

# The SOLUTION source

Thunder Bay Counselling Newsletter  
By Colleen Ginter, Clinical Counsellor on behalf of Thunder Bay Counselling

For You & Your Family

Summer 2017

**IN THIS OUR SUMMER 2017 NEWSLETTER WE WILL BE FOCUSING AND EXPLORING THE CONCEPTS OF RENEWAL, GROWTH, CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION.**

## Transformation: The Symbol of the Butterfly

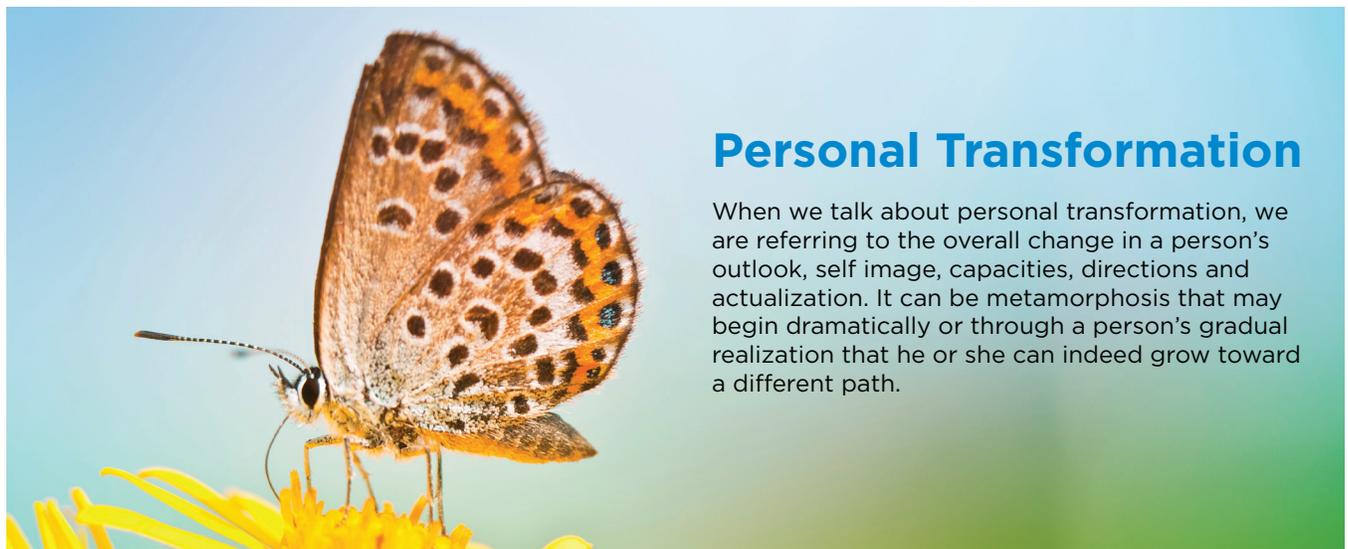
In many cultures the butterfly is seen as a symbol of transformation. In transformation, there are cycles. There is the egg stage where growth begins. The larvae stage, the cocoon stage where you go within, and the final stage where the larvae transforms into the beautiful butterfly.

The butterfly changes from one life form into an utterly different life form - and it makes the change from one life form to another within the span of like a month or so. Through the process of changing our minds, actions and behaviors, our physiology changes too. There is proof meditation can actually change our cells - even change the structure of our DNA!

Is it easy? No - but ask a butterfly if changing from caterpillar to butterfly is easy - I doubt she'll say "oh, no sweat, it was a breeze"..

Are you in a place of discomfort? Are you stuck? Consider the butterfly - consider her ability to change from one form into another. Your commitment to transformation holds just as much gravity. You can move from one form of life into another. It may take a time of cocooning yourself - a time of withdrawal so that you can regroup yourself - but when you emerge from your cocoon, you are a new form of life. In essence, you are able to spread your magnificent wings and fly into the vistas of your own design.

([www.symbolsoftransformation.com](http://www.symbolsoftransformation.com))



### Personal Transformation

When we talk about personal transformation, we are referring to the overall change in a person's outlook, self image, capacities, directions and actualization. It can be metamorphosis that may begin dramatically or through a person's gradual realization that he or she can indeed grow toward a different path.

