



New Year - New Beginning - Now What?

1 Corinthians 9:24: (NASB) *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.*



In just two days we will begin yet another new year. With it comes new experiences and new opportunities to make a difference in our own lives, as well as the lives of others. Many people make "New Year's Resolutions" and most don't keep them. Why? Why don't resolutions usually work? Stay with us and find out!

What makes us "resolve" to do something?



 **January 15th cutoff, *Persist with your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *How is your new year coming out so far? I know it's early. It's January 15th. You know what that day means, don't you? January 15th is the cutoff. Statistics show that 95% of the people that actually made a New Year's resolution have already broken it by today. And that's if you even made a resolution!*

What happens to us that we don't keep our resolutions?

 **Step 1: Have a Vision, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *The first step for lasting change is very much like making a New Year's resolution. Fundamentally, it is the same. The first step is, you gotta have a vision for what it is you really truly want, not what you think you want or what you should have. What are most people's resolutions? I'm going to stop eating sugar. I'm going to stop smoking. I'm going to lose ten pounds. The problem is that it is not very inspiring for most people. It's not telling you what you are going to get; it's only what you are not going to do. It's hard to have you move forward with that.*

What makes a compelling vision that would permanently affect the direction of your life?

Lots of inspiration:

Hebrews 12:1-3: (NASB) *¹Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

A clear destination:

²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.



An understanding of the course:

Hebrews 12:4-8: (NASB) ⁴You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; ⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him; ⁶For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. ⁷It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

A clear grasp of the end result:

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.

What fuels our resolve?

Once we answer this question we will have bridged a major gap between our personal "status quo" and true personal growth. This is BIG!



A vision pulls you, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins*

- *A vision that really works is one that excites you. If you say, well my resolution is to lose a few pounds, well that's okay but it's not very compelling...it's got to be something that has to have the power to pull you - not something you have to push yourself to do.*
- *Those are two different kinds of motivation. Push requires willpower and willpower never lasts. What will last is pull - having something so exciting, so attractive, something you desire so much that you have a hard time going to sleep at night and you get up so early the next morning that you rocket it to the next level.*

What "pulls" you in your life? We tend to gravitate towards what pulls us. Are we being pulled by good things?





Would true rest from your burdens pull you?

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Jesus does not remove the burdens, but he gives us rest. This is a great promise! It gives us the ability to quiet our minds. Here is a reason to have this compelling vision in our own Christianity.

Step 2: Reasons, *Persist with Your Goals*, Tony Robbins

- *Along with that compelling vision, you gotta have strong enough reasons that you are going to follow through when the going gets tough. That's one of the biggest things missing for most people...Most importantly they don't have strong enough reasons to push themselves through to get that dream, to get that goal, when the inevitable challenges come up. You don't let the fear take you over if you have strong enough reasons. Those reasons can be positive or negative. They can be: If I don't do this, this is what it's gonna cost me. If I do this, this is what I'm gonna gain in my life. Reasons come first, answers come second.*

Would an inexhaustible source of strength pull you?

Isaiah 40:30-31: (KJV) ³⁰Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: ³¹But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew (literally means "to change") their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Instead of relying on ourselves, we rely on God.

Would the solemn word of the Almighty pull you?

Isaiah 45:22-24: (NASB) ²²Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. ²³I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. ²⁴They will say of Me, Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength. Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.

God has a plan and has sworn by Himself that He has control. There is something bigger at work here. This changes the way we look at things and how we act.

Would the ability to cast fear aside pull you?

1 John 4:16-18: (NASB) ¹⁶We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

We have confidence that God's judgments will ring true in this world - and throughout all of eternity - throughout all of the universe. If we have real confidence in this, that perfect love of God can cast fear aside, we know the end result will be godly. That is compelling and it pulls us. It is a test of our faith to focus on the right kinds of things.

Proverbs 29:18: (NASB) *Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law.*



Having a compelling vision and strong reasons are very important aspects for success.

What keeps our resolve alive?

 **Resolve; don't wish, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *Everything in life is always changing - we don't have to work on change! Change is automatic, but progress is not. So if you want to make real progress, then you've really gotta look at your life in a different way. Say, "I've got to take control of this process and not just hope it's gonna work out," like people do when they make a resolution. Because isn't that what people are really doing at the beginning of the year? They say, here are my resolutions for the year, and they really basically tell you their wishes. It's their wish list. They hope it all comes together. Then they call it a resolution, but they don't know what a resolution is. When you resolve something - to have a resolution is to resolve it - when you resolve, this is how it's gonna be, you cut off any possibility except the thing you've committed to.*

It doesn't take resolve to experience change, but it takes resolve to make progress.

