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The Business of Personal Transformation

By Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D.



Transformation is a big word these days. Businesses, leaders, industries – they are confronted with, going through, and trying to manage their way through *transformation*. Even my own firm, the Leadership Research Institute, has as our very own Mission:

Transforming Leaders to Transform the World.

Transformation is bigger than change. It's bigger than achievement. It's rethinking *everything* to become new again, bigger, and totally different, ideally in a good way, to accomplish something new, better, and more suited to the present moment and the future.

Nowhere is transformation more intense than when it's taking place in your own life. You may feel a sense of dread or a thrill when you realize that what's really undergoing transformation...is *you*.

What Will Be *Your* Transformation?

Sometimes life leads us to transformation, and sometimes we choose it for ourselves. Either way, transformation begins when *we* begin the journey from wherever we are – whether we want to be in that place or not – to becoming who we most want to be. Consider which definitions of transformation are most suited to you.

A thorough or dramatic change. Transformations are all about change: *thorough* change; *dramatic* change; often *observable* change. What is the change *you* want to make?

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A *conversion*. Conversion has the connotation of changing one’s beliefs, embracing new ideas, experimenting with new perspectives, and finding a new point of view that feels more positive or hopeful or promising. What ideas are you willing to revisit, to see what they have to offer?

A *revision*. You don’t have to change everything about who you are to experience transformation. On the contrary, the best and strongest and most naturally brilliant parts of you will be *driving* your transformation; they will be *revealed* by your transformation. That said, are there parts of you (or your life, or work, or relationships) that you’d like to revise? Change around? Update?

An *evolution*. Another variation on transformation is an *evolution*. In evolution, we strengthen the parts of us that serve us best and let go some of the things that no longer do. What are you ready to release, so you can grow?

A *renewal*. There’s a big difference between renovation and remodeling; the first suggests a total destruction before rebuilding; the second a simple refreshing of what already exists – perhaps with some newness that brings a breath of fresh air and new life. Are there places you’d like to refresh, revitalize, or renew?

A *revolution*. Revolution implies a rejection of the old ways to turn to a new way – an innovation; a re-invention; a new start. Where would you like to spark a revolution?

A *new direction*. You don’t have to start a revolution to go a new direction. Often surprising even ourselves, sometimes we’re drawn to a different path or a new outcome – something we sense in our soul may change us or our lives for the good.

What will be *your* transformation?

It Isn’t Business; It’s Personal

There’s an old retort to the saying, “It’s not personal; it’s just personal” that goes, “Well, it’s personal to *me*.”

When it comes to the business of transformation, it’s important to realize that transformation changes *everything*. It’s *not* just business. It *is* personal.

As businesses transform themselves to innovate for the future, leaders and employees alike will benefit from recognizing that *each and every one of you* in that business will be affected.

- You may have to adjust to sudden, perhaps welcome or perhaps unwelcome, change.
- The new ways may require new beliefs about what’s possible.
- You may have to think differently, act differently, work with new people, try new things.
- There may be big opportunities to embrace.
- There may be surprising things to let go.

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- You will all be better and more excited about the possibilities if you can envision a new future ~ to see with enthusiasm what's ahead.
- In order to avoid chaos and confusion, you will all need to communicate, collaborate, and move *together* in a new direction.

As a leader, you will be most successful when you attend to the change process and give everyone the time, patience, information, and resources to support the transformation – including you.



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