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**Timmins Family Counselling Centre**  
Centre de counselling familial de Timmins



## Renewal and Growth

Sometimes the change begins with experiencing a difficult time in your life. This may cause you to want to change things in your life because you start to see things with new eyes. To change, you might have to seek resources from within yourself. You might discover strengths and abilities you never knew you had. Sometimes it takes a very challenging process for personal transformation.

Another person's transformation might be quite different. You might experience a slower, more gradual process. Your desire to change is less dramatic. The reasons you want to change are varied and not necessarily because of a crisis.

The process:

- Critical reflection Critical reflection is vital to make change positive and productive. This involves trying to make sense of what has happened and it means looking for answers about the personal issues that have arisen. Critical reflection is a sincere search for what has led to the current state; an examination of cause and effect relationships.
- Discovering and exploring options for the future. This is when the person becomes aware of the possibility for changing their reality through abilities and powers that may have been untried in the past. It means going through task-oriented problem solving until issues are resolved. For example, the person who wants to become more financially competent may begin with tasks like balancing a cheque book or understanding a financial statement.
- A shift in the fundamental beliefs through which the individual understands and draws inferences about the community and the world in which he or she lives. In everyday terms, this boils down to a realization that certain things are permissible and even good. For example, a career woman may realize for the first time that it is okay to refuse to perform tasks that are supposed to be the responsibility of others. This strikes at the belief that a nice person and a good co-worker should please people – a belief that the person may have espoused.
- A resolution towards making a new set of plans for the next chapter in life. After conflict and new learning have changed self-image and worldview, transformation becomes imminent with the forming of plans to build a different path for living.
- Reinventing oneself. People who go through crises and emerge from them often want to become different from what they used to be. This is when the term “reinventing oneself” is often heard and it bodes well for personal transformation because the litmus test of change is when behavior is altered.

Personal transformation takes place through a process that is radical, internal and rational. Most of all, it is one that encompasses the way a person thinks and feels; how they see the world and themselves; what he does henceforth and his behavior. It is often a difficult change to make but it is very much worth the effort it takes”. (David Riewe)

# Supporting Change

“Think about the personal strength that you showed to survive these events. Even if you made some mistakes or did some things you regret, you did what you had to do to survive and that is something to be proud of.

Think about the things that you have put in your life currently that make it meaningful - be it relationships, your work, your faith, or taking care of your family. Try to find everyday happiness in the life you have now.

Think about what you have learned from going through these difficulties, and about how you might use this knowledge to help yourself and other people or create something of personal or societal value.

Know that there will be ups and downs. Learn to anticipate and manage these. Be gentle with yourself on days when it is just too difficult to see the positive.”

(Melanie Greenburg PhD)

## THE 51 PERCENT SOLUTION

When you bump up against the tendency to stay in old ruts, you experience what is known as resistance. You might think that some part of you is willfully sabotaging your desire to change. We refer to this as ‘habit energy.’ This reminds us that doing the same thing over and over again is inherently reinforcing. Sometimes people say such things as, “I must be getting something out of it or I wouldn’t keep doing it.” You might also think, “I know that I am capable of change, but let’s take a realistic look at what that might take.” We might think about the 51 percent solution. The 51 percent solution says that if you do something more often than not, change will follow. You will have some days where you will feel 100 percent on board and others where you will want to snuggle into the past. As long as 51 percent of the time, you take the new step, you will get to your destination. The conservative tendency of the brain then becomes your ally because each time you practice the new habit, you strengthen the neural pathways that support it. Over time, 51 percent becomes 60, 70, 80 percent... and you have created a new normal.