What is the automatic change versus the progress mentioned in this verse?

Hebrews 5:12-14: (NASB) ¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

The Apostle Paul is chastising the Hebrews because they have changed - but only from being a baby in Christ to a big baby in Christ who needs to grow up! They changed, but they did not grow or make progress.



Is my Christianity an entitlement or a privilege?
As an entitlement, we are looking for what we can get.
As a privilege, we look for what we can give.



 **Step 3: Review and feel, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *First step: A vision that's compelling. Second step: Make sure there are strong enough reasons to follow through. Third step: You've gotta review it and feel it every day.*
- *There is a part of your brain called the reticular activating system (RAS). That part of your brain determines what you notice in the world. It's really important because when you set a goal, when you get really clear on a vision, there are strong enough reasons and you review it enough that it becomes a part of you, that part of your brain says, anything that relates to this I need to*



notice...the brain becomes incredibly acute at noticing anything to get you to move forward.

Here's an example - if you want to buy a particular car, you may notice that you suddenly see that car everywhere! That is because your brain is more focused on it and therefore brings it to your attention.

Philippians 4:4-8: (KJV) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Review and feel, review and feel...commit these Scriptures to your mind and heart.

⁸Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Review and feel, review and feel...these will help us to progress.

It is here that the test of *courage* must rise to great heights, for whenever we are called upon to rise up - to change - to step out - we are *always* faced with FEAR. Although it has been required throughout, courage is now center stage where it will have its showdown with fear.



"At 211 degrees, water is hot. At 212 degrees, it boils. And with boiling water comes steam. And steam can power a locomotive." - Mac Anderson

Is our life simply hot water, or is it that one degree more that can make steam that can move a locomotive?



"Courage is simply the willingness to be afraid and act anyway." Dr. Robert Anthony

Courage can develop with 1) a motivating vision, 2) truly compelling reasons that pull us towards that vision, and 3) reviewing and feeling that vision every single day.

Joshua 1:9: (NASB) *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*



How do I find a truly compelling personal vision?

Why bother, *Persist with Your Goals*, Tony Robbins

- *Most people don't even make a resolution anymore. Why? Because they have made them for years and years and years and they know they are not going to follow through. So after a while, who wants to disappoint yourself? Who wants to be upset with yourself? Why even bother to set a new standard for this year when you know it's going to be the same as last year?*

There are three basic forms of vision: futile, fuzzy, and fiery!



This is a vision that is not only small and unchallenging, but it is self-destructive. It actually brings us down, for it is based in self, laziness and inactivity. This is usually the "default." The default is our fault, because we can choose to change it!

2 Timothy 2:15-18: (ASV) ¹⁵Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. ¹⁶But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, ¹⁷and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus an Philetus; ¹⁸men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.

We need to focus on spirituality in its purest sense, and avoid putting our faith in traditions and ceremony. Our spirituality should be vital!



This is a vision that is obviously unclear. It is a vision filled with mediocrity, rationalization and indecisiveness. It only has the power to maintain the status quo. It does not excite or incite, yet it is the vision that is held by most of us.

"I want to lose weight," is an example of a fuzzy vision. It is too general a statement that does not provide any specific motivation. It won't get you to be different.



The fuzzy vision does not require a lot of courage because there is no specific, dynamic commitment.

A cause or an effect? *The Hidden Power of Setting Goals, improvementaudio.net*

- *One of the most important decisions you will ever make in your life is do you want to be a cause or an effect? When you choose to be a cause you make things happen. When you choose to be an effect, you settle for whatever happens to you. You are satisfied to laugh and to cry, to live and to die, based on the action of others.*

James 1:22-24: (NRSV) ²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like.

People like this are still babies in Christ...and big babies aren't so cute anymore!



This is the vision that is bigger than you are, more powerful than you are, and a vision that you can only with your greatest effort, play a very small, yet very significant roll in.

But it takes humility. It is all about the vision, not about "me." This is how we can make resolve happen in our lives.

Jesus fulfilling the fire of this vision:

John 2:15-17: (NRSV) ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace! ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for your house will consume me.

The temple was turned into a marketplace to gouge the consumer. Jesus had enough of his Father's holy place being turned into a place of cheating and robbery. He disrupted the thievery.

