

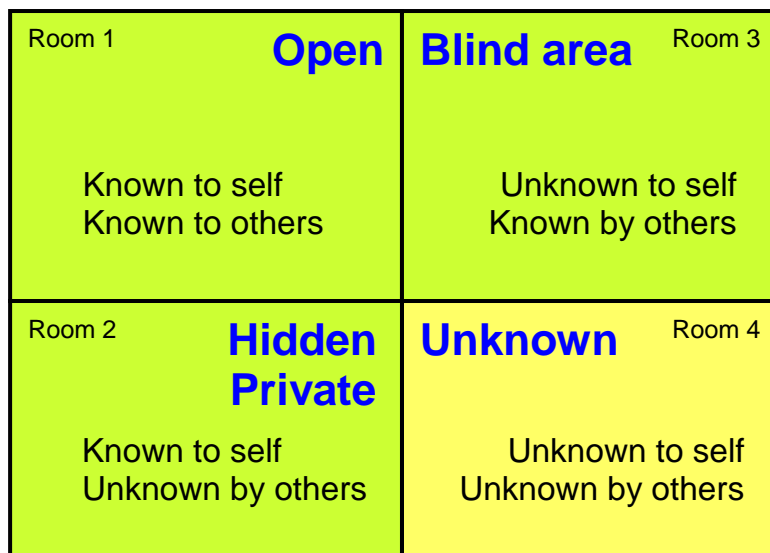


Creating Life Change

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Stimulating a healthy life development is a rewarding achievement. There are many dimensions of life that bring change but the best ways touch into the deep core needs of our being. The good news is the best change comes through the power of God, who loves us and has provided his Spirit to work within us. Trying to bring change is our own ability falls well short of the goals.

Let us understand something of our human makeup. Here are several conceptual ways of doing this. The first is the Johari window concept:



The Johari window describes four areas of our being:

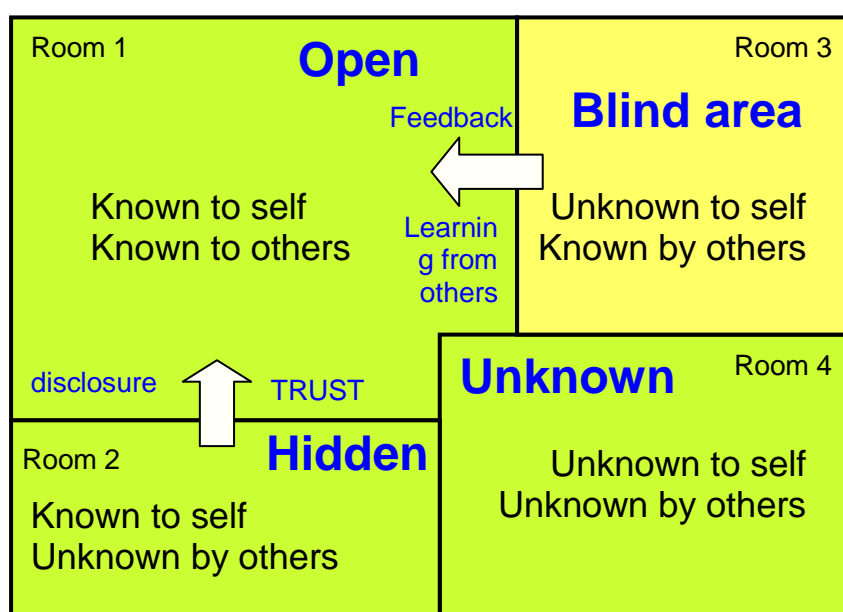
Room 1 is the **open area**, the part where what is seen is obvious and known to ourselves and open to others.

Room 2 is the **private or hidden area**. We keep some aspects of life personal and private. Some is wisely done for privacy and protection. Some may be to create an image or certain reputation. Other aspects are secrets, including shame or uncertainty, where we are fearful of others' reactions to knowing this about us. It may even contain some scheming manipulative intent and hidden agendas.

