

Possible World Workbooks

Shift Happens

Journey to Sustainable Behavior

by David Miller & Lee Van Ham



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**Shift Happens:
Journey to Sustainable Behavior**

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Assessing Our Shift



Session 2

A Moment of Shift in My Life

Purposes for this Session:

- To look for Metanoia in my life-experience thus far
- To raise my awareness of how I've responded when change impacts my life
- To give full value to those experiences as formative for my life

Preparation prior to this Session

Complete the journaling questions for this Session and bring a personal item that symbolizes some part of your story. The symbol will be part of creating our alter altar for this Session, indicating that we hold sacred the sharing that we do with one another.

Scenario for This Session (120 minutes)

- 10 minutes: Opening ritual to create an open, sacred space and reaffirm the covenant
- 100 minutes: Three-part structure of active listening, reflective comments, and open discussion
 - Active listening to each person's story as they speak out of the journaling questions*
 - Reflective comments following each person's sharing, i.e., "What I/we hear you saying is"*
 - Open discussion after everyone has been actively listened to and, in turn, received the reflective comments from those in the group. THEN the conversation space opens to whatever questions and thoughts have risen in us. We offer them with the hope of furthering one another's processes of change.*
- 10 minutes: Review of assignment for the next session and concluding ritual

Introductory Essay for This Session

Our lives come to turning points. Some are planned; some appear without warning but they have the power to instigate shifts in our lives. In this Session we examine those turning points We look for Metanoia so we can better come to know how we respond to these moments of change.

As we search through our lives for these experiences of change, we will likely hear inner voices evaluating our experiences. They will want us to devalue some and elevate others. They may be comparing our experiences with those of others and deciding that the experiences of others are more interesting or valuable. But despite these inner voices, this process can help us all understand how we maximize those changes for the good of all.

Telling the stories of our life's turning points is special, sacred activity. If we do not perceive our life as sacred, it may be because we do not perceive clearly its wholeness (holiness). We may instead perceive it as more fragmented than pieced together. Such self-perception, very common for all of us at times of our lives, benefits greatly when we have the chance to tell the stories of special moments of our lives to a small group of active listeners who in turn will tell theirs.

Actively listening to the stories of turning points in others' lives is likewise a special, sacred activity. Our listening and reflecting back to the storyteller what we heard, what resonated with us, and feelings that came up in us contributes to their wholeness and ours. In a group where storytelling and active listening are pursued intentionally, we piece together parts of our lives that were previously unconnected. Fragments become parts of a new whole. Many become one. When we have moments of such valuing of our life experiences by others, we are able to integrate as a person, connect our ego with our greater self. From this we have the capacity to co-create a positive future for ourselves and others.

When we do this well in a group, all involved are challenged to see ourselves in new ways. Will we dare to believe these new self-perceptions? Will I insist that only my way of seeing myself is true and the others in the group do not see me correctly? Will I be able to face my self-righteousness if I can trust only my own perceptions of self and not those of others?

Metanoia inevitably brings us to new self-perception. Talking of our turning points and having them actively listened to and responded to, takes us into the realm of Metanoia.

Session 2

Name _____

The Journal—Where I gather my consciousness for Metanoia

Journaling begins with stillness. Quieting our inner noise. Slipping past the sentry guarding the garden-gate to our innermost self. Sitting and being attentive to the feelings and thoughts that arise in this centered place. Writing them ... all. Uncensored. Valuing each as a gift from the deep well in us and all the rivulets that feed her.

Journal on the questions below:

1. What has been one of the most important moments of shift (Metanoia experiences) in my life?
2. How did my mind change as a result?
3. What emotions were part of the experience?
4. How did my actions change after the experience?
5. What did others say about my turning point experience?
6. Anchor these personal experiences within in the larger world by noting what was happening at the time in the larger community, nation, and world.
7. Sitting mindfully with this experience of the past, if I wish more could have happened as a result, what is it? AND, without blaming myself for what has not happened, what, if anything, can happen now in my life to further bring that moment, that consciousness, into my current reality?

Assignment for the Next Session

1. Read the “Introductory Essay” for the next Session.
2. Complete your journal entry and come to the next session prepared to pass your journal piece to a colleague in the group. This will happen during the next session after everyone has completed sharing their life-experiences. Your journal entry will be returned to you at the following session. Prior to the following session, the person who receives your journal entry is encouraged to add to your writing the feelings or thoughts that arise for them as they read what you have written. You will do the same with the piece you receive from a different member of the group.
3. Bring a personal item that symbolizes some part of what you write.
4. Interview someone about one of the most important turning points (Metanoia experiences) in their life. Ask them the questions you wrote about in your Journal for Session 2. Especially, notice how their story impacts you. Then write in your Journal on the topics assigned and bring a symbol to the next Session that is related to what you write.