There are many different catalysts for transformation. People have found doorways into the transformative process through experiences of pain, loss, and illness as well as through ecstatic and mystical experiences and communion with the natural world. Although extraordinary transformative experiences can be profound, transformation can also be found in the course of ordinary, mundane everyday experience. Not all extraordinary experiences lead to lasting worldview changes, but many act as catalysts along the way. Consider your insights about transformation through the exercise of Integrating Transformative Experience.

Preparing the Soil for Growth
Just as soil can be prepared for cultivating a beautiful garden, transformation of consciousness can be cultivated and nurtured. By fostering curiosity, creativity, and introspection in your life, you can open yourself up to expanded dimensions of your being. These are ways of being that increase the transformative potential of your experience. Once you’ve prepared the soil and the seed of transformation has been planted, you begin the growth cycle. The exercise, Preparing the Soil, will help you clarify your intentions for transformation.

Paths and Practices
By harnessing the inner resources that shape your interpretation of life events – through the four essentials of intention, attention, repetition, and guidance - you can begin to build new ways of responding to your everyday experience (A Path to Transformative Practice). As your inner experience calls on you to grow and change, you begin to change your outer realities, such as building positive social networks and avoiding situations that cause you undue stress. Through disciplined practice, you can develop new habits and develop more adaptive traits that will help you flourish even in difficult circumstances.

Why Practice?
Many transformative practices help you cultivate insight: seeing your situation and the true nature of things more clearly. Secondly, such practices can return the ego back to its appropriate role as a useful tool for navigating daily life, but as only one aspect of your inner life. Practice can make room for other aspects of your being – creativity, intuition, surprise, emotion, physicality, etc. as sources of inspiration and motivation. You learn to ride the ego; it serves you rather than you serving it. Thirdly. As you become more aware of your authentic self, you learn to clear away what is out of alignment of that self, and fourth, moving out of the past to living in the present moment of acceptance and empowerment. Fifth, finding the balance between courage, determination, discipline and choice on the one hand, and letting go, acceptance, surrendering to the mystery of transformation on the other.

Everything is Sacred
Their research shows that through the transformative process personal identity and one’s circle of concern expand to include other people, future generations, and ultimately all of nature and living in a sustainable manner. Transpersonal psychiatrist Stan Grof has said: “In this worldview, the divine is expressing its endless creativity by moving from the original undifferentiated state of oneness into plurality, into the worlds of immense diversity. In deep self-exploration, we can become aware of the deep unity underlying all of creation. This brings with it a compassion for all sentient beings and an increase of tolerance.”

The Transformative Process: Take-Home Messages
- Notice catalysts, windows of opportunity, and moments with transformative potential, large and small.
- Recognize what you can – and do- bring to the table.
- Discern what is right and true for you, based on your subjective experience & observations.
- Practice holding intention, cultivating attention, repeating life-enhancing actions, and seeking internal and external guidance.
- Integrate your transformative practice into your life.
- Expand your practice and your transformation beyond the personal.
- Connect with the Mystery, the sacred Ground of All Being.
- Live deeply, in every way that you can.