Room 3 is the **Blind Area** where others can see what we are like but we cannot comprehend. We may deny them when they attempt to show us these corners of our makeup. "You've got me wrong!"

Lastly is the **Unknown area**: aspects of ourselves that we do not recognise and others cannot see. Yet we may see the effects at times when certain 'buttons' are pushed, triggered responses from us that surprise or shock us. In this area are ingrained attitudes or prejudices that we may not consciously recognise. Also suppressed hurts, offences, past traumatic events and other deep emotions that we have buried (suppression can be a useful coping mechanism but meant to be temporary). On the positive side are latent abilities yet to be discovered. It is very important to actively seek to gain understanding of this part of us, for in this area are driving motives for many of our responses. To ignore this area is to severely limit the extent that you can change - but it will continue to affect us.

The normal process of maturing involves some disclosure from your Private area to those you trust and accepting feedback from others about the Blind Area dimensions. The less pleasant ways of having our privacy invaded or being told what we did not want to hear can also be turned to our advantage.



The Bible gives us some understanding about the process of learning about ourselves, including what is contained in Rooms 3&4

"The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out."
Proverbs 20:5 NIV

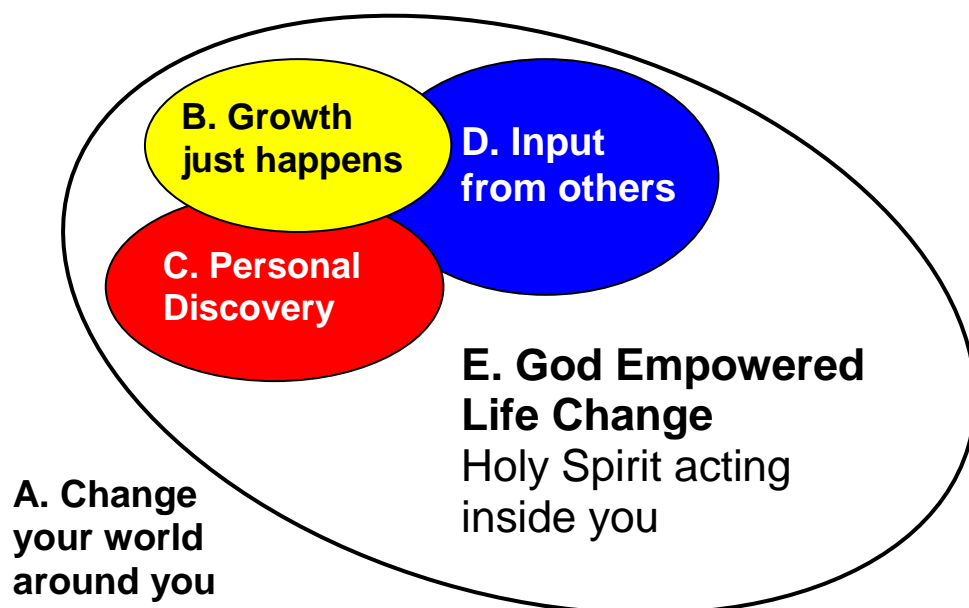
"The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being."
Proverbs 20:27
The lamp is the Holy Spirit

"All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord."
Proverbs 16:2 NIV.
The Message version puts it this way: "Humans are satisfied with whatever looks good; God probes for what is good." Life change involves getting our motives sorted out so good is not just tested for but also created within us.

One of the declarations of God can be applied to this process of knowing ourselves: "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."
Isaiah 42:16.
So, for those things we are blind to in Rooms 3&4, we have God's assistance.

How does life change happen?

