

Chapter 1:
Tools for Transformation

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What do you need in order to heal from a broken bone?

- To be still

What does the prairie need in order to replenish itself?

- Fire to burn

What does a seed need in order to root, become a tree?

- Good dirt

So sometimes it's ok to be completely still?

- Yes

I can use the fire that burns me sometimes?

- Yes. How will you use it?

I can use the dark?

- Yes. What will you do with it?

I am full of useful things?

- Yes. It's a matter of how you view all that you have.

But I have so many needs!

- What does needing teach you?

But I am selfish-

- Maybe you need to learn how to give to yourself.

But I am empty-

- Maybe it's time to plant something in the empty place in you.

So, there's nothing in me, nothing I have experienced in my life that is a total waste?

- There is nothing wasted in a transformed life.

Transformation Symbols

When we talk about transformation and recovery, what do we mean? Perhaps talking about transformation is a way to talk about who we were, and how we have changed as well as who we hope to become. Recovery is often about finding new purpose and meaning in our lives despite events that have already taken place. Transformation is about finding some raw material in past experience that I can use in building the life and personhood I want for myself today. Transformation is about moving toward the life I want to live.

It is important to symbolize what we want our lives to be so that during the rough times our symbols can remind us that we're still on the journey, and *nothing is wasted in a transformed life!*

1. What would you say symbolized you at your darkest time?
2. Is there something that symbolizes who you are becoming or what you want your life to be?

Ask yourself: What image can I keep in front of me that will be a constant reminder of who I am becoming?

Some people think of a bird egg that hatches into a young fledgling. Others speak of the acorn that will become the great oak. Draw or cut out a picture of your symbol of transformation that means the most to you. Enter it on the following page. You may even want to carve, or sculpt, an object that you can touch, or carry with you.



This symbol represents who I am becoming:



WE are the stuff of our own Transformation.

The process of personal transformation begins in the place of our greatest loss, our deepest grief, our most abject fear. It is rooted in the place of what we thought was utter uselessness, despair, and total waste. But we affirm that we have always carried in us and still possess who we are intended to be and what our lives are intended for. Transformation is the natural progression of becoming; becoming never ends. It begins the moment we choose to engage in creating and re-creating the lives we want to live in relationship to one's self, others and to one's spirit. There need not be room for regret in our transformed lives.

We believe in personal transformation. Transformation is what comes about when we use all that we are right now, and the totality of our experiences. Transformation is what happens when we come together to create intentional relationships of healing and hope.

Healing in a community of our peers takes place when each of us is trustworthy – creating a sense of safety in relationship to one another; when we use our voice in the knowledge that each voice will be heard; when we create choice for one another through non-coercion – living the truth that each person is the expert of his or her own experience; and finally, when we support each other in courageous action through each person's personal power.

Beth Filson, 2005 – I Have a Story to Tell: A Trauma-Specific Training for Peer Providers