



Selected Papers of William L. White

www.williamwhitepapers.com

Collected papers, interviews, video presentations, photos, and archival documents on the history of addiction treatment and recovery in America.

Citation: White, W. (2009). Transformational change checklist. Posted at www.williamwhitepapers.com

Transformational Change Checklist

William L. White

Emeritus Senior Research Consultant
Chestnut Health Systems
bwhite@chestnut.org

For some people, the transition from addiction and recovery occurs in a moment—a powerful experience that forever separates past and present. Scientists who have studied these religious and non-religious recovery conversion experiences refer to this style of recovery as transformational change or quantum change. Such experiences can be so powerful that one is sometimes left disoriented and questioning one's own sanity. The checklist below contains elements that many people note as part of their transformational change experiences. The list may help you understand the legitimacy and value of your experience.

___ My experience was preceded by a period of emotional unrest.

___ My experience occurred during or immediately following a period of social isolation.

___ Immediately before or during the experience, I encountered a powerful message/messenger.

___ I experienced new insights that seem to come from deep within me.

___ I experienced something over which I had no control.

___ What I experienced was sudden, unplanned and unanticipated.

___ The experience was extremely intense, and I felt like a new person afterwards.

___ The experience was accompanied by strange physical and/or emotional experiences unlike any I have had before—voices, visions, profound sensory awareness, new ideas, a deep sense of love and acceptance, a deep connection to others and/or a sense of release and freedom.

___ I experienced the presence of a spiritual being.

___ During or immediately after the experience, I feared I might be “going crazy.”

___ The after-effects of the experience have been positive.

___ The experience seems to have left a lasting, permanent effect on me.

___ After the experience, my appetite for alcohol and drugs was diminished or taken away completely.

___ The experience changed who I am as a person.

If you have experienced many of the items above, you may well have had an experience of transformation change that is positive and potentially permanent. In 1934, an alcoholic hospitalized for his fourth treatment had such an experience. His name was Bill Wilson—the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. Since then, millions of individuals have found sobriety and serenity in AA and other Twelve Step fellowships.

References

- Miller, W. R., & C'de Baca, J. (2001). *Quantum change*. New York: Guilford.
- White, W. (2004). Transformational change: A historical review. *IN SESSION: Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 60(5), 461-470.
- White, W. & Whitters, D. (2005). Faith-based recovery: It's historical roots. *Counselor*. 6(5), 58-62.