



# ThinkWell

## Embrace Change Realise Potential

### **Embrace Change & Realise your Potential**

Embrace the change. The bad news is nothing lasts forever. The good news is nothing lasts forever. Quote by J. Cole.

If stuck in habits that are not working for us, we should remember that change is not just possible, but inevitable. Since the universe is undergoing continuous creation, the only guarantee, no matter how hard we might try to keep things the same, is that all will change.

Everything changes. Nothing can remain the same. Our bodies, our minds, our emotions, beliefs and the world around us are constantly developing and evolving. This is the true nature of the universe and everything in it. Even Mount Everest, the highest peak of the Himalayan mountain range, was once at the bottom of the ocean. Now it rises to astounding heights.

Accepting our own value, potential and evolving nature removes many of the blocks and chains that hold us back from doing what we want to do and living how we want to live. We can then focus our attention and energy on what we really want to achieve unhindered. If the earth at your feet can rise from the bottom of the ocean to the spectacular heights of the Himalayas, what change is possible for us? Realizing our potential.

One of the most defining traits of humankind is the potential we all possess. We are extremely adaptive creatures and can develop and learn throughout our lives. We've been doing this through our written history and long before.

We create clothing to tolerate extreme temperatures, build shelters for protection, modify the land around us to produce food through farming, and we create all manner of machinery and technology. If you look around you right now, you will see items that were engineered and constructed via human ingenuity and labor. Hence,

due to our natural ability to adapt, we find ourselves living all over the planet in many environments that were never suited to us in our original natural state.

Simply put, we can succeed almost anywhere if we just put our minds to it and roll up our sleeves. Genetic potential. Our potential is not limited to what we can build or create individually or collectively, although that is very impressive.

Potential is built into us, hardwired into our anatomy and physiology. Potentiality is innate in the cells that make up our bodies and has only recently been seen and understood in a process known as gene expression. Our genetic code or genes are like a blueprint and instruction manual that control the development and function of the cells in our bodies.

DNA gives the order that tells each cell what type of cell it is to become and what it must do. The information and orders from our genes make us what we are and cause us to operate the way we do. Our DNA code decides if we will be tall or small, soft, muscular or lean, blonde-haired or brown-eyed.

Interestingly, the complete manual for the entire body is present in almost every cell, but only the necessary instructions for that specific cell are switched on. This explains why, under normal circumstances, a hair cell doesn't become a muscle or a nerve cell and why we don't grow skin where we need bones or blood. The important part for us about switching on or off genes when discussing potentiality is that while many of our genes are unchangeable within our lifetime, others can be switched on or off by our environment, lifestyle choices and our thought patterns.

The study of epigenetics tells us that where we are, what we do and how we think can affect change in us from the inside out. That's fantastic news because it means that we're not simply genetically determined or born to be a certain way. Certainly we are genetically predisposed or more likely to have some traits, but we also have some real control over what we become.

Where there is choice, there is power and we have lots of choice. It has also been found that some of the genetic changes made in the body because of its current needs will be passed on to offspring. This suggests that if we start teaching our bodies to be healthier at an early age, we can pass on healthier genes to our children. If we have kids already, that isn't an option, but they will see our healthy habits as a normal way of life and hopefully make healthy living a part of theirs. Your effort to improve your health now can positively affect your future children and grandchildren. Think of it as a long-term investment.

Even if you're not ready to take care of yourself for your own sake, do it for your kids. Brain potential. Another example of human potentiality comes from the study of neuroplasticity. This is the brain's ability to change and develop. It was once thought that our brains developed as children and adolescents, only to lose brain cells as we got older. It turns out that our brains can develop and change at any age, again according to our needs.

Our regular behaviour is a key trigger for this brain development. How we use our brains most often directs this change. The brain can be trained to improve at different activities just like the body can through exercise.

That means you can teach an old dog new tricks. When we use specific sections of our brain more, they grow and become stronger and more efficient. If we choose to develop creativity, music skills, languages, mathematics, positivity, etc., the brain will start to change as soon as we do. It's never too late to begin training our brains to do what we want. What that all means is that, to a large degree, we can write or reprogram ourselves. This, of course, has the knock-on effect of rewriting the story of our lives.

Writing our own life story is possible if we want it to be. We're already doing it in a way each day, only our outcomes may be less than ideal if we're doing it unconsciously and without positive intent. We might currently be scribbling and doodling aimlessly instead of consciously writing the lines we want to be part of our story. We may even be writing bad scripts because we've assigned ourselves unhealthy roles and believe that's all we can be or do. What could we do if we were more mindful and purposeful in our actions? What if we chose our roles instead? Proof of the pudding. Masses of information on epigenetics and neuroplasticity can be found online should you want more details on the research that's ongoing in those areas.

Nonetheless, we all like a personal recommendation that tells us I have used this and yes, it works. I have indeed used them myself and I've seen the results firsthand. Lifestyle changes have allowed me to transform from being an unhealthy, overweight kid with a fondness for sweets who got easily out of breath.

I became a fitter, far more energetic individual, helping me achieve national sporting success. I still have a sweet tooth but it's on my terms. I changed from thinking I was done with education at 16, believing I was stupid after achieving a very average leaving search result, to putting myself through college twice and developing an insatiable appetite for knowledge.

I shifted from having no career expectations beyond working on a factory line at 17 to starting my own business at 25 and paving the way for a career in health and wellness along the way. Openness to self-development allowed my mindset to shift from wanting to change everything about myself. I didn't want curly hair, freckles, sticky out ears, glasses or big lips.

With work, I became confidently comfortable with who I am. I went from having low self-esteem to a genuine self-belief and an attitude of, if somebody else can do it, why not me? I also moved from believing that my place in this world was fixed and quite limited to accepting that I have a world at my feet. This in turn led to traveling to some of the most beautiful, interesting and amazing places on the planet. A new way of thinking taught me to identify fears or doubts so I could limit their power and effect, instead looking at them as challenges and opportunities that would help me to grow

wiser and stronger. It aided me in letting go of a judgmental attitude where I looked at much of life as black or white, right or wrong, instead becoming far more open-minded and accepting of how things are. A clearer perspective taught me to trust that life happens for us, not to us, even if I don't fully understand what's happening in the moment. I don't need to worry so much about the future, instead looking forward to whatever it brings. Change can indeed be difficult. I've certainly struggled to let go of old habits at times through fear of the unknown.

Although it took effort, these changes were far easier than remaining as I was. I'm now doing things that I thought would be impossible for me, such as writing books, illustrating, singing, songwriting, performing, traveling, coaching and running my own company. The biggest plus is that none of these take away from my most important jobs, that of being an involved and active parent to my children, maintaining friendships and running a home.

It was possible to incorporate many positive life changes while still living a normal life. We don't have to become monks to meditate, Olympic athletes to exercise, nutritionists or chefs to eat well, starving artists to develop our creativity or quit our jobs to travel the world. These can all fit into a normal life with some simple modifications. I've learned that change can be very good for us and that we can enjoy being open to all the possibilities the future will bring. There's always more to learn, do and experience. But where I am now is so much better than where I used to be.

We're made of the same stuff, you and I. So if I can get to that place, so can you.