



TransformingLives.Coach

ASSIGNMENT: CREATING YOUR CHANGE STORY

The First Question

Big change brings equally large uncertainty. The first question is, *Where are you going?* Without clarity about the destination, everything you do may take you closer to or further away from the direction you should be heading.

All too often, if we know where we are going, it is based purely on our thinking, or someone else's.

- *I am going to do X because I think I would like it.*
- *I did a lot of research, and (this change) makes sense.*
- *I can get rich working in financial services.*
- *If X can be successful at this, so can I.*
- *I've had this idea this since I was a kid.*
- *My parents wanted me to become (a lawyer, a doctor, etc.).*
- *I'll have job security.*

The problem is, intellect is not enough to ensure success during a major change journey. Depending on the change, a strong intellect may be necessary; regardless of the journey, it is not sufficient. Just think about how often you have heard someone say (or have said yourself), *My heart wasn't in it, or I knew in my gut that I made a mistake going down that path.*

Numerous writers and speakers have made the point that Martin Luther King's famous speech was not, *I Have a Plan*, but rather *I Have a Dream*. Simon Sinek's TED talk [How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#) has had over 36 million views. As the leader of your own change journey, I encourage you to watch it before completing this assignment. (The video is just over 18 minutes long.)

The Foundation for Successful Change

The foundation for successful change is clarifying where you are going, and ensuring that it is the right destination for you. Major changes require shifts in our thinking as well as what we do. They often call for letting go of things that have provided us stability in the past, whether that be job security, people in our lives, defense mechanisms, beliefs about ourselves, etc. (I refer to these things as "anchors." If you are interested in reading more about this, I write about it often on [my website](#); one post that focuses exclusively on this topic is [Anchors Aweigh](#).)

If major change were easy, we would all be doing much more of it much more successfully. The reality is, it is hard. It takes discipline; it takes courage; it takes making mistakes, learning from them, and moving on; it takes falling down and getting back up; it can demand sleepless nights, and stomach-churning days. The way to get through all of this is to really embody the outcome that you are seeking to achieve; to know what it will feel like, smell like, sound like, taste like...to know not just in your mind but in your body what it will be like to be successful. Having that clarity of your intent is what will help you get through the tough times.

Unless you have gone through this exercise before, it is unlikely you currently have this level of clarity. And, this assignment alone will not get you there. However, it will begin to lay that foundation. Our upcoming coaching session will build on it. I encourage you to set aside time in the following weeks to continue evolving and refining the work that you are starting to do here.

Assignment 1

Please give yourself as much time as you need to complete this assignment. I encourage you to read the entire assignment. If Part 1 applies to you, complete as much as you can, read what you have written, and then set it aside; do not move into Part 2 yet. Come back to it later, or tomorrow, and continue working on Part 1. I encourage you to do the reflection a second time, making any edits to what you have written; then move into Part 2. If Part 1 does not apply to you, move directly into Part 2. Again, my encouragement is to work it through, set it aside, and come back to it for a second time.

Please send me whatever you have completed no less than 24 hours before our next scheduled session. Don't worry about whether or not it is complete. The reality is that even if you think it is, you will be coming back to it later to work on it some more.

If you currently have a destination in mind, whether or not you are sure that it is the right one, start here. If you do not, move on to Part 2.

Part 1: Where are you heading?

1. Briefly describe the destination of the change journey we are working on together. What outcome(s) are you seeking to attain? That destination may be clear and specific (e.g. *My destination is to obtain a new job in X industry as a Y professional*) or it may be more general (*My destination is to determine whether I should change careers, and then to successfully move forward with whatever decision I make*).
2. Why are you taking (or considering) this change? When did the idea of it first come to you? When did it become serious?

3. What is motivating you about the change?

4. Stop. Read what you have written; edit it if appropriate. Then close your eyes, and reflect on it. Find this change in your body. Where is it? Do you feel it? If you do, what does it feel like? What emotions is it bringing up? How do they make you feel? If you can't feel the change, what thoughts about it come up for you? Spend some time with these questions. Then open your eyes, and record the experience.

5. Did this exercise raise questions in your mind about the change? If so, what are they? Did it answer questions about the change? if so, what answer(s) did you find?

Part 2: Where do you want to be heading?

1. What is the destination that is in your heart? This is not the destination you think you should be heading toward. This is not the destination you are planning on. It is the destination that you feel passionately about achieving. Don't worry about how to get there. Don't judge it as impossible, or foolish, or think about how long it may take to achieve. Don't put other people's judgements on it. (*My friends think I am stupid to be wanting to do this, or My family thinks I am foolhardy.*) These may be challenges; they may be obstacles; they may make it more difficult to get there. We can work on that later. Right now, start with what is in your heart. If you know what that is, write it down. If not, take some time to reflect on it. You may want to meditate, take a walk, go running, or brainstorm. If it comes to you, great! If not, we will work on this in our next session; stop here, and return to review/rework Part 1. That will help you when you return to Part 2.

2. Imagine that you have been successful. Close your eyes. Let the feelings sink in. What are they? Where are they in your body? What is it like to be there? Who is there to celebrate with you? Who isn't? Let the feelings sink in. What are they? Where are they in your body? What is it like to be there? Spend some time in the future, and then come back. Record not just your thoughts, but your feelings. Write from the future. *I did it! Here I am!...* Print off your story and put it in your wallet or pocket or purse or...Carry it with you. Read it, edit it, make it more and more deeply your own. Make it more and more deeply real. Know what success in this change feels like.