**Transformation - Stories, Illustrations, & Funnies**

**The image of “turning lead into gold” comes from the medieval science of alchemy in which practitioners strove to turn the base metal of lead into gold – the most precious of metals. The phrase was also used as a metaphor for the process of psychological transformation. *(Douglas Bloch, in New Thought magazine)***

**In the oceans, photosynthesis is carried on mainly by algae. Long before anything could live out of water, these plant dynamos did most of the work of changing the earth's atmosphere from poisonous gases to breathable air -- a process which probably took some 2 1/2 billion years. Today, tiny algae called diatoms carry on the bulk of aquatic photosynthesis. (Rutherford Platt, in The Living World of Nature, p. 235)**

**The word “amphibian” is Greek for “double life.” This name is appropriate because all amphibians start out as water-breathing creatures similar to fish. Then, as they mature, most amphibians go through a process called “metamorphosis” which transforms them into air-breathing land animals. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**Gazelles, prairie dogs, wild asses, and many other animals never drink water. They have a special chemical process which transforms a part of their solid food into water. *(Denver P. Tarle, A Treasury of Trivia, p. 111)***

**In the Irish uprising of 1848, the men were captured, tried and convicted of treason against Her Majesty, Queen Victoria. All were sentenced to death. Passionate protest from all over the world persuaded the Queen to commute the death sentences. The men were banished to Australia -- as remote and full of prisoners as Russian Siberia. Years passed. In 1874 Queen Victoria learned that a Sir Charles Duffy who had been elected Prime Minister of Australia was the same Charles Duffy who had been banished 26 years earlier. She asked what had become of the other eight convicts. She learned that: Patrick Donahue became a Brigadier General in the United States Army. Morris Lyene became Attorney General for Australia. Michael Ireland succeeded Lyene as Attorney General. Thomas McGee became Minister of Agriculture for Canada. Terrence McManus became a Brigadier General in the United States Army. Thomas Meagher was elected Governor of Montana. John Mitchell became a prominent New York politician and his son, John Purroy Mitchell, a famous Mayor of New York City. Richard O'Gorman became Governor of Newfoundland. (Johnny Rocco, in Abundant Living magazine)**

**Biochemists haven’t yet come up with lab bacteria powerful enough to eat big oil spills, insofar as I know. But they say their research has produced a dandy product to open clogged drains, a good septic tank treatment and a high-tech remover of pet stains from your carpets. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Mining companies use microbes to recover metals such as gold, copper, and uranium. Now research suggests bacteria could be enlisted for “bio-mining” in space, to extract oxygen, nutrients and minerals from the moon and Mars for use by future colonists. More than a quarter of the world’s copper is harvested from ores using microorganisms, which separate the desired material from the rock to which it is chemically bound. (Charles Q. Choi, in Scientific American)**

**In 1909, a man named Charles Hercules Ebbets began secretly buying up adjacent parcels of land in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, including the site of a garbage dump called Pigtown because of the pigs that once ate their fill there and the stench that still filled the air. He hoped eventually to build a permanent home for the lackluster baseball team he had once worked for and now owned. The team was called the Trolley Dodgers, or just the Dodgers, after the way their devoted fans negotiated Brooklyn's busy streets. In 1912, construction began. By the time it was completed a year later, Pigtown had been transformed into Ebbets Field--baseball's newest shrine, where some of the game's greatest drama would take place. *(Geoffrey C. Ward & Ken Burns, in Baseball)***

**Many museums that feature the bones of animals in their displays have a resident colony of dermestid beetles, which are used to clean carcasses completely, leaving only the clean skeletons. It takes the beetles about a week to polish off a large animal, and overnight for a small rodent or bat. *(Barbara Seuling)***

