

Dave & Larry

How Do You Know You're Changing?

A GUIDE TO RECOGNIZING WHEN THE
WORK STARTS WORKING (SO YOU
DON'T ACCIDENTALLY FOOL YOURSELF
INTO THINKING YOU'RE STUCK WHEN
YOU'RE GENUINELY MOVING)

Might This Be You?

You're deep in the work. You know, the kind that produces meaningful improvements in your quality-of-life.

And you're pretty sure you've been doing everything right.

And now you're getting anxious about something: "How do I know if this is actually working? If I'm actually changing? How do I tell the difference between real transformation and just... feeling better for a couple of days?"

You're okay. That's not doubt, even if it feels like it. That's wisdom. Riding on the coat-tails of solid self-awareness.

And that's good.

It's okay to wonder. You've probably felt hopeful at times in the past, only to notice at some point that you've begun to slip back. And now you need to know, "Is something really changing or am I just getting better at performing for myself, and especially for my audience?"

A problematic question, and an astute one at that.

This guide will help you recognize when real transformation is occurring. So you don't mistake real progress for another false start, just because the proof you were hoping for hasn't shown up.

And just as importantly, it'll help you see when you're genuinely not fooling yourself, even while it feels like nothing's working.

The Difference Between Performing Change and Living It

Here's the first thing to understand: real change doesn't always feel like forward movement would. Or like progress.

In fact, sometimes it feels like there's nothing happening at all, while in fact EVERYTHING is happening beautifully but you can't see it.

Because transformation isn't linear. It's not a straight line from "sick, sad, mad and stuck" to "free." It's more like a flower growing in your garden. Invisible for a while, until then suddenly it pops its head out, smiles at the sun, and says "Hi - now let's keep growing together."

So how do you know if the little seeds of change are on the path to flowering?

You look for the signs. Not the dramatic ones. The quiet ones. The ones that show up in moments when you're not even paying attention.

You wouldn't bother doing this for a real seed, but for the purposes of advancing your progress on the journey to future happiness and success, you might find the roadside signage useful.



Sign 1 You Catch Yourself Noticing

Real change starts with awareness. Not forced awareness. Not "I'm trying really hard to be mindful" awareness. But spontaneous awareness that you're suddenly noticing.

You're in the middle of your day and out of nowhere you think: "Oh. There's that pesky Catastrophizer again. Have you REALLY got nothing else to do?"

Or: "Huh. I just chose to feel good for no reason. Note To Self: Let's do that more often."

Or: "I used to nosedive into the ground over that kind of thing. But this time,... I'm not."

That's the first sign it's working. You're not making an effort to notice. You're just waiting to notice. And soon you will start naturally noticing - without effort, without forcing - because of the emerging novelty of how good all these changes you're making are now making you feel. Which is the whole point of the exercise: to become continuously aware that you're making yourself feel good, and then happier. And then just happy.



Sign #2 The Patterns Lose Their Grip (Even When They're Still There)

Here's what most people get wrong about Personal Transformation: they think the goal is to eliminate the patterns. To never feel anxious again. To never again catastrophize. To never doubt.

But that's not how it works. The patterns don't disappear at first. They just stop running you.

You'll still have moments where the Inner Critic shows up. But instead of believing it, you'll recognize it: "Oh, there you are."

You'll still feel anxious sometimes. But instead of reflexively nosediving, you'll pause: "This is just anxiety. It's not the truth." The sign it's working isn't that the patterns are gone. It's that you become aware of no longer being controlled by them and their disruptive interference.



Sign #3

You Stop Trying To Fix Yourself

(This one's subtle, but it's huge.)

Most people approach Personal Transformation with the victim mindset: "I'm broken and I need to fix myself – so I can better myself." And that mindset creates a vicious loop - the harder you try to fix yourself, the more broken you'll feel.

Because there's nothing in there that needs fixing. If anything, it's what's outside and beyond you that needs a major adjustment, but that's a whole other level of insanity.

Meanwhile, here's what you can do: When the work starts workin', something will shift. You'll stop seeing yourself as a problem that needs a solution. You start seeing yourself as someone who's just discovered that she's learning.

Noticing. Adjusting. Trying and Testing. Taking the time to do it right. Remembering the results. Storing the good ones, for future repetition. Because you've become responsive. To the truth instead of to worry. Make no mistake about it: that shift - from "I'm broken" to "I'm learning" - is one of the clearest signs that you're undergoing sustainable, positive change. You may have been stuck, and now you're learning about getting unstuck and on with your life.



Sign #4 Happiness Stops Feeling Conditional

Before the work, happiness was something you chased. It was something that came from something else. "I'll be happy when I get that promotion." "I'll be happy when I lose that weight." "I'll be happy when I find the right guy." "I'll be happy when I finally figure this out." But when the work is working, something changes in your approach to feeding your natural desire for happiness. You start choosing to feed it. Like, immediately. Not because everything's perfect. But because you can.

