



STEP-BY-STEP PLAN FOR A TRANSFORMED LIFE

We all have areas in our lives that we'd like to see change.

We cannot sit back and wait to be happy and healthy and have a great life; we have to decide to make it happen.

Everything we do and say starts as a thought. **Romans 12:2** tells us that **we can actually be transformed** into a new person by changing the way we think.

Most people think habits form over 21 days but that's incorrect. According to neuroscientist Dr. Caroline Leaf's research, **habits form in a minimum of 63 days. Three cycles of 21 days.**

By spending **7 minutes a day** (1-2 minutes each step) in a focused way will help to break things down. Replace negative thinking by focusing your attention on health replacement thoughts based on the Word of God.

Renewing the mind is a lifestyle, not a one-time activity, so this *Spiritual Growth Email Series* is meant to be repeated all throughout the year.

Start by tackling one negative thought that you want to change. Each day, you will work on breaking down the negative thought, while at the same time building up your faith by growing in the Word.

John 16:13 says that He will guide us into all truth, so let the Holy Spirit show you which area to work on first.

Please see the "Five Step Plan" and advice from Dr. Caroline Leaf.

1 GATHER

Become aware of your environment and your thoughts.

GATHER. This step is about increasing your awareness of your external environment and what you're allowing to enter into your brain through your five senses. It also allows you to recognize the internal environment of your mind, and what's coming out from the inside (i.e. your attitude).

HOW TO DO IT:

Ask yourself the following questions:



What am I experiencing through my five senses right now?



What thoughts are bubbling up in my mind?



What feelings do those thoughts generate in both my body and mind? (peace, worry, tense muscles, comfort, stress, heart pounding, adrenaline rush, etc.)



Do I feel dominated by the feelings that have risen from these thoughts? Do they make me feel like a victim or a victor?



Do I want these feelings and thoughts to be a permanent part of me?



When you identify the negative thought, immediately and prayerfully think of the replacement thought. (i.e. a scripture that applies to the situation)

2 REFLECT

Go deep with your thinking.

FOCUSED REFLECTION. This step is about catching your thoughts and entering into directed rest and disciplined thinking. You can choose to accept or reject any thought that comes to you. Healthy and toxic thoughts are both built by rehearsing them in your mind. The deeper you think, the more you change the landscape of your brain. This deep intellectual process can help you come up with your own

HOW TO DO IT:

- Specifically focus on one thought.

- Control your attention and prevent chaotic thoughts from moving through your mind.

- Be aware of your body, emotions, and sense of self as you do this.

- Integrate healthy thoughts by reflecting on the positive, not just dwelling on the negative.

- Mentally rehearse the positive thought in your mind. It becomes stronger each time you do.

KEEP GOING >>
to steps 3-5

3 WRITE

Put your brain on paper.

WRITE. Writing consolidates your thoughts and adds clarity to what you've been thinking about. It helps you to visualize the area that needs to be detoxed.

HOW TO DO IT:



Keep a thought journal.



Pour out the impressions in your mind on the page. Don't worry about sorting them out.



Be creative with it. Don't just limit yourself to writing in straight lines. Draw pictures or diagrams. Group words together. Add color and texture.



Add more information by writing out the positive alongside the negative.

4 REVISIT

Create the change you want.

REVISIT. This is an exciting, progressive, "moving forward" step that allows you to evaluate where you have been and where you are going. This is where you will redesign, reorganize, and recreate the specific thought you have been working on.

HOW TO DO IT:



Look at how you have been dealing with your circumstances. Think through your reactions again. Are there areas that are still negative? What is a possible solution? How can you reorganize or redesign those thoughts to get where you want to be?



Visualize what you want the end result to be.



Don't try to get there all at once. Take it one day at a time.

5 REACH

Do something.

ACTIVE REACH. This step requires you to reach beyond where you Currently are. It allows you to practice the new healthy thought until it becomes automatic, like a good habit. It helps you line up your thoughts with your actions and the words coming out of your mouth. This is the most challenging and fun part of the plan because it includes exercises that you will do throughout the day. You decide what the exercises are. answers.

HOW TO DO IT:



Find an **action** (something you will say and/or do) that will help reinforce the healthy thought you have been working on to replace the toxic thought.



It's always helpful to **quote a verse** of scripture that applies to your situation.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- If you are trying to replace a negative thought of regret, you might choose to say, "I am putting this behind me," and visualize the situation disappearing in a puff of smoke. Then finish by quoting a verse that applies.
- If you keep trying to change the past by replaying scenarios in your head, you might choose to say, "I am switching off that movie," and act as if you're doing it. Then finish by quoting a verse that applies.
- Other exercises might include simply smiling or laughing out loud, sitting up straight while visualizing yourself confident and strong, or reaching out your arms while imagining yourself receiving specific healing or provision from God.

TURNING POINTS:

Many people tend to quit by Day 4 or 5 and the healthy thought they have been working on is forgotten. **Resist the temptation to give up!** Keep going! You're worth it!

Peak changes are happening by Days 7 and 14. The repetition is causing your new healthy thought to become a long term memory.

By Day 21, you have begun to integrate your new healthy thought into your lifestyle. **By repeating the 21 Day cycle two or three more times**, your healthy thought will become a healthy habit and prevent the negative thought from coming back.