**Building on Success: What Was on the Land Before:**

**1. UN Building – slaughterhouses, cattle pens on the land.**

**2. Walt Disney World – cow pasture**

**3. Westminster Cathedral – prison and fairground**

**4. Boston Common – cow pasture**

**5. Greenwich Village – marshland**

**6. Rockefeller Center – botanical garden. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Dolly says to Billy: “Butterflies are new-and-improved caterpillars."  
*(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**How many cities were built from scratch to be national capitals? Start with Washington, D.C. And Australia’s Canberra, Brazil’s Brazilia and Pakistan’s Islamabad.  *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Carbon is one of the most abundant elements in the universe. It is found in nearly all of the chemical compounds known to man. Pure carbon is found in several different forms. A crystallized form of carbon is sometimes created many miles below the surface of the earth. There the carbon atoms are subjected to immense heat and pressure, transforming this rather abundant element into one of the rarest and most beautiful objects known to man, a diamond. (*Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**Canadian scientists have managed to transform human skin cells directly into blood cells – the first time one kind of human cell has been converted into another, says the Los Angeles Times. Converting one cell type into another has typically required “rewinding” it to first become a stem cell before turning it into the second cell type. That method is complex and risky, because stem cells can go awry and become cancer cells. The Canadian team skipped that step by tweaking a single gene in the skin cells, then bathing them in growth factors; the cells were transformed into the three types of blood cells – red, white, and platelets. If the method can be perfected and improved, it will revolutionize medicine – providing limitless supplies of blood and healthy blood cells to leukemia patients. “Since this source would come from a patient’s own skin, there would be no concern of rejection of the transplanted cells,” team leader Mick Bhatia, a stem-cell expert at McMaster University, tells the Los Angeles Times. British regenerative-medicine specialist Ian Wilmut, who was not involved in the study, said the breakthrough is “a step along the line to believing that you can produce anything from almost anything.” *(The Week magazine, November 26, 2010)***

**What’s now known as New York City’s Central Park, that zillion-dollar real estate, once was rocky ground or smelly swamp. Money folk wanted to get rid of the squatters who’d put up shacks there. That’s why they donated so much land. They had no idea what they were giving away. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**If we would all declare that our cities are free from crime, knowing that the presence and the power of God is greater than anything that can happen in the outer, and that the spirit of love is a strong force bringing good instead of evil, our cities would be transformed and transmuted.    
*(Grace L. Faus, in Aspire magazine)***

**Mary Bethune Cookman, a black woman with no financial resources, saw the inequity of the educational system and started a college on the only land available to her, on the city dump. Today, Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach stands as a living testimony to this woman’s faith. She believed that one needs to do only what is possible now.  *(Phil Barnhart, in Seasonings for Sermons, p. 68)***

**A comet spends most of its time as a frozen ball drifting through space. While in this state, a comet is dark and lifeless, just like a regular asteroid. When the comet approaches the sun, an amazing thing happens. It begins to blast jets of gas and dust, creating a glowing mass that can stretch for hundreds of thousands of kilometers. This amazing transformation makes the comet one of the most impressive objects found in our solar system. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**That glittering diamond the missus is wearing on her finger was once a hunk of soft coal. Somewhere in ages past it underwent a temperature change of at least 5,000 degrees and submitted to pressure of over a million pounds per square inch.  *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 176)*  
International Hearing Dog Inc. selects dogs from shelters, trains them to assist the hearing-impaired and places them, at no cost, with people who need them. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**The Earth absorbs sunlight and then releases it into the air again as heat. The heat is trapped by water vapor and clouds in the atmosphere and reflected back to Earth. The atmosphere acts like an enormous blanket around the Earth, keeping in the warmth. *(The Usborne Book of Facts & Lists, p. 100)***

**Irving Berlin’s song “Easter Parade” was originally titled “Smile and Show Your Dimples” – which was a flop. Berlin then put “Easter Parade” words to the melody and it became a hit. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 85)***

**Farmers from the Canadian Prairies to the front range of the Colorado Rockies are emerging from one of the worst droughts in a century. Ample snowmelt and regular spring rains have transformed scorched farmland into verdant fields that are knee-high in grass and grain. “Everything is bright green,” said Jay Fenton from his farm near Irma, Alberta. “It is so green it would just about hurt your eyes.” A bountiful harvest this season is expected to help farmers across the region recover from two years of parched conditions that kept many from harvesting anything. *(Rocky Mountain News, June 23, 2003)***

**By all accounts, his career at Maine Township High School in Des Plaines, Illinois, was remarkable only in its mediocrity. Known as Harry--if he was known at all -- the shy student never rose above a C average. And while his peers found glory as football stars or student government officers, Harry toiled in obscurity, wheeling projectors from room to room as an audiovisual assistant. Such a nonentity was Harry that one classmate. Ernest Ricketts, recalls, “A girl I knew accepted a date with him and then decided, ‘Nope, can't do it. Too much of a geek.’” Call it a case of late blooming--or just plain Revenge of the Nerd. As fate would have it, Harry -- after dropping out of college and several years spent hammering away as a carpenter--evolved into sexy- box-office swashbuckler Harrison Ford. *(People Magazine)***