How do I latch onto powerful reasons for my resolve?

Progress is the secret, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins*

- *Getting things is not going to make you happy. That's good news in a tough economy. It doesn't matter what you get, whether it be money or opportunity. All those things might excite you for the moment. Even a relationship, as magnificent as it may be, might be exciting for a while. But if*



you don't keep growing, that relationship isn't going to stay exciting. The secret to real happiness is progress.

We need to focus on the progress towards Christ-likeness.

Remember this text from the first hour?

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸*Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Did you notice...? The concept of a yoke means that you are going to work. This yoke will press us but not hurt us. Jesus is asking us to work alongside of him. Once the Apostles received this rest, was their journey over? No! It had just begun!

How can we rest if we are supposed to work? What are we resting from? We rest from the toil and burden of trying to manage our own lives, and making decisions based on our own thinking that we as human beings think is best for us. We rest from that and adopt the yoke of Jesus. We take on the decision-making through the eyes of Christ and God's word. There is rest in that because they are in control and are much bigger than us. We can manage our lives with a higher purpose. It is our responsibility to carry it out but not to create it. We can rest from the stress if our faith says to us, "Walk in Christ's footsteps."

What am I expecting, not only from life, but specifically from my own Christianity?



**Is my Christianity an entitlement or a privilege?
Am I looking for all of the abundance and none of the effort?**

Matthew 5:38-41: (NASB) ³⁸*You 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... now *that* is progress!

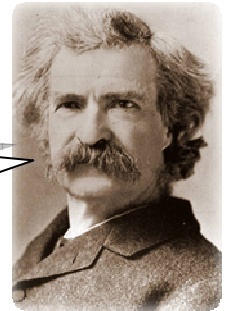
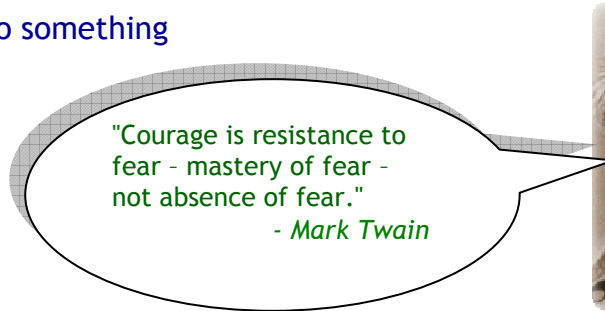
If our reasons for our Christianity have anything to do with becoming like Jesus, then we should be pulled towards this:

Matthew 5:43-45: (NASB) ⁴³*You 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.*

Loving your enemy is giving, not getting. My expectations should now lead me to an attitude of love and forgiveness ...now *that* is progress! That is what Jesus did.



Most of us want to do something special with our lives. That can come from being a part of something bigger than we are, it can come from a striving for excellence, and it can come from a life or world-changing idea. Christianity is all of these!



"Courage is resistance to fear - mastery of fear - not absence of fear."
- Mark Twain

Romans 12:4-8: (NASB) *⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

Christianity is being part of something bigger than you! It is about brotherhood, striving for progress together, and helping others to be faithful.

⁶Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

If you are given certain abilities, you are to use them. Play your part as well as you possibly can. Strive for excellence!

Romans 12:21: (NASB) *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

What a world-changing idea! This starts with the body of Christianity and will expand to the world in general.

How do I get over my own lack of motivation?

 Focus on momentum, how to move forward with lack of motivation, goalguru.com

- When you feel stuck and are lacking motivation, here's what you do: You don't focus on needing motivation to act, act anyway. If you focus instead of finding motivation or waiting for the motivation, and focus on creating momentum by just taking an action that will propel you forward, the motivation is going to come back very quickly because you will be excited again and not discouraged about achieving that goal. So, focus on momentum rather than motivation to propel you forward.



When we are not motivated, we need to remember certain things...

When preparing to take the Promised Land, Joshua approached the task in three steps:

Step 1: Focus

Joshua 1:8-11: (NRSV) *⁸This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful.*



Remember the things that are most important. Keep God's law in your heart and mind and don't let it go. This is more important than being lazy and unmotivated!

Step 2: Reassurance

⁹I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

By keeping the most important things in your mind, you will have God protecting and guiding you. That is so reassuring! The Bible is filled with such promises.

Step 3: Preparedness

¹⁰Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, ¹¹Pass through the camp, and command the people: Prepare your provisions; for in three days you are to cross over the Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.