Let's try another conceptual diagram

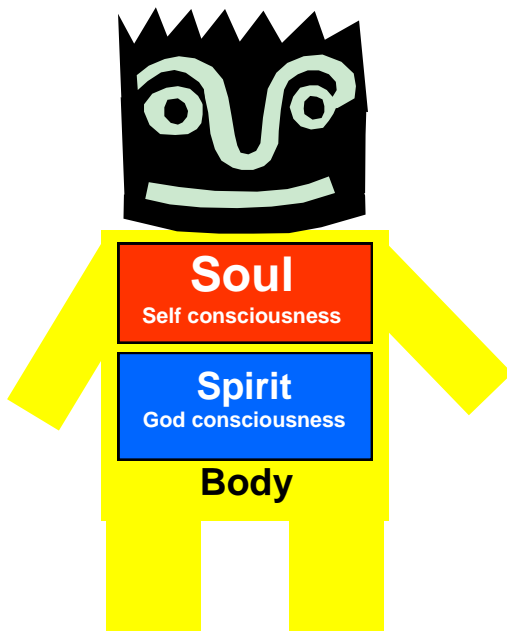


Let's look at these 5 areas:

- A. Change can be made **in the situation around you**. You can change your hairstyle, dress in a new look, buy a new car or house, move somewhere else. You can mix with a different crowd, even ignore certain people. Each can be satisfying and feel good in the change. If they are the attempt to become new, has the real you inside become any different? No, it is just externals changed.
- B. Some growth and change happens as **natural self-development**. No great effort required. Go with the flow. Still, much gain does not happen this way. Time does not fix everything - you just get older and can waste important opportunity.
- C. **Personal discovery**. Seek this intentionally. Learn. Understand yourself better. Become wiser. Try for gain. Add to your strengths. Learn from experiences. What you have worked for is well appreciated.
- D. **Input from others**. Remember from the Johari window you do not see everything about yourself. Use the support, encouragement and affirmation of others. Accept challenge, provocation, correction and advice. Be taught and trained. Seek counselling if needed. Model and copy what is valuable in others you trust.
- E. These first 4 methods can be done by drawing on your inner human strength. The fifth way takes you into a new area. **God wants to place his Spirit deep within you** to release empowered change that you cannot achieve alone. May be only way to achieve change. If you are prepared to accept his loving interest in you and trust him to be Lord over your life, this brings a powerful effect into play.

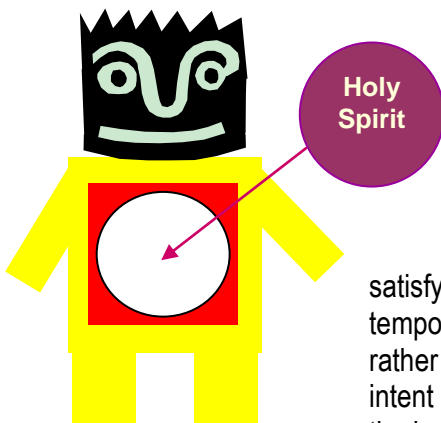
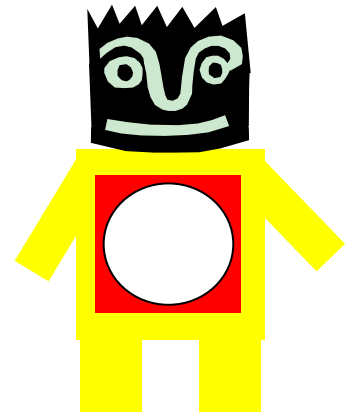
"I pray that out of his glorious richness God will strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ... to grasp how wide ... and deep is the love of Christ, (which you won't fully comprehend) so that you may be filled very full of all the fullness of God." *Ephesians 3:16-19*

Spiritually, we understand we are comprised of 3 sections:



- A. **Our physical body**, with which we connect with our surrounding world
- B. **Our human soul**: consisting of our **mind** (thoughts, intellect, reasoning, attitudes and memories), **emotions** (feelings, reactions) and our **will** (decision making, discipline and perseverance)
- C. **Our spirit** – our God consciousness.

Deep within us is an inner restlessness seeking to be satisfied. **A hole in the soul.** God says this can only be satisfied with a valid relationship with him through Christ. He designed humanity this way. Therefore we cannot bring sufficient life change ourselves without him.



