



Wisdom, Intelligence and Changing Paradigms

Some key terms:

Intelligence: noun:

- Capacity for learning, reasoning, understanding and similar forms of mental activity; aptitude for grasping truths, relationships, facts, meanings, etc.

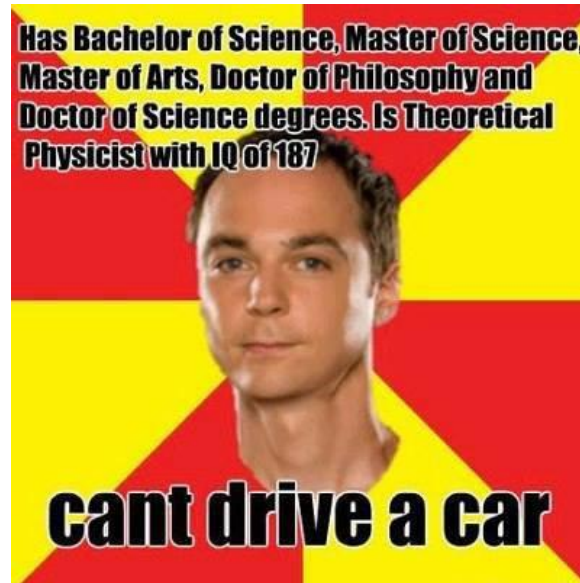
Wisdom: noun:

- The ability to think and act utilizing knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight

In simple terms: Intelligence is the ability to **take in**, learn and mentally “absorb” knowledge whereas wisdom is our ability to **effectively use** that knowledge.

➤ **Group Discussion: Try to describe person who has a lot of intelligence but very little wisdom -**

The typical example of a person with a lot of intelligence but very little wisdom would be that person who is extremely “*book smart*” (High intelligence) but in his or her own life cannot seem to effectively manage day to day interactions outside of an academic environment due to a *lack of common sense* (Low wisdom) A good example would be someone who could win on the show Jeopardy but who could barely manage their own relationships outside





➤ **What about a person with lower intelligence but a lot of wisdom?**

An example of a person with less intelligence but a lot of wisdom could be a person who does not have a lot of “worldly” knowledge perhaps because of limited cognitive abilities or a below average education. However, this person uses the limited knowledge that he or she has to effectively solve problems and is able to reason on decisions because of a good level of wisdom to effectively use the knowledge he or she has.



Discussion Questions:

What are some areas where you believe you have a good degree of knowledge? (Intelligence)

- You can consider academic (related to formal education) areas such as math, history, science, etc.
- Also think of other life areas and experiences where you picked up a degree of knowledge and expertise such as work, hobbies, trades, other interests



In what life areas do you have a lot of wisdom? (The ability to make good decisions based on your knowledge)

- Some areas to consider – Running a business, managing a family, health, relationships, dealing with other people, risk management and safety, general life skills (“life hacks”)

In what areas might you need more wisdom? – (Think of where you need to make better decisions)

Challenging question: Have you ever thought you were wise, but then you had a shift in your thinking and you started to make decisions differently?

- For example – A person shifts from being primarily “street smart” while using drugs to a new view of wisdom as a person who no longer abuses substances. Shifting from a focus more on getting over on others, getting away with certain behaviors without getting caught – changing toward a more honest, straightforward way of dealing with life choices and other people.

When an individual changes their view and the way they make decisions, that is called a *Paradigm Shift*

- ▶ **Paradigm** – A world view, based on one’s personal values, beliefs, experiences and theories
- ▶ **Paradigm Shift** - A radical change in underlying beliefs or theory

Whether you realize it or not, pretty much everyone alive has undergone some kind of paradigm shift in their life. To illustrate consider the following:

- Take your age and divide it in half – For example if you are 18, think about what it was like when you were 9 years old. If you are 46, think about age 23.
- Discuss: How has your thinking changed since then when you were half your age? (Hopefully with experience, maturity and growth, it has)
 - **How are your values and priorities different since then?**
 - **How have your goals changed since then?**
 - **Have you changed some of your opinions?**
 - **How has your decision making changed since then?**

Hopefully by discussing this, you now understand what a paradigm shift is. Some of your thinking may have stayed the same, but overall it is likely that you shifted your views in some areas as you gained wisdom and life experience



Discuss: What are some other situations that may cause a paradigm shift? – Consider the following areas below and if you can, share if you have had any of these experiences personally -

- Loss or harm of a loved one – For example “After my father died suddenly, I made a decision to get my life back on track and start being responsible and taking care of business in my life”
- Illness/Injury – For example “Surviving cancer made me change the way I viewed life. Now I treasure each day and I take the time to smell the roses (so to speak) instead of spending all my time angry and stressed out”
- Children – For example “After my first son was born, I really started to realize that I wasn’t just living for myself any longer and now I had to make some sacrifices personally to help give my kid a better life than I had growing up”
- Hard times – “When I was working and doing well, I used to frown on other people who were less fortunate, thinking that they were just being lazy, but when I lost my job and then I lost my home, I gained a new respect for people who may be struggling financially and I have a completely different understanding of what it is like to be broke with no decent job prospects”
- Influential Relationships – For example: “For most of my life I was mistrustful of people from different backgrounds than mine. Then one day I was in trouble and someone from a different culture than mine really helped me out of a tough situation and they were so caring and kind – I now see things much differently when it comes to differences among people”
- Other- What other types of life events can you think of that can trigger a paradigm shift?