The people had a reason to prepare. Remember the kind of battle we are in...others who fight along with us depend on us! They struggle along with us. We can find inspiration by remembering that others go through similar experiences as we do.

1 Peter 5:6-11: (NASB) ⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. ¹¹To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We have to be ready. The devil could be looking for us! But there are others that are in the same dangers and we are to work together. There is great power in co-laboring. Even a word from someone can really change your outlook. We can help each other in many ways.



A caller suggested: **2 Timothy 1:7:** For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.



"This is My Dream," Kashy Keegan

I have no choice, I'm in too deep
My heart was born to follow this dream
I can't back down and I won't give in
Somehow I'll find that strength deep within
'Cause the passion I feel inside
Is too strong to lay down and die
This is my life, this is my dream
This is the reason my heart beats
I'd rather fight each day of my life than give up belief
'Cause this is my heart, this is my soul
This is the only love I've known
My will to try grows weaker with time
But I won't give in 'cause this is my dream



Remember the many simple things we can do:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22: (NASB) ¹⁶Rejoice always; ¹⁷pray without ceasing; ¹⁸in everything give thanks; (thankfulness sets your mind for growth and progress) for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

The new year is an opportunity to review parts of our lives and *make progress* rather than *experience change*. It is time to affect the way things go in a godly way, because the gospel is such a motivating vision that I have my personal reasons to make myself a different and better person, giving honor and praise to God our Father and Jesus our Lord.

*New year, new beginning...now what?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!*



*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*

Here is another way to look at the process of producing life-changing events - this time spurred on by author John Maxwell, well known author and leadership mentor.

An excerpt from John Maxwell:

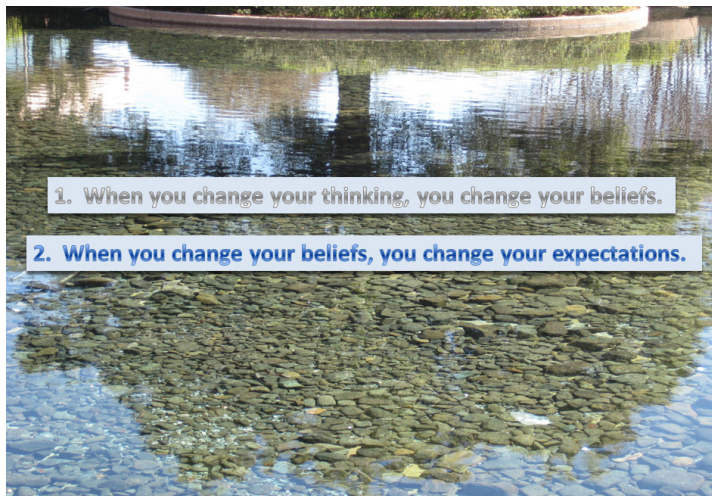
1. When you change your thinking you change your beliefs.
2. When you change your beliefs you change your expectations.
3. When you change your expectations you change your attitude.
4. When you change your attitude you change your behavior.
5. When you change your behavior you change your performance
6. When you change your performance you change your life!!!



1. When you change your thinking, you change your beliefs.

Acts 10:9-20: (NRSV) ⁹About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and

eat." ¹⁴But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." ¹⁵The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." ¹⁶This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven. ¹⁷Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon's house and were standing by the gate. ¹⁸They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are searching for you. ²⁰Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them.



1. When you change your thinking, you change your beliefs.

2. When you change your beliefs, you change your expectations.

John 1:45-49: (NRSV) ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth. ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see. ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit! ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, Where did you get to know me? Jesus answered, I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you. ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!

Mark 9:20-27: (NRSV) ²⁰And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹Jesus asked the father, How long has this been happening to him? And he said, From childhood. ²²It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us. ²³Jesus said to him, If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes. ²⁴Immediately the father of the child cried out, I believe; help my unbelief! ²⁵When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again! ²⁶After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, He is dead. ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand.



Luke 17:5-6: (NRSV) ⁵The apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith! ⁶The Lord replied, If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, Be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.