**There is a small, cranberry-like fruit that, when chewed, afterward makes any sour food taste sweet. This taste bud-altering effect lasts fifteen to thirty minutes. Known as “miracle fruit,” these West African fruits make lemons taste like candy and oranges disgustingly sweet. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 174)***

**Gardening can become a spiritual exercise, teaching us discernment as we eliminate the weeds from our lives, giving what we value room to grow. *(Diane Dreher, professor of English, Santa Clara University, avid gardener and author of Inner Gardening)***

**Researchers have made the startling discovery that some chemical messages sent by genes are changed before they arrive at their destinations, a finding that challenges a central tenet of genetics. “It’s an absolutely astounding concept,” says Olke Uhlenbeck of the University of Colorado-Boulder, a biochemist familiar with the research. “Nobody has the foggiest idea how it works.” The phenomenon is called “RNA editing.” The first evidence for RNA editing was found in 1986 in a group of parasites called trypanosomes, and it since has been found in several other life forms. Researchers do not yet know how widespread RNA editing is or why it evolved, but it appears to be a normal part of the functioning of some genes. In trypanosomes, for example, researchers found that certain genes were missing crucial elements. Yet the elements were present in the genetic messenger chemicals associated with those genes, apparently restored through RNA editing. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**At the Newmont Mining Corporation’s Gold Quarry Pit in Nevada, miners work in an open pit 1000 feet deep and almost a mile and a half long, scooping up tons of ore. Then the world’s smallest miners take over. Called Thiobacillus ferrooxidans, these bacteria eat the sulfide minerals like pyrite that often bond to gold. After the bugs have had their meal, the gold is processed by conventional means. *(Joseph A. Harriss, in Reader’s Digest)***

**If your local landfill is spoiling the landscape, consider the Japanese solution -- a $41-million public golf course built on 18 million tons of garbage. Course manager Kuniyoshi Watanabe points out that such a foundation is potentially explosive since rotting refuse produces methane gas.  So to prevent the fairways from blowing up, the 18-hole course is dotted with 74 vent pipes that allow the gas to escape. As a result, players with sharp noses might be put off by the smells wafting from the garbage. Smoking is banned, because a cigarette lighter could set the gas aflame. But these detractions haven’t stopped the golf-mad Japanese from jamming the new course. The $110 to $140 green fees are still a lot less than membership at many private clubs, and the course is booked solid a month in advance. *(Carla Rapoport, in Fortune)***

**To make the drink called Postum, Charlie Post removed the bran from the wheat. Then to make use of the bran, he invented Grape-Nuts. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The fine hair in the ears of slaughtered cattle usually wind up in artists’ brushes labeled “camel’s hair.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**In his book Life Changes, James C. Hefley tells the story about Joseph Craik, a Scot, living in a small Scottish village. Years ago he became known all over Scotland as “the man who turns inkblots into angels.” Joseph Craik was a talented and creative penman and artist. He was teaching in a small village school. Often his young pupils left inkblots on their pages. Instead of chastising the students, or circling the inkblots in graphic red and taking away points for sloppy penmanship, Joseph Craik did something quite different and delightful. Beginning with the blots made by the children, he would add a line here and another line there, and out of the inkblots would appear pictures of angels! When the papers were returned to the students, instead of criticism, they were wonderfully decorated with exquisite angels. The children were delighted, and encouraged. And Joseph Craik became a legend in his own time, known far and wide as the man who turned inkblots into angels. (Delia Sellers, in Abundant Living)**

**The invisible multitudes are the waterwheel of life. By digesting raw elements, they lift them to a higher level of energy, so they can be used, as vitamins and enzymes, by higher forms of life. *(Rutherford Platt, in The Living World of Nature, p. 129)***

