

My Story: Discovery of the Process

Mark Dandridge Pendleton

I had just turned fifteen years old when I first experienced the *Begin a New Life* process.

It was summer time, and I was working in my grandmother's vegetable garden. There was something on my mind that was troubling me. I don't remember exactly what it was; but I do remember that it had a real grip on me. It was tying me up in emotional knots, and it wouldn't let me go. So I decided to run the problem through the four universal steps of *Begin a New Life*. As I continued working, I did the following:

1. Took an honest look at myself.
2. Recognized and acknowledged *my part* in the problem.
3. Prayed to the Lord for help and power in resisting that part.
4. Began a new life.

This was the first time I ever practiced these four universal steps of life change. What happened was remarkable. By the time I'd finished going through the steps, the issue that had tied me up in emotional knots was gone—it had disappeared from my consciousness. In fact, the shift in my mental/emotional state was so dramatic that I thought to myself, “*Wow, this process really works!*” ...and I was only *fifteen* years old!

Then the process disappeared from my mental radar screen. For whatever reason, I was unsuccessful at making it a regular spiritual practice. But regardless, that one experience of the process is something I never forgot.

I grew up through my teen and adult years to age forty-four. During those years, I practiced a number of approaches to spiritual life. Each one helped me along my spiritual path; but I wanted more. In my heart I wanted a practice that fit my *soul*, and none of the ones I'd tried in my adult years had done that—not fully, not completely, not *deeply*. For all of those years, I felt like David the shepherd boy in Judaic scripture who was given king Saul's armor in preparation for battle against the giant, Goliath.¹ But Saul's armor didn't fit David—he wasn't able to walk in it—so he took it off.²

And for all of that time—from age fifteen to forty-four—I didn't forget the experience I'd had in my grandmother's garden. Occasionally I'd remember it or call it to mind; and when I did, I'd think to myself, “*What about those four steps of life change that I tried years ago: What if I were to go through them over and over again, for different issues in my life? What effect would it have?*” And what's interesting, despite these thoughts, I still didn't return to the process. And so it sat on the mantel-

¹ See the Bible, 1 Samuel 17.

² 1 Samuel 17:38-39

piece of my mind—waiting to help me, waiting to serve me, waiting to impact my life for good.

Sometime around my forty-fourth birthday, I decided to *combine* the four steps of *Begin a New Life* with the spiritual program I was practicing at the time. I did so. But *combining* the two approaches didn't work—it was confusing. It made me feel like I was spinning my wheels spiritually, unable to get any real traction in my life. I felt like I was married to *two* partners instead of just one.

At that point I knew that I had to choose *one* of my two partners over the other; and I knew in my heart which one it would be. I chose *Begin a New Life*.

That choice came in the fall of 2004. Since then I've never looked back. I haven't needed anything more in a baseline approach to spiritual living. This one provides everything I deeply want, need, and hope for—and *then* some.³

What I've discovered in *Begin a New Life* is a process that can remove *any* stumbling block in my life, and one which allows me to realize my deepest longings, hopes, dreams, and aspirations. After many years of searching, I've found a process that fits my *soul*—truly, deeply, and completely. I am content.

Epilogue

As a final note, when I first began this process as a regular practice, I kept a record of the positive effects it had on my life. That list grew until it was fifty-eight items long. Then I stopped counting. Later, I culled the list down to include only my favorites. That list was still *twenty* items long. So I squeezed hard and brought it down to just *three*. My favorite three are these:

1. This process takes me to the real heart of any personal, life-related issue *faster*, more *directly*, more *deeply*, and more *completely* than anything I've ever experienced. At times it has done so in a breath-taking way—literally.
2. This process provides me a sense of closeness and togetherness with God that I haven't experienced before. This has been a pleasant surprise and an ongoing blessing in my life.
3. Finally (and this is my one, all-time favorite) this process provides me a sense of *hope*—regularly and consistently. In fact, in all the years that I've practiced the process, there hasn't been a single session that I've come away from *not* feeling a sense of hope—a sense of, "I can *do* this; with God's help I will *conquer* this thing in my life." Wise people say, "Don't say *always* or *never*; and yet what I'm telling you about *hope* at the hands of this process has always been true for me—every single time. This has been a real godsend in my life—one that I couldn't have guessed I would experience.

³ The *BNL* process was so immediately helpful in my life that by the end of 2004 I began formatting and packaging it for public use. I hoped that other people could benefit in ways that I personally was benefitting. I also wanted the process to be easily *accessible*, easily *doable*, easily *repeatable*, and easily *reviewable* for anyone who might discover it. The *BNL* website and worksheets are the results of that desire.