And because of how good it makes you feel. To feel good, again. And then, to take that mood with you as you continue on that other work you want to do. The other improvements you want to make. Choosing happiness, first, is a sign that your desire for it is stabilizing.

And stable desire? It's mission-critical; the engine of everything else you want to change.

More on that later.



Sign #5

You Start Noticing What You Want, Not Just What You're Avoiding

Most people are running away from their pain as they choke down their lives, day after day. Because inside they don't want to feel anxious. They don't want to be confronted with the consequences of forgetting to remember that their natural state is happiness. They just don't want to feel bad all the time.

But when you get this right, the focus reverses. You'll stop asking "How do I avoid feeling bad?" and start asking "What do I actually want to feel?" Not someday soon, but right now.

That redirection of your awareness - from reluctance, fear and avoidance towards allowing yourself to openly desire what you want - is one of the secret signs that transformation is underway.



Sign #6 You Stop Checking for Progress

Here's the teaser: When the work is really working, you stop obsessing over whether or not it's working.

Not because you're in denial and you've stopped caring. But because you're too busy enjoying your life to constantly evaluate whether or not you're getting it right.

You're playing the right Games. (more on our Game of Change, elsewhere)

You're noticing the patterns. You've started choosing happiness every time you have a choice. And now it's becoming routine for you to feel good.

Checking isn't the same as doubting. Checking is just "I want to make sure I'm on the right track." And the fact that you do care enough to check? That's actually a great sign. It means you're engaged. You're paying attention – and to the right indicators. You're not just going through the motions.



Sign #7 Other People Notice (And You Don't Need Them To)

This one's tricky. Because sometimes, when real change is happening, the people around you will notice.

They'll say things like: "You seem... different. Lighter. More yourself." And that's nice. It feels validating. (NOTE: beware of the, "We liked you better before you made all these changes," syndrome; that's their own work to do and has nothing to do with yours.)

But here's the real sign it's working: you don't need anyone to notice. You're not changing for approval or applause. You're changing because you've decided that feeling good matters more to you than performing for others. And if they notice? Great. And if they don't?

That's fine, too.

Because the change isn't happening for them. It's happening for you.



Sign #8

You Can Sit With Discomfort Without Needing to Fix It

Before the work, discomfort feels dreadful and demanding. Anxiety meant you had to do something immediately to make it stop.

Sadness meant you were failing. Uncertainty meant you were lost. But when the work starts working, struggle and suffering lift. You can sit with controlled negativity and just let it be.

Not because you've transcended it. Not because you're enlightened. Not at first, anyway, but that's next.

No, because you've realized: "This feeling won't kill me. And it's actually part of the Game to just let it pass through me. Yeah, I'll be fine. Whatever...."

And that capacity - to sit with what is, without needing to negate or dismiss it straightaway - that is one of the clearest signs that your awareness has crossed the threshold into honest desire for change.

The Question You're Really Asking

Here's what we imagine you're really asking when you say "How will I know if it's working?"

You're asking: "How do I know I'm not wasting my time, and embarking on yet another predictable self-help disappointment?" And here's the honest answer: you won't know for sure until you check behind you.

Because real change doesn't announce itself with fanfare. It doesn't give you a certificate of completion, having shown up at some predetermined destination. Instead it arrives quietly and in small moments. Gradual shifts. Like a slow-moving ship coming closer and closer to shore.

Tiny recalibrations are taking place inside that monstrous ball of potential which is you, which you might not even notice until you look back and ask, "Wait. Am I the same person I was when I started? So how do you know all this stuff is working? You trust a proven process, first, which in turn tells your mind that you wish to start trusting yourself. You keep playing the Game we'll provide; and always by the Rules. You keep noticing. You keep your eyes continuously on the prize: more and more and more happiness. You give the Game time to work, and yourself the grace to win. Then if you want to, look back at where you've been and prepare to be amazed.

The Bottom Line

If the Course we wrote sounds good, then you're right to wonder: "Will it actually work for someone like me?"

Here's what we can tell you: it works if you let it. If you give yourself permission. If you allow it to work. And we have means at our disposal to assist and support you with allowing it, because that permission is a big deal.

If you will become aware. If you will notice. If you're willing to be honest with yourself about what's actually happening to you, instead of what you think should be happening.

Then yes. It works.

And you'll know it's working not because you feel perfect. But because you feel real. And real? That's the only kind of change that lasts.

Ready to Find Out?

Visit www.daveandlarry.com and begin looking into Your Heart of Change.

You've already taken the first step by reading this. The next one is yours to choose.

Dave & Larry

Two guys who spent decades wondering if they were fooling themselves or not – and finally figured out how to tell the difference.