



**The Art of Change**  
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# **Part 1**

## **Preface**

I have never purchased a book that was categorized in the self-help section of a bookstore, although I have purchased many books with the hope of helping myself. My first books were fiction, mostly fantasy and science fiction, and I read them as a means of escape from the everyday. Not unlike a drug, I would become lost in fictional worlds of good and evil, where almost always the heroes would prevail. Hours went by quickly while I was reading in bed, and upon finishing a book, I would feel a sense of journey, accomplishment, and subtle sadness which as an adult is the feeling you have after returning home from the perfect vacation, knowing you must go to work the next day. I never wanted these books to end. I didn't want to leave alien worlds where morality had a clear purpose.

Fantastic fiction was a form of comfort and support for my young body, but as I grew older, I derived less and less self-help from these types of books, and almost stopped reading them entirely, only occasionally picking out a novel that had an appealing cover. I kept on reading, of course, but I restricted my appetite primarily to academic-like texts where knowledge is laid out on the page for easy access. Because I traded epic-fiction for books of science, I must assume that both sorts of books were fulfilling a similar purpose in me. The fiction provided escape and moral certainty, while science promised the certainty of knowledge and hope.

The benefits of scientific texts soon wore off as well, and it was no longer enough to bury my thoughts in the fruits of a scientific method. Science for me was an escape, not unlike reading fantasy. Although many people pursue science because they believe it is the one true way to knowledge, I did so primarily to find comfort. It was a form of self-therapy. I was still interested in biology and chemistry. I would continue to read textbooks on gravitation and relativity, and even commit to books on applied and pure mathematics; but the usefulness of organized science faded for me. I am not claiming that I learned everything one could learn in science, only that I learned most of what I needed to know.

During medical school I began to explore philosophy, likely for the same reasons that I had taken up science and fantasy before. Up until that time I had considered most of philosophy useless. What good were the theories of long dead men to me? It's true. I took one philosophy course in college—introduction to ethics—but I wasn't passionate about the subject, or so I thought. I took the course for a requirement and a grade. In college and before there was no chance of me picking up a

book of philosophy for pleasure, and I suppose that most of you could say the same. Those of us drawn to philosophy for fun are a dying breed; you need only go to your local bookstore—which is also a dying breed—and measure the size of the philosophy section, if it exists at all.

Philosophy, too, is running its course. I am still left with discomfort, but I am far better for the effort. The individual statements that follow cannot be taken in isolation. Each point depends upon the others, and much of what I say is knowingly contradictory. Good luck.

# **Part 2**

## **Introduction**

Your despair, your fears; your guilt, anxiety, and shame—these are not minor concerns that occasionally require cleaning and touch-up work to keep them under control. If there is the tiniest *mental* bug that is eating away at you, or a gross cognitive monster preventing you from finding peace, then *not* doing something about it is tantamount to condemning yourself to personal hell on earth. You are living trapped in yourself, forced to suffer under the domination of a torturer that is partly you.

You have little time to make changes, and every moment that passes is potential wasted, assuming you still wish to change. No book will offer you freedom, and the self-help books that promise salvation are for the most part illicit narcotics, supplied to unsuspecting consumers that believe they are receiving a cure when in truth they are swallowing pills that continue the disease. Self-help cannot change your life because it does not strike out at you; it does not stretch your mental and moral fibers. The procedures described in self-help have little potential to alter the problem of you, and without vigilant behavior and thought-policing, they are completely useless.

You are the government that rules yourself.

The industries of self-help and psychological services do not appreciate the gravity of self-change. They treat self-change as a peaceful exercise that one may, on a cool summer day, undertake with a glass of lemonade while you rest on a hammock in the shade. A few witty paragraphs, a new secret, and some helpful advice to function better in social relations are all we need, they tell us. *But is not self-change a battle between who you are now and the person who you hope to become?* Like corporations that compete for market share, sports teams that compete for titles, and nations that battle for land; you are a domain where different versions of you battle for the precious prize of awareness and choice.

Self-change, like any battle, demands sacrifice, struggle, and conflict; and cannot be had by sitting on the sidelines or by mere hope. Positive thought can do nothing against the forces that threaten you. Do not expect a fair fight. The person you are this moment—the person who suffers now—is far stronger, more clever, and has better weapons than the *image* of the person you hope to become. The person you hope to be, the future you, exists as a potentiality in your imagination, and as an abstract vision, can only influence you indirectly like a ghost displaced from reality.

To change, you must form a revolution within yourself to overthrow the government that is you. It will not be easy. Parts of you will be lost forever.

# **Part 3**

## **Main**



1.

If you are attempting to change, then you are the enemy of yourself.

2.

After you change, you will notice something new—you will see how you have always been.

3.

If you want to change but cannot, then a force must be acting to prevent your change. That force may be you.

4.

Change is a gamble. You will certainly lose parts of yourself if you change, but there is no guarantee that you will gain anything.

5.

No self wants to change because change is destruction of the present self. Know that if you change, the present self, the self reading these words, will no longer exist.

6.

You may desire to change, but also desire that your new, changed-self will still be recognizable as you—as you are this moment. These desires are incompatible. You cannot be both 'the person who desires to change now' and 'the person who has changed.'

7.

Self-change is a battle. Be prepared to suffer. If you cannot tolerate being uncomfortable, then you are not prepared to change. If you are not ready to change now, seek allies in yourself and others, rest, build strength until you are strong enough to tolerate the anxiety of transformation.

8.

Only attempt change when you are ready. The desire to change is not enough.

9.

To say or think "I want to change" means only "I am not ready for change". Like your neighbor who says "I would like to help you, but..." means only "helping you is not my priority, I will not help you."

## IDENTITY

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10.

To become someone new, first you must see who you are in the present, then you must see who you hope to become. It is difficult, if not impossible, to chart a course to a destination if you do not know where the journey begins.

11.

To know yourself is to know your strategy for navigating through existence. Self-knowledge is the strategy, the program, the subroutines

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