

## *Action*

*If you listen closely when you unlock a safe there comes a moment when you hear a click and the tumblers finally fall into place. You can't really see what is happening, but your fingers move and it all comes together. The beginning of change is like this. You do something and finally something clicks. It is all very mysterious. You don't really understand it, but when it happens you know it and immediately you open the safe and take out your valuables. In this case, the valuables locked up in the safe are all the wonderful things you will become when you change. And the key to all this is taking action. You do not just sit there and stare at the safe. You do something—anything.*

## *Willingness*

*Willingness precedes change. The question is: Where does it come from and where does it go? No one knows. However there are three major theories. One is that it is the by-product of a crisis experience. Another is that it comes from some benevolent force in the universe—God or a Higher Power. Finally, some people believe that it just happens. One day we are unwilling to change and then next day we are ready to move forward.*

## *Crisis Experience*

*People in 12-Step programs call a crisis experience “hitting bottom.” It is any experience, or series experiences, which bring you to the point where you are ready to ask for help and to do something different. This works for very stubborn people who will not change until their life is really a mess and being stuck has turned into “incomprehensible demoralization.” By this I mean that all hope is gone and the person in question is either in a life-threatening situation or so depressed that s/he can barely get out of bed. S/he may even be suicidal.*

*Many people in the grips of such a dilemma die. They take their own*

*lives—sometimes slowly through addiction, and sometimes quickly by jumping off a bridge. For others, however, this incomprehensible demoralization triggers a fear of death and then the next move is quite clear. Change or die!*

### *The Spiritual Approach*

*While we do not really understand spirituality, we can observe the changes that take place in people once a spiritual awakening has occurred. Over the last twenty years, I have seen people change after such an experience. They are in a miserable rut. They are powerless over their inner compulsions and have no strength to fight back. They habitually re-enact behavior that is self-destructive and life-threatening. Then, in a moment of agony, they call out “God help me,” and somewhere deep in their heart they surrender. They admit they are powerless and they ask for help. Then, they feel willing to change, when before they were afraid. They feel as if they are at the start of a glorious new journey and happily move forward. (I will talk more about spirituality later.)*

### *It Just Happens*

*Some people don't need to hit bottom or to pray for a spiritual intervention. They just wake up one day and feel motivated. Then they take action. We don't understand just how this works, but I have observed it. I always wanted to be one of these people.*

### *Stay Focused on Yourself*

*If you are unhappy with your life don't try to change it—change yourself instead and your life will automatically get better. You are the key to everything—your thoughts, your values, your behavior.*

*Changing other people, places and things will not help either. You cannot control these things. Sometimes things go your way and sometimes they don't. Sometimes people do what you want and sometimes they don't. The only power you*

*have is to change yourself. Put all of your energy into this.*