

A Pattern for Personal Transformation

*How to bring about change in your life
in a changing world.*



By

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Most of the following was gleaned from Dallas Willard's book, Transformation of the Heart. My thoughts and questions as to how to bring about change and desired outcomes in one's life is intertwined. The transformation of one's life and reaching one's goals involves not just one part of man but his spirit, mind, soul, and body set in community. Healthy life change is a gift of God's grace.

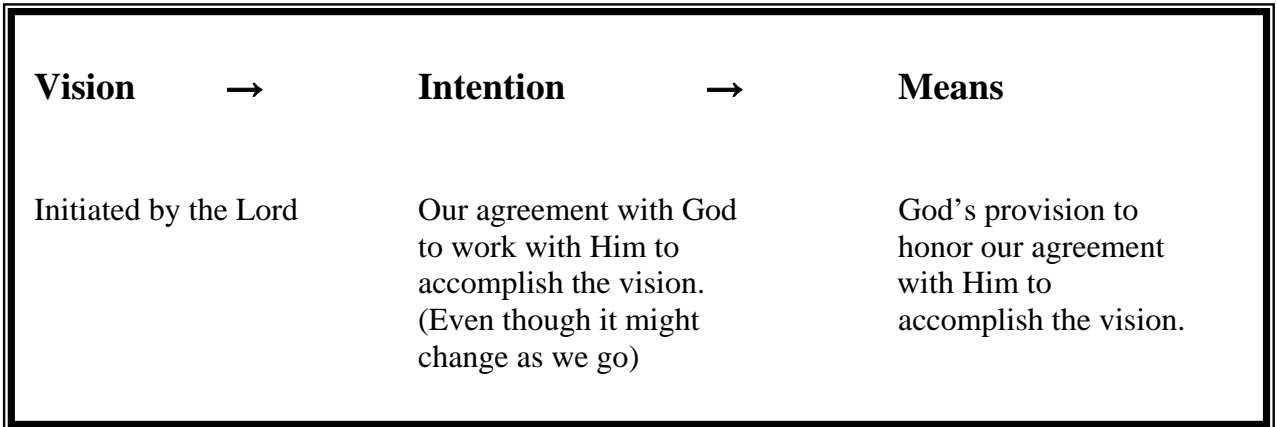
A Pattern for Personal Transformation

Where do you begin when it comes to making lasting change? You begin by thinking about your thinking. Most never take time to think about their thinking. Transformation begins in your heart as well as your mind. Personal transformation is also a gift of grace - a gift from God. God has given you a will, and you are an active participant in the process of change - what you do or don't do makes all the difference.

In his book, Renovation of the Heart, Dallas Willard gives three components for lasting change: vision, intention and means. We will examine the three components for transformation, the Scriptures accompanying the components and questions one may ask in reference to the components.

Willard says transformation, radical and lasting change, has three components:

- 1. Vision**
- 2. Intention**
- 3. Means**



“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 acceptable and perfect” Romans 12:2 (NASB)

Vision

Vision begins in the mind. A vision is created in your mind and can result in the achievement of that vision as a desired outcome.

- Vision that underlies spiritual formation into Christ likeness is the vision of life now and forever, in the range of God's effectual will.
- You cannot see vision clearly on our own. You need God to show you.
- Vision of God's Kingdom is where you must start. It is where Jesus started. We are to pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done...."
- Vision is a wish to do something, to achieve a desired outcome, to change.
- It is paramount that you trust and rely on God as you examine your vision. If you do not count on "the One", you will not have an adequate vision of the kingdom and the vision will not be based on a solid foundation
- If the vision is crystal clear and strong, then even in the midst of difficulty and distracting circumstances, the desired outcome can be accomplished.
- You must have vision, or better yet, it must have you, before the vision will become a reality.
- When passion accompanies vision, the likelihood of reaching the desired outcome increases. Passion is the driving force that enables the desired outcome.
- You cannot clearly see the vision in its entirety on our own. You need to share the vision in community so you can get a broader perspective on the impact of the vision.
- When a desirable state of being or a desired outcome is envisioned, the intention to realize it actuated and the means in place, then you can achieve the desired outcome.
- Unless the vision is properly grasped, intention will be malformed or nonexistent and the means that is implemented will be chaotic and ineffectual.
- You must earnestly and repeatedly pray that God will directly work in your inner being to change the things that will enable you to obey His Son.
- Without vision, one perishes.

Scriptures to examine:

Proverbs 29:18 (The Message) "If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves..."

Colossians 3:17 "whatever we do, speaking, or acting, do all on behalf of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to Him through God the Father."

2 Corinthians 10:5 "...taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

Questions one might ask in reference to one's vision:

1. What is the biblical vision of your life in the kingdom of God?
2. How will the vision and desired outcome impact God's kingdom?
3. Why is this desirable?
4. Why is it valuable?
5. What problems might one expect to encounter?
6. What steps must be taken to reach the desired outcome?
7. Why should you pay the price in time, energy, emotions, and resources?
8. How will reaching your desired outcome improve your life?
9. How will reaching the desired outcome change your life and the lives of those around you?
10. What is the value in working toward your vision?
11. What must be done to accomplish your desired outcome?
12. Do your patterns of thinking conform to the truths of God's Word, and can you extend and apply those truths, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to all the details of your daily life?

Intention

You must intend the vision if it is to be realized.