Exercise – Illustrate Your Paradigm Shift

On the following pages you will see a diagram that represents a paradigm shift. Hopefully since you have been working on substance use issues, consider how you have changed the way you think for the better.

In the circle to the left labeled “**Old Me**”, try to list some ways your thinking, behavior and attitude used to be when you were living your old lifestyle before you started making positive changes in your life.

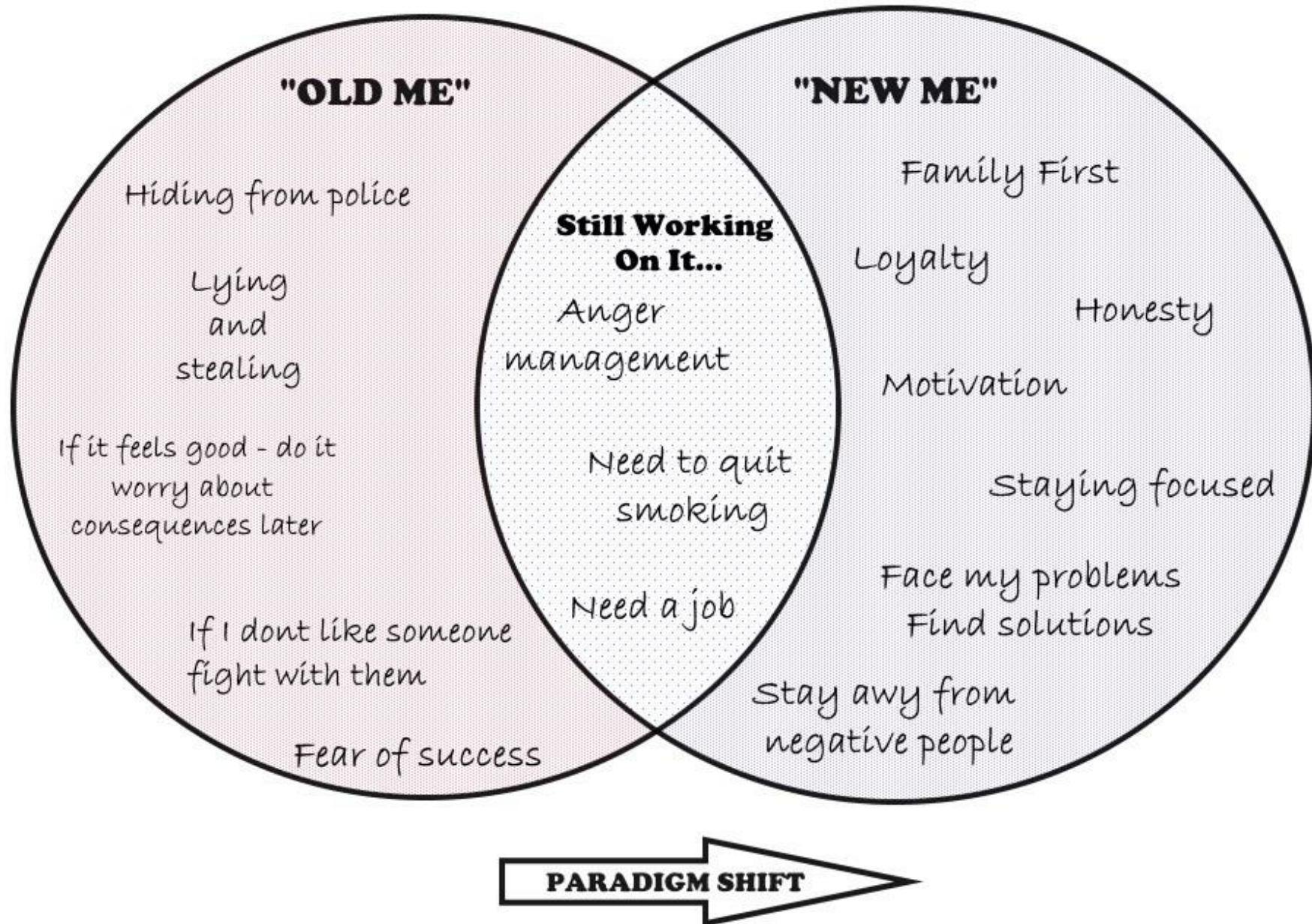
In the circle on the right labeled “**New Me**” list some new ways that your thinking, behavior and attitude has changed for the better

In the middle section between the two circles labeled “**Still Working on It**” list a few old behaviors and thinking that you are still working on (Things that you have not changed yet from the old you, but you want too)

An example is provided to help get you started. When everyone is done with their diagram, share & discuss them as a group

