

Chapter 9

How to Expand the
Prism Through Which
We View the World



*Any fact facing us is not as important
as our attitude toward it, for that
determines our success or failure.*

- Norman Vincent Peale

What that means is, once we make up our minds to think about something in a certain way, it can be really tough to change the way we see a situation.

The next time you find yourself stuck in a rut of thinking that any particular situation laid out before you is rock solid, remember it is not. As a friend of mine says, “Everything is not etched in stone.”

That simple truism is the key to it all. I have always felt that flexibility is the most important coping mechanism available to us. But flexibility is more than a coping mechanism; it is an art.

Flexible thinking isn’t an exact science, but our ability to be flexible enables us to live in this world much more comfortably. You see, the opposite side of flexibility is rigidity. A rigid life is a sterile life. Oh sure, it keeps us safe; we are never confronted with having to adapt to new ideas and circumstances. But not being flexible in our beliefs and actions exacts a huge cost on each and every one of us.

The cost? We miss out on so much. We inevitably sabotage our best intentions. We all recognize how it happens over and over again. We all do it. We have a way of taking an event and adding it to our belief system so that it comes out the same over and over again.

What follows are some important steps to transform rigidity into flexibility. Remember, you don’t have to master these all at once. But the next time you find yourself looking at a problem square in the face, try following one of these tips in order for you to be able to open the doors to the different areas of your life.

Freedom Step 1



All circumstances in your life are a gift. The pain you experience through these circumstances can be your teacher, if you choose to understand what the lesson is.

I have a friend who is a recovering alcoholic. He is a wonderful guy who has been sober for years.

One day we were talking and I asked him how his life improved when he stopped drinking.

“You know, Steve,” he said, “the year I stopped drinking, I thought everything would get better. But six months sober, my wife left me, my house was taken away, and my daughter was hurt badly in a terrible car accident.”

I was shocked.

He continued, “Most people asked me if I was going to start drinking again. I told them, ‘No, absolutely not!’ I have learned something that has changed the way I think about the things that happen to me. I told them each difficult time was a gift. I could choose to grow from those times and meet my needs sober, or I could drink and run back into a bottle. Then I finally realized I could have my needs met in a twelve-step group just as easily. And anything I went through drunk years before, I could go through sober now.”

