

Introduction

Mohandas K. Gandhi endured a painful identity crisis that caused him to drop out of college. During that destitute period a friend suggested he read the Bhagavad Gita, a revered spiritual text of India. The ancient teachings quickly became a guide to how he wanted to live and ignited within him, an understanding of how the world could achieve peace through non-violence.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the founding leaders of the women's rights movement was eleven years old when her only remaining brother died just before he was to graduate from college. In an effort to pacify her grieving and devastated father she promised him that she would become all that her brother would have been and more. Her father responded that he wished she had been a boy.

We need only talk to neighbors, overhear conversations at a coffee shop, or chat with coworkers to be reminded that transformation is occurring within and all around us. In our own immediate community, there is always someone experiencing a major turn of events: sending a child off to college, returning from military duty, changing careers, getting into an accident, moving across the country, becoming a grandparent. Every day, hundreds of thousands of women have a transformative experience through childbirth; patients learn they have a serious medical condition; students obtain long-sought degrees; and people end or begin marriage, go into the Peace Corps, study abroad, or retire.

When you have a life-changing experience, your normal, day-to-day life is interrupted, suspended, or even forgotten altogether. Your senses heighten, your awareness broadens, and you focus completely on the powerful occurrence unfolding in front of you—or within you. Whether this experience is chosen or forced upon you, sublime or traumatic, life as you know it has inexorably changed—and you along with it. Or so it appears.

A life-changing event can give the impression that you have endured a fundamental shift—that you are no longer the same. Yet, when the conversations about your pivotal event dissipate and loved ones and you must return to daily responsibilities, you might notice, that something is amiss. Fortunately, these unsettling feelings do not indicate there is a problem. Rather, you are in fact, undergoing a massive reorganization at your very core that will take months, if not years to complete.

When Mohandas Gandhi hearkened the inner call to read the spiritual text of his homeland and Elizabeth Cady Stanton made a vow upon her soul to bring justice to women everywhere, they both launched into the transformation of a lifetime. Although his journey was seeded in revelation and hers, absolute betrayal, each would unknowingly move forward, through

the phases of transformation, attain wholeness and in so doing, affect the future of humanity itself. Scholars and individuals alike have reaped many lessons from the lives of Gandhi and Cady Stanton but there is one particularly relevant message here: transformation does not begin and end with an event and furthermore, is not guaranteed.

Regardless of how long it has been since you had a catalytic experience (and don't worry if you can't readily recall one), the chapters that follow shed light upon how your highs and lows will weave together towards your larger purpose. Using real-life accounts of people who have lived through the strains of birthing themselves anew I reveal actions you can take for a successful transformation and point out the junctures at which most people risk sabotaging their opportunities. I begin by defining key concepts and show you how to read the Map to Wholeness so you can transform, become a new you, and realize a state of wholeness: fulfilled, stable, balanced, joyful, and at peace.

Why Learn the Map to Wholeness?

As I walk you through stories of people who have transformed, you will recognize how prominent and seemingly unrelated periods in your own life are actually connected to form a pattern. This pattern, revealed through my research and detailed in the Preface, is made up of 13 specific, sequential phases.

Pictorially, the pathway to becoming whole involves a process that has two distinct, cycles that together, form the shape of an upright infinity symbol, a figure-8. The first cycle is an upward-moving loop that culminates in a life-changing event, a crisis or a peak. The second is a descending integrative curve that climaxes in letting go of old patterns and the emergence of a new identity, relationships, and abilities. The combination of both halves, the *entire infinity movement*, is what produces a complete transformation.

When you read the Map to Wholeness you can determine which of the 13 phases you are in now, which normalizes experiences you have that feel strange, ("It is okay that I do not want to socialize at all") and relieves stress when you feel out of control, ("At least there is a reason for what I am going through. Now I know that this will end"). For example, if you are presently enduring one of the most difficult period of your life you are probably in the *Dismemberment* phase. If you feel restless about a nagging dream that it is ridden with impossibilities, you might be in the *Disorientation* phase. Or if you have recently emerged out of the darkest time of your life and are feeling a sense of relief, you can use the Map to discover that your current phase is

called *Surrender and Healing* and soon, you will transition into a phase when you will realize your wishes.

Like signposts along a road that tell you where you are, how to navigate so you don't get lost, what to expect around the corner, and how far you have left to go, the Map to Wholeness explains a larger reason for your present circumstances. With uncanny precision, you can recognize why you are having the types of delight or sorrow, fortune or misfortune, and fulfillment or lack thereof. When studied closely, my research explains that our lives are far more predictable than we have known.

I hope that the stories and ideas in the pages that follow will help you to feel relieved, clearer, understood, and soothed. Because the journey is internal and often solitary, imagine that I am with you, holding a candle before you as you make your way, encouraging you when you feel you cannot go on, and offering you the intimate words of those who have gone before you as inspiration and guide.