**The Jack Pine was once a “weed.” It was not only too small to use for lumber, but a substance within its cellular structure prevented its use for pulp in the manufacture of paper. Jack Pine was considered a “tree weed,” with little present value and none foreseeable. Millions of acres of Jack Pine were considered waste land -- an area larger than the State of Connecticut. But men of a paper company in Michigan believed “that a weed is merely a plant for which man has not yet found a use.” They did what others considered impossible. They found an economical way to remove the substance contained in Jack Pine’s cellular structure which had prevented its use for paper pulp. As a result, this firm is now making a beautiful, high-quality paper out of Jack Pine -- employing many thousands in this work. Those who claimed nothing from Jack Pine -- received nothing. Those who planted their seeds, believing in their own success -- reaped the harvest. *(Jon Speller, in Seed Money in Action, p. 24)***

**The fountain of youth starts in the kitchen. The kitchen is the heart of your home and at the center of your health. I believe that you can transform your life and your health with what you eat. *(Dr. John La Puma, author of ChefMD’s The Big Book of Culinary Medicine: A Food Lover’s Road Map to Losing Wight, Preventing Disease, and Getting Really Healthy)***

**Gioacchino Rossini -- perhaps ridiculing composers who would excuse their lack of creativity because of the lack of suitable subjects -- declared: “Give me a laundry list and I’ll set it to music.” *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts)***

**The rain forests of Washington State’s Olympic Peninsula are unbelievably lush and green. No matter where one looks, there is green, there is life. Hanging masses trail down gracefully from the tree branches. A common sight in the rain forest is that of “nurse logs.” These are fallen trees that have decayed on the ground and become rich food for new life. If one looks closely at a row of ferns or small trees, it is easy to see the fallen log that nourishes their life. Here we are given a picture of the glory of God’s redeeming work. *(Eunice Graham, in Portals of Prayer)***

**The lotus flower is a reminder of the teachings of Buddha. It begins to grow in mud under water, but blossoms as it grows out of the water into the sunlight. *(Mission News from the Holy Childhood Association)***

**All marble starts out as limestone. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 263)***

**On July 24, 1915, the steamer Eastland overturned in the Chicago River, drowning between 800 and 850 of its passengers. Most of the corpses were taken to the Second Regiment Armory, which is now home to “The Oprah Winfrey Show.” Some of the show’s employees have claimed that the studio is haunted by ghosts of the Eastland disaster. *(MOMENTS IN TIME – The History Channel)***

**The penguin has an apparatus above its eyes that enables it to transform salt water into fresh water. The albatross drinks sea water. It has a special desalinization apparatus that strains out and excretes all excess salt. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 23 & 24)***

**Penguins have an organ on their foreheads that desalinizes water. *(Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 259)***

**Willy: “We have no food, no water, no phone or power of any kind, and every one of our loan requests have been turned down flat!” Ethel: “Is there anything on the plus side of the ledger?” Willy: “We're not going to be up all night writing thank-you cards.” *(Joe Martin, in Willy 'N' Ethel comic strip)***

**In 1986 a bullet paralyzed police officer Steven McDonald for life. From this came unspeakable grief -- and a deeper vision about many things that affect others, including his marriage. Before he was shot, McDonald admits, he and his wife, Patti Ann, were having problems. "I watched all the things Patti Ann had to go through, and she handled it so gracefully," he says. “I'm from a female-dominated family with five sisters, but I still slipped into typical male behavior -- I had a big ego. Now I feel a woman is my superior in many ways. I like to think if our roles were reversed that I'd be as strong and compassionate as she is, but sometimes I don't think this is so." *(Michael H. O'Shea, in Parade magazine)***

**The city of Rome had to deploy 20,000 municipal employees to clean up after the pope’s funeral. They dismantled 27 giant outdoor TV screens, drained and stowed 3,600 portable toilets, and removed 250 tons of garbage. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 22, 2005)***

**Given Harry Potter's huge following and the escalating fan frenzy, what is it exactly about the Harry Potter series that has entranced so many adults and kids--including many young boys who rarely picked up a book before? Joanne Kathleen (J. K.) Rowling -- the slight 36-year-old writer who went from struggling single mom on public assistance to wealthy best-selling author -- isn't quite sure of the answer to that question herself. “Certainly, according to all the publishers that turned Harry Potter down,” she has said, “I was quite right in thinking that if ever it got published, it was highly unlikely it would sell very many copies.” *(Dorothy Samuels, in Ladies' Home Journal)***