What an awesome heart God has for us!
The inner restlessness can be filled.
By God himself! Through his Holy Spirit
being placed within us.

We may recognize that in the past we may have tried many things to satisfy that deep cry of our being – some giving good effect but always temporary in satisfaction. Most sin is not so much deliberate wrongdoing but rather an attempt to satisfy this inner desire with something other than God's intent for us. No thing, personal achievement or other relationship can truly fill the hole in our soul. Think how you may have tried doing this.

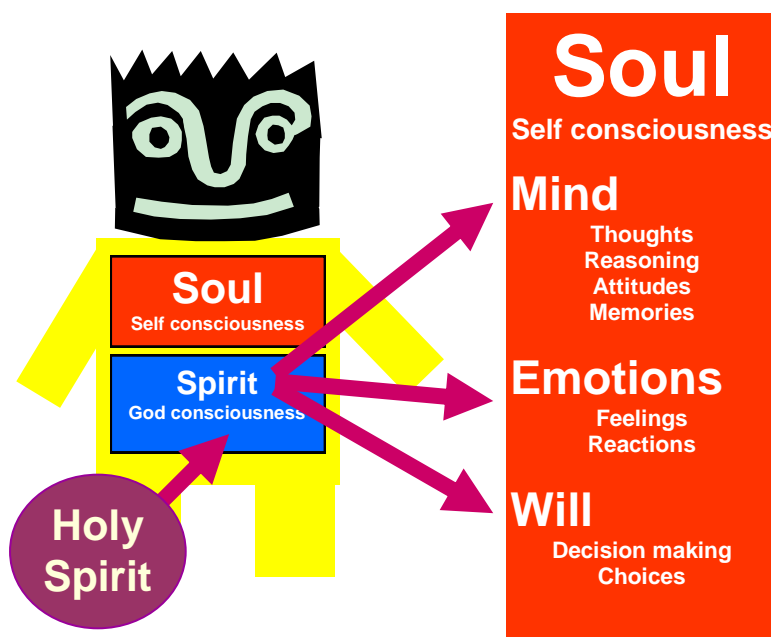
The writer Paul describes his summary of life discovery this way:

“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Philippians 3:7-12 NIV

Let's take in one last diagram to put this together:



As we ask the Spirit of God to fill us, change starts to happen – immediately but not instantly completed. The Spirit works from deep within us in our spirit to bring a new order progressively to our soul. With our cooperation and partnership, he works to rebuild the way we think and reason and comprehend life. He rebuilds our emotional responses so that the old ways of reacting start to change. He brings power to our willpower so we can start to achieve what we could not do ourselves alone.

Beware of teaching that puts all the emphasis on you obeying what you are supposed to do. You cannot be expected to do this all by yourself. From a humanist or from a “Christian” perspective, be real. The real power to change is not found in yourself but given (by asking) freely from the Holy Spirit. Some will tell you all you need to change your life is more teaching and understanding - if you learn more, you will know what to do. There is a limited truth in this. But if this is the answer, the best life change will be achieved by those very intellectual people, and the gospel of Christ will have little power for those less well supplied intellectually. If the answer to life change is through becoming strong and healthy emotionally and relationally, what hope is there for those are behind the 8-ball this way. If life change was just a matter of strongly applied willpower, then those with well developed will power would be the successful ones. But Christ came with good news to everyone including those poor in these soul areas. The gospel is not about self promoters but those who are humble enough to acknowledge they are in need of Christ to touch and meet the emptiness within them and their inability to fix it all.

Paul also wrote in *Philippians 2:12-13 NLT* “Dear friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God’s saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.”

Note how he calls for you to work with careful and determined application but also says God is providing you with the desire (willpower) to live well and also the power to achieve that.

Will you work in partnership with the Spirit of God inside you? It is his delight to see all his intention for your life built solidly within you.

Some final thoughts:

- We cannot run the show ourselves successfully.
- God is more interested in our character development and life growth than just making happy moments.
- The deep love of God is behind the power that changes our lives