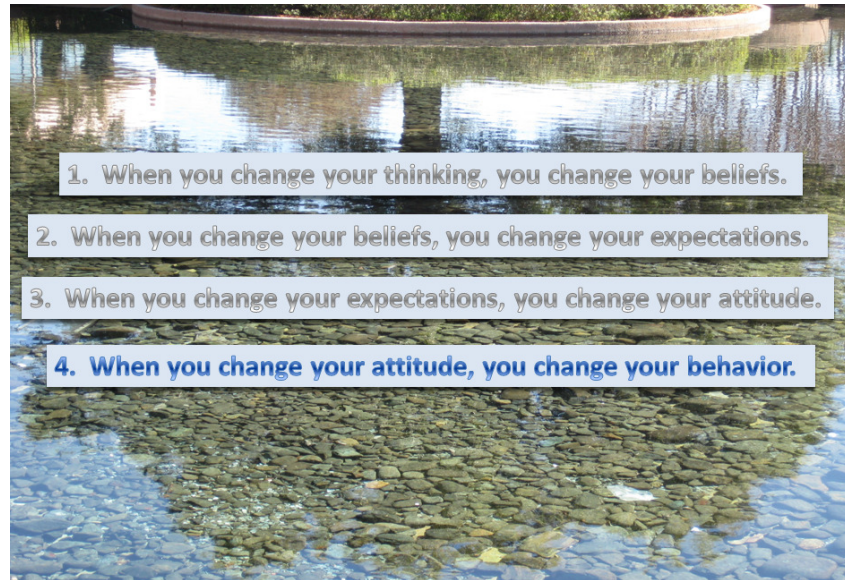
Luke 11:9-13: (NRSV) ⁹So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!



1 Peter 4:12-16: (NRSV) ¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. ¹⁶Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.

Now, the conversion of Saul - talk about paradigm shifts!

Acts 9:1-9: (NRSV) ¹Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? ⁵He asked, Who are you, Lord? The reply came, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do. ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.



1. When you change your thinking, you change your beliefs.

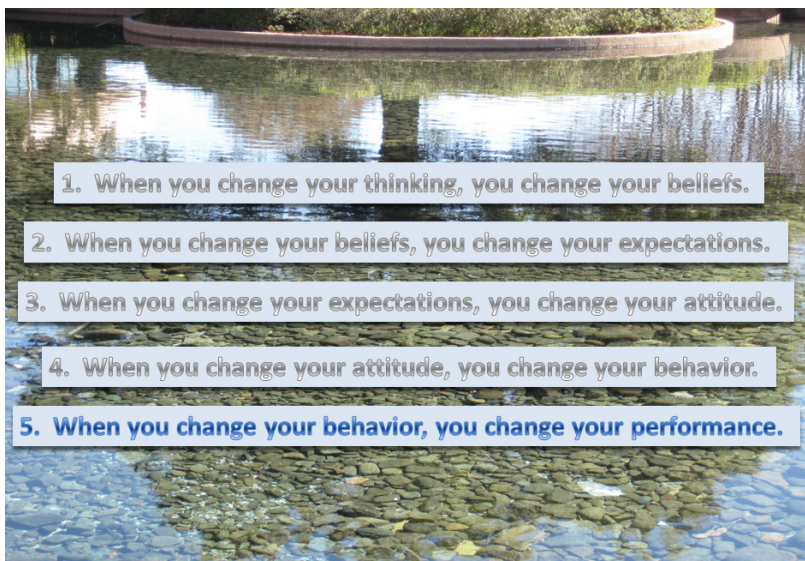
2. When you change your beliefs, you change your expectations.

3. When you change your expectations, you change your attitude.

4. When you change your attitude, you change your behavior.

Saul was not the only one who had to readjust his attitude and behavior. Ananias' paradigm told him clearly to stay away from Saul!

Acts 9:10-17: (NRSV) ¹⁰Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. He answered, Here I am, Lord. ¹¹The Lord said to him, Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment 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. ¹³But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name. ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name. ¹⁷So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.



1. When you change your thinking, you change your beliefs.

2. When you change your beliefs, you change your expectations.

3. When you change your expectations, you change your attitude.

4. When you change your attitude, you change your behavior.

5. When you change your behavior, you change your performance.

Here is where the "rubber meets the road." All of the changes up to this point are primarily internal, but this change shows the world your authenticity...

Acts 9:18-22: (NRSV) ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength. ²⁰and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, He is the Son of God. ²¹All who heard him were amazed and said, Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the

purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests? ²²Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.



A new paradigm produces a new life...

Acts 9:23-27: (NRSV)

²³After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, ²⁴but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; ²⁵but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. ²⁶When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the

disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.

2 Timothy 4:5-8: (NRSV) ⁵As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. ⁶As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

