



INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

Week 17 Transcript: Process of Change

This week marks the transition into the next module of the program. In Module 1 we've been learning and practicing how to regulate our nervous system for increased resiliency. Module 2 is all about bringing this newly developed resiliency into the realm of relationships.

But first, we are going to take a deeper look at the process of change. There are some key understandings about the change process that help us discern and embrace where we are in that process so we can stay the course and complete what we've begun.

The internal map that guides our steps is changing throughout this program. It's important to recognize that our concept of who we are in relation to our world has gone into a temporary chaos before it breaks down, so a new map can be formed and developed. This can feel stressful, disorienting and often confusing.

Because this internal structure is how we've related to ourselves and everything around us, we feel like we are falling apart and that our world is disintegrating. We may then begin to resist the changes, even though they are the very things we set out to transform. So, it's time to re-orient to our inner map.

This reminds me of the process the butterfly goes through. The following was taken from an article in Scientific American, describing the change process this fascinating creature endures:

"First, the caterpillar digests itself, releasing enzymes to dissolve all of its tissues. If you were to cut open a cocoon or chrysalis at just the right time, caterpillar soup would ooze out. But the contents of the pupa are not entirely an amorphous mess.

*Certain highly organized groups of cells known as **imaginal discs** survive the digestive process. Before hatching, when a caterpillar is still developing inside its egg, it grows an **imaginal disc for each of the adult body parts** it will need as a mature butterfly or moth—discs for its eyes, for its wings, its legs and so on."*



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I imagine some of you may feel like digested caterpillar soup right about now. But, take heart. I love the idea that *"imaginal discs"* survive the digestive process. You will come out of this place still you, but a more mature and whole you that has taken on an entirely new form.

Another way to orient to where we are in the change process is to take a look at the theory of The Four Stages of Competence that was developed at Gordon Training International in the 1970s.

Knowing and understanding these four stages can help us accept that the learning process is often slower, and more uncomfortable, than we would prefer. But, every stage is essential.

It starts with Unconscious Incompetence. In this stage, we're not aware of what we don't know and what needs to change. We're communicating and behaving in ways that are not working for us, but are pretty clueless about it.

We transition next into Conscious Incompetence. In this phase, it's been brought to our attention and we've identified the need for change, and are more aware of when we are reacting in the old ways, but we haven't mastered the new thing yet.

This is the most uncomfortable of the four stages because we are keenly aware of our inability to put the new skill into practice. Which explains why this is when most people give up on learning something new. This is just one stage of the developmental process. You will continue to progress, so hang in there and keep practicing.

Then we move into Conscious Competence. Here we are practicing our new skills, but it takes a lot of thought and focused energy. We have to be very aware and choose to implement new steps as the old way is still deeply engrained and the new way still very new.



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And then, we arrive at Unconscious Competence. This is when we naturally respond in the new way without thinking. We often don't know we've arrived here until we look back and notice, or someone reflects back to us, that we are acting in a different way. We've embodied the skill and do it without too much thought or effort.

Here's an example of the Four Stages of Competence, as it relates to the Pause & Pivot process. I've chosen the example of eating when experiencing stress because this is one of the most common ways we try to regulate our uncomfortable emotions and sensations.

Unconscious Incompetence looks like being unaware of our behavior, and how it correlates to our stress levels, but beginning to notice that our pants are getting tighter and tighter every year.

Conscious Incompetence looks like becoming aware of the link between experiencing stressful emotions and sensations and mindless eating. We won't have gained the new skills yet of making a different choice, but the awareness in the moment will start to give us opportunity to create change.

Conscious Competence looks like noticing, in the moment, that we are experiencing a stress trigger and are mindful of our movement toward food. Even if we are already sitting in the drive-thru, or staring into the pantry, we can access something different.

We notice our behavior and become curious by asking the question, *"what am I feeling that I don't want to feel?"* By shifting where we place our attention, we can put down the bag of chips and go for a walk. We don't do it every single time. But, we will do it more and more.



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Unconscious Competence looks like having a moment when you realize you haven't numbed with food for a few weeks. You don't know how and don't recall making really focused, deliberate choices not to. You just did it. And, you notice your pants feel a bit looser, as well.

What stage are you in? Let's explore that together this week on our group page and through the action guide.

If you recall, one of the first things we talked about in this program is the fact that change is experience dependent. Allow for this new way of being to form. Choose to stay with it and you will create the change you are hoping for.