**Bored with burgers? Sick of sausage? Well, cooked locusts, termites, flies and beetle larvae have more protein, pound for pound, than beef, chicken or milk. They're also low in fat and packed with vitamins and minerals. They taste good and they're good for you! OK, maybe just good for you! *(1993 Disney Adventures)***

**Someone said we are all Clark Kents looking for a phone booth. We want our transformation to be quick, painless and complete. We want to shoot up to the stars as long as we don't have to leave home. *(Dr. Larry Morris, in Easy Does It)***

**Gary Dahl dug up some rocks from his backyard in Santa Cruz, California, and decided to take a chance on a joke. A lot of people thought he was crazy, but Dahl put his rocks in a box, wrote a funny pamphlet, and became a millionaire.  People bought Pet Rocks like crazy and Dahl is still laughing. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not: Book of Chance, p. 94)***

**Civet, a honey-like secretion from a civet cat’s genitals, gives off an unpleasant fecal odor, but in the right proportion transforms perfume into an aphrodisiac. Civet helped create the allure of the original Chanel No. 5. *(Harry Bright & Jakob Anser, in That’s A Fact, Jack!, p. 15)***

**Mary Anning collected fossil shells on beaches near Lyme Regis in southern England and peddled them to tourists. To support her widowed mother. If you’ve never heard of her, maybe you’ve heard the line about her: “She sold seashells by the seashore.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Being involved in major sports competition for the last 30 years has helped me to see that you should not allow other people to determine your behavior. Pressure should come from inside and then you transform that into a feeling of excitement and exhilaration. Fears and pressures that most people experience are usually external. They worry about how they're going to be perceived, or what people will think of them if they lose or if they fail. When you can shed those apprehensions you will find that competition is something to embrace and look forward to. *(Pat Riley, in Personal Selling Power)***

**Francis Scott Key wrote the poem “The Star Spangled Banner” during the War of 1812. The poem attained wide popularity when sung to the tune of “To Anacreon in Heaven,” a traditional British drinking song; it was officially named the U.S. national anthem in 1931. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 170)***

**In grade school her classmates called her names—“Big Beak," “Cross-Eyes," and “Mieskeit" (Yiddish for ugliness). Although she was an excellent student, the young Barbra was small and thin, awkward, and had a rather large nose. When she graduated from high school and tried to get work as an actress, most casting directors thought she had talent but weren't impressed with her looks. Undaunted, she transformed herself with clothes, makeup, and a new hairstyle, taking full advantage of her striking blue eyes and long, slender neck. When the Broadway show “Funny Girl" made her a celebrity overnight, the homely Streisand suddenly found herself one of the world's most beautiful and glamorous entertainers. Women flocked to beauty salons to ask for the “Streisand look.” (*Madigan & Elwood, in When They Were Kids, p. 168)***

**Eckhart Tolle’s personal pain body fed on a tumultuous upbringing. Educated at the Universities of London and Cambridge, Tolle dropped out of academia after a breakdown, and his “awakening” followed an abysmal cycle of anxiety and depression that brought him to the brink of suicide. Tolle tells of his transformation, the end of his “dark night of the soul” that included receiving a strong message: “Resist nothing.” The next morning, everything changed for him. *(Colleen Smith, in The Denver Post)***

**Some of the early Church Fathers held that in the Transfiguration it was the disciples who changed, not Christ. Because their perception grew sharper, they were able to behold Christ as He truly is. *(Gregory Wolfe)***

**Normally when a tree falls in the forest, it starts to decay almost immediately, helped along by fungi, bacteria, and oxygen in the soil. But when a whole forest is standing in a swamp, as many of our forests did 350 million years ago, the fallen trees drop into the mud where there are no insects or bacteria and little oxygen. Eventually the trees turn into peat, such as those in that state in Ireland and Florida and in the bogs of Canada. Tons of mud and silt, deposited over millions of years, turn it all into coal. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 228)*  
A dramatic blind wine tasting on May 24, 1976, in Paris was attended by France’s elite wine experts. Much to France’s horror and America’s delight, two California wines scored top honors (the winning red, a 1973 Stag’s Leap Cabernet Sauvignon). The shocking result transformed the wine industry worldwide. *(Chai Woodham, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**The yo-yo was originally a deadly Filipino weapon until it was adapted and introduced as a toy in 1929. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 69)***

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