- Intention is brought to completion only by a decision to fulfill the intention.
- The vision of life in God's kingdom, through reliance upon Jesus, makes it possible for you to intend to live in the kingdom as He did.
- It is paramount that you trust and rely on God. If you do not count on "the One", you will not have an adequate vision of the kingdom and the intention will not be based on a solid foundation.
- Transformation(change) or vision will not take place by accident.
- When something is not intended you do not see it and its value.
- Given the vision, the intention is something you must choose to do or not to do.
- You may wish what you supposedly intend to happen, perhaps even want it to happen, but if you do not decide to do it - it doesn't happen.
- Intention is the conscious involvement in the stage of planning.
- There must be a clear vision, during the planning stage, with the desired outcome in mind.
- Action needs to follow the plan.
- Effective action has to involve order, subordination and progression.
- Although you need input from community, you still need to write your own script and manage it in order to accomplish your desired outcome.
- What matters most in intention is your choice.
- Just waiting to see if it is going to happen will not make it happen.
- You must initiate, bring into action, those factors that would bring the vision to reality – the desired outcome.
- Intention is brought to completion by the decision to fulfill or carry through with your vision.
- The desired outcome needs to be measurable.
- Intention must be clear, and a plan of action decided upon, before you may be able to see what the means will need to look like.
- Set goals instead of making promises to yourself or others.
- In spiritual transformation you must not merely believe things about Jesus, however true they may be; you cannot actually believe the truth about Him without intending to trust Him by intending to obey Him.
- It is not enough to believe the right answers, you must be set to act as if they are the right answers.
- The idea that you can trust Christ and not intend to obey Him is an illusion. If you don't intend to follow His advice – you don't trust Him.
- For spiritual formation to take place in your mind and heart, Jesus needs to be constantly present in your mind. You need to put on the "mind of Christ". You need to throw out every false idea or destructive image about God.
- To be spiritually formed in Christ, you must have and must implement the appropriate vision, intention and means.
- You must count the cost before moving forward.

Scriptures to examine:

Ephesians 6:10(PAR) "...be empowered in the Lord and in the energy of His might."

Ephesians 3:16(PAR) ""become mighty with His energy through His Spirit into the inward person."

Questions one might ask about intention?

1. What is the transformation(change) or desired outcome going to look like?
2. Is there a clear plan to follow?
3. When will you begin to implement the plan?
4. How will you know when the desired outcome has been reached?
5. How, concretely, can we "intend to live in the kingdom of God now"?
6. What alternative solutions do you have to the problems you will face?"
7. Who will help you accomplish your desired outcome?

→	Stimulus	→	Interpretation	→	Choice	→	Response
	An action happens		90% of the time we we misinterpret in part or the whole Our wounded heart plays a big part in our interpretation		We will make better choices if our heart wounds are healed.		Healthy and holy choices

Negative Beliefs that Impact our Thinking and Decision Making

The following was written by David Burns and might be helpful as you think about your thinking in decision making.

All-or Nothing Thinking

The person who thinks this way sees everything in black-or-white terms. No shades of gray are possible. Perfectionists see their work as either perfect or worthless. The healthy person sees spectrums and variations and exceptions in nearly every area of life.

Overgeneralizations

This is the tendency to draw sweeping conclusions from very little evidence. For example, a man who is turned down by one woman after he asks for a date may draw the conclusion that all women will reject him and he will never get a date. The healthier thinker draws conclusions only after taking in a great deal of evidence.

Negative Mental Filter

The person filters out any information that is positive or good. She just does not hear compliments or words of affirmation or praise. She hears only criticism. The healthy person hears both good and bad.

Disqualifying the Positive

The person hears the compliment but discounts it. He explains away words of affirmation or praise.

Means

Means is stepping forward or taking action toward your desired outcome. Means is the instrumentalities used toward the outcome.

- Vision and solid intention will lead you to the means.
- Means is carrying through on intention.
- If the vision is clear and strong, the intention well thought out, the employment of the means thoughtful and persistent, the desired outcome is likely to happen.
- Once the vision and intention are in place, you will begin to find appropriate, orderly and effectual means to fulfill the desire to realize the vision or desired outcome.
- You will play a large part in accomplishing the desired outcome.
“Where there is no will, there is no way.”
- You should seek God’s favor about your intention, search His Word for guidance Seek counsel from Godly friends that you trust, and then continue to push forward.
- Staying focused on the vision is fundamental.
- Practice, practice, practice is often the key to reaching the desired outcome.
- Persistence is a major part of means.
- You are not left to yourself to find the means (resources). Some are directly under your control and some are God’s actions towards you.
- By not deciding to move forward, toward the vision, you are usually allowing someone else to decide your destiny for you. This is a form of bondage.
- At any point, vision, intention and/or means can be sabotaged. Sabotage keeps you from the desired outcome. Its mission is to hinder, obstruct, waste or destroy the vision. It is performed by an opponent or enemy and is carried out subtly or covertly. Often the enemy surfaces and attacks us through family and friends.
- The simplest form of sabotage is “self-sabotage”, where one prevents his own success. This often happens when you fear success.
- Signs of sabotage: Procrastination, avoiding competition, avoiding work, or perfectionism.
- It is important to celebrate small success along the way toward the decided outcome. The journey is often more rewarding than accomplishing the desired outcome.

Scripture to examine:

Philippians 4:6-7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

Questions one might ask about means:

1. What are the main means that you will personally use for implementing your decision to live in the kingdom of God now?
2. Do you trust God? Do you ruthlessly trust god?
3. How will you know when you have reached the desired outcome?
4. Are you willing to ask for help before you need assistance or encouragement?
5. Who will walk alongside of you and hold you accountable?
6. What part does prayer play as you work toward your desired goal?
7. What are your fears and how will you allow them to effect the desired outcome?
8. How will you acquire the desired recourses?
9. What will allow you to fight the dogfights that will come during the means?

Fear is rooted in the absence of the experience of God's love. Fear is the emotion that most often hinders us from accomplishing our desired goals.

Grace is God acting in and with us to accomplish that which we cannot accomplish by our own ability.