

How do we get there?

As we set out to answer this question, there are four important pieces of information with which we need to equip ourselves:

3.1 Don't confuse who you are with what you do

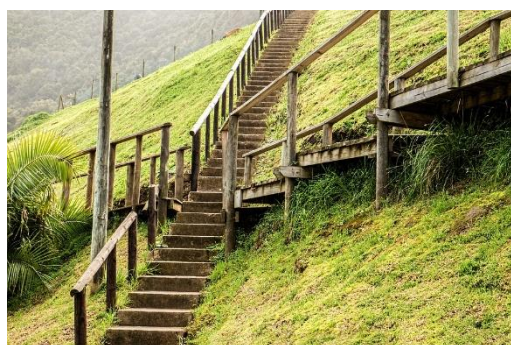
How did we get to this view of ourselves in the first place? We have already seen the negative elements of Nature (Step Two), but we must not assume that our inclination to make wrong choices means that we must, therefore, be rubbish. Of course, it is serious that we make those wrong choices, but we are still 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14) – and that includes every aspect of who we are. In fact, our sin is that we are not making choices that are consistent with who we are. We were made to be glorious, bearers of God's image (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23). For us to live in that magnificent calling, we need to be filled with the life of God himself – and that is possible because of forgiveness at the Cross and the power of God's Spirit in our lives. Only as we respond to the impulses of God's Spirit do we begin to live in a way that is consistent with who we are.



So, we must make a distinction between our 'raw materials' and the wrong use of them. We need to experience forgiveness, live by the Spirit and then set about getting rid of everything that contradicts those truths. Don't rubbish your temperaments, rather focus on exercising your will that has now been set free in Christ. Our position in Christ has become our reality. Now we can concentrate on being 'transformed by the renewing of your mind' and allowing our salvation into every part of our lives (Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:12).

3.2 Your view of yourself is probably wrong

Returning to the two temperaments at each end of the table, we need to have that vision of both temperaments being at peace. That is what God intended, that is what was lost, and that is what God offers us now. We need to recognise that the view that we have long held of ourselves is just plain wrong. It isn't that it has recently become wrong – it always has been. We get so used to thinking and feeling a certain way that we have assumed that what we feel is a true picture of who we are. It isn't. In God's sight, we are better than that, and we can begin to realise that we are someone completely different to who we feel ourselves to be.



Both temperaments are involved. It is easy to equate our qualities with the extrovert temperament and view the introvert as the more difficult place where pain and fear reside. Our introverts will have their struggles due to years of neglect but qualities reside there and they are far better than many of us believe.

We can easily assume that what the introvert feels is somehow wrong – as if we shouldn't have those emotions or should 'know better.' How can we ever be affirmed if we carry this instinctive response to feeling things deeply? There is a reason for every emotion we experience. An understanding of those emotions will come, but we must first stop condemning ourselves for what we feel.

3.3 Family stance is powerful

Families develop stances. For example, a predominantly extrovert Sanguine family might well not cultivate the introvert in its family members. Family stances can get passed down through the generations and reinforced with each successive generation – unless someone stops, thinks about what is going on and realises it can be different.

3.4 We must be real with where we are

We have already assessed how our extrovert views our introvert. There are three simple tests that will help us see how accurate we have been in our evaluation.

3.4.1 How defensive am I?

If our introvert temperament is immature, he will not be able to take criticism constructively. We will instinctively defend ourselves because it will feel as if a child is being asked to perform in an adult world.

Our defensiveness is rooted in what we feel about ourselves. When you are next challenged, if you respond defensively, pause and recognise that what is being said to you has opened up what you feel about your introvert. Use it as an opportunity to choose to do the opposite of what you would have done in the past. Instead of going quiet, respond. Instead of going down the guilt road, plan how you will change and move forward. Instead of using your extrovert (on behalf of the introvert) to attack the ‘unreasonable person’ bringing the challenge, ask yourself if the challenge they are bringing is really a vote of confidence in who you are and what you can do rather than an affirmation of your worst fears about yourself.

3.4.2 How much do I need to please?

It is easy to carry a ‘little view’ of ourselves. What did you feel about yourself as a child? Silly? In the way? Of no real consequence? Our parents may have loved us dearly, but if they were not living in their introvert, they would not have been able to convey acceptance and affirmation to our introvert. If we were using our extrovert to protect what we felt about ourselves, then our view of ourselves would have remained small.

Most adults carry the small child view, struggling to gain approval by keeping everyone happy, working hard to be pleasing, wearing themselves out because they are never ‘good enough.’ Do we compare ourselves with others, always looking for approval and acceptance?

3.4.3 How ‘natural’ is my extrovert?



There are times when the ingredients of the extrovert become unnaturally enlarged. This can be a sign that we are running away from turbulent emotions within the introvert, or simply don't like what we see when we look inside. For example, a Choleric may be overly ambitious or become obsessed with getting everything exactly right. A Sanguine may have become unpleasantly bossy or excitable. Rather than simply trying to contain the excesses of the extrovert, it will be more helpful to find out what the person really feels about himself. The best

way to stop the pot from boiling is to turn the gas off!



Armed with this information we are ready to begin the process of being 'transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Romans 12:2). The following illustrations and principles are designed to help us change our view of ourselves.