(The Chemistry of Joy Workbook)

## IS NEGATIVE THINKING KEEPING YOU STUCK IN YOUR CHANGE PROCESS?

Noted physician and author Christiane Northrup advises that, as you think, so you feel. “Positive thoughts have a high vibration and negative thoughts have a low vibration. Every single thought you think is also accompanied by subtle changes in your immune, endocrine, and central nervous systems. Positive thoughts are accompanied by positive changes in your body’s biochemistry. Negative thoughts, on the other hand, tend to depress your immunity and your mood. And remember that both types of thoughts tend to attract their physical equivalents. That is why getting a handle on the quality of your daily thoughts and choosing them more deliberately and consciously

is a powerful tool for making your life easy. Thoughts and their accompanying feelings actually change the neuronal patterns in our brains. Luckily we have the ability to change the way we think. Repetitive thoughts of joy and compassion actually create new connections in the brain and the old ones of depression and sadness eventually fall away, but only with repetition and dedication.”

It’s like creating a path in the woods. Paths in the woods while taking a hike become easier to follow and walk on the more people walk on them.

# More Ways To Support Renewal and Growth

**Recall your intention.** Yogi Berra is said to have noted, “If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up somewhere else!” Clearly stating your intention will steer you in the right direction. Your intention can be a work in progress and regularly revisited.

**Remember what you are already doing well.** Anytime resistance or discouragement shows up, it pays to remember what’s gone well and the skills you may have forgotten about.

**Cultivate willingness.** Resistance is all about closing down; willingness is the essence of staying open. At times, you may need to simply “be willing to be willing” to entertain new information or take a new action or ask for what you need. Any small opening will begin the process of moving past resistance.

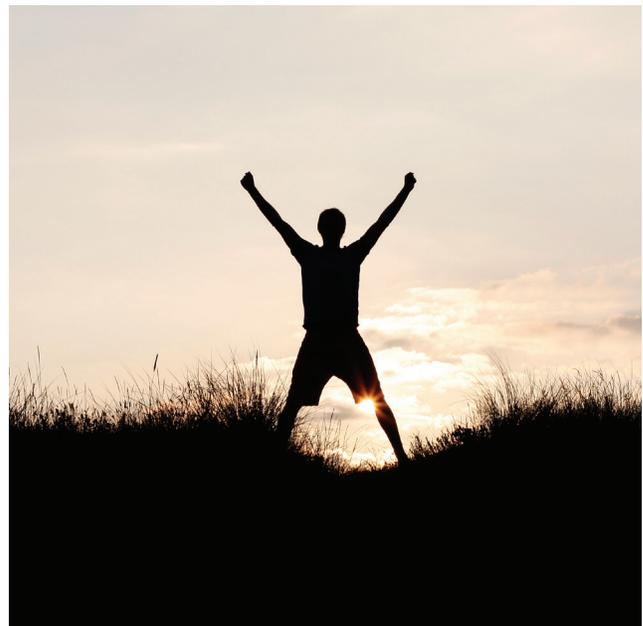


**Practice acceptance.** An eleventh-century Tibetan story illustrates the power of acceptance:

One day Milarepa arrived home to find his cave filled with demons. They were wild and crazy demons and disturbed his peace of mind. To get them to leave, he first tried telling them to get out using logic. No success. After multiple attempts to reason with them, he lost his temper and ranted and raved. Still they stayed. Realizing his efforts to reason with them were doomed, he finally gave up and simply sat down. "Well I'm not leaving and neither are you, it seems. I guess we'll just have to learn to get along," he said to them. Immediately all but the most vicious and threatening demon left. In a flash of wisdom, Milarepa approached the vicious demon and put his head directly into its mouth. "Eat me, then." he said. "I'm powerless to defeat you." With this the demon left him in peace.

The moral of the story? When we simply and radically accept what's happening, the demon of resistance leaves us.

**Sustain hope and faith.** At times faith and hope are in short supply. Especially in the "lean times" or "thin places". It helps to tap into sources outside yourself. Your spiritual tradition and practices, your supportive friends, inspiring stories and readings, and uplifting music can all be your allies.



**Ask for Support.** The road to a more joyful life can be long, rocky, exhilarating and beautiful. Sharing the trip with others can lighten the difficulties and enhance the joys. Finding a network of support is essential.

(Chemistry of Joy Workbook)

Helping  
people  
is what  
we're all  
about.



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**(705) 267-7333**

60 Wilson Avenue, Suite 310  
Timmins, Ontario P4N 2S7

[timminsfamilycounselling.com](http://timminsfamilycounselling.com)



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