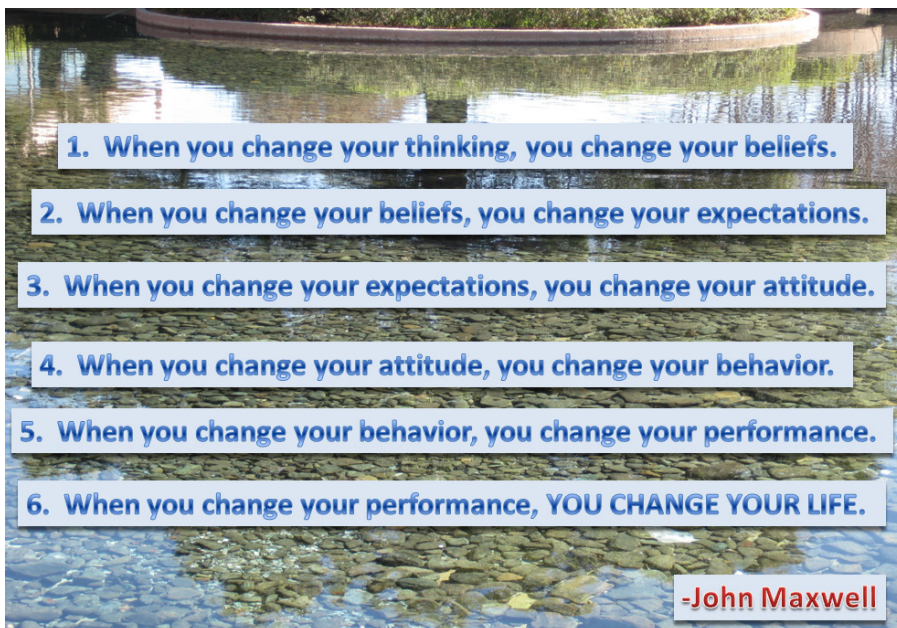
- *I want to be well rested tomorrow so I can get my stuff done.*

The ME Application: Have you noticed how far apart our two examples have gone? On the one hand you have the silly story of procrastination which, while funny, brings us absolutely nowhere in terms of accomplishment. On the other hand, we have lives utterly changing: Ananias deepening his faith, and Saul finding his faith to the point of risking his very life.

2 Timothy 4:6-8: (NASB) *6For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

We have the choices laid out before us. Towards which path will we lead our Christian life? We have the ability to choose.

It is nice to think about changing our job, exercise, diet, health - but the change we are talking about is harder to do. The good news is that it can be done with boldness in Christ.



*Does your paradigm need shifting?
For Jonathan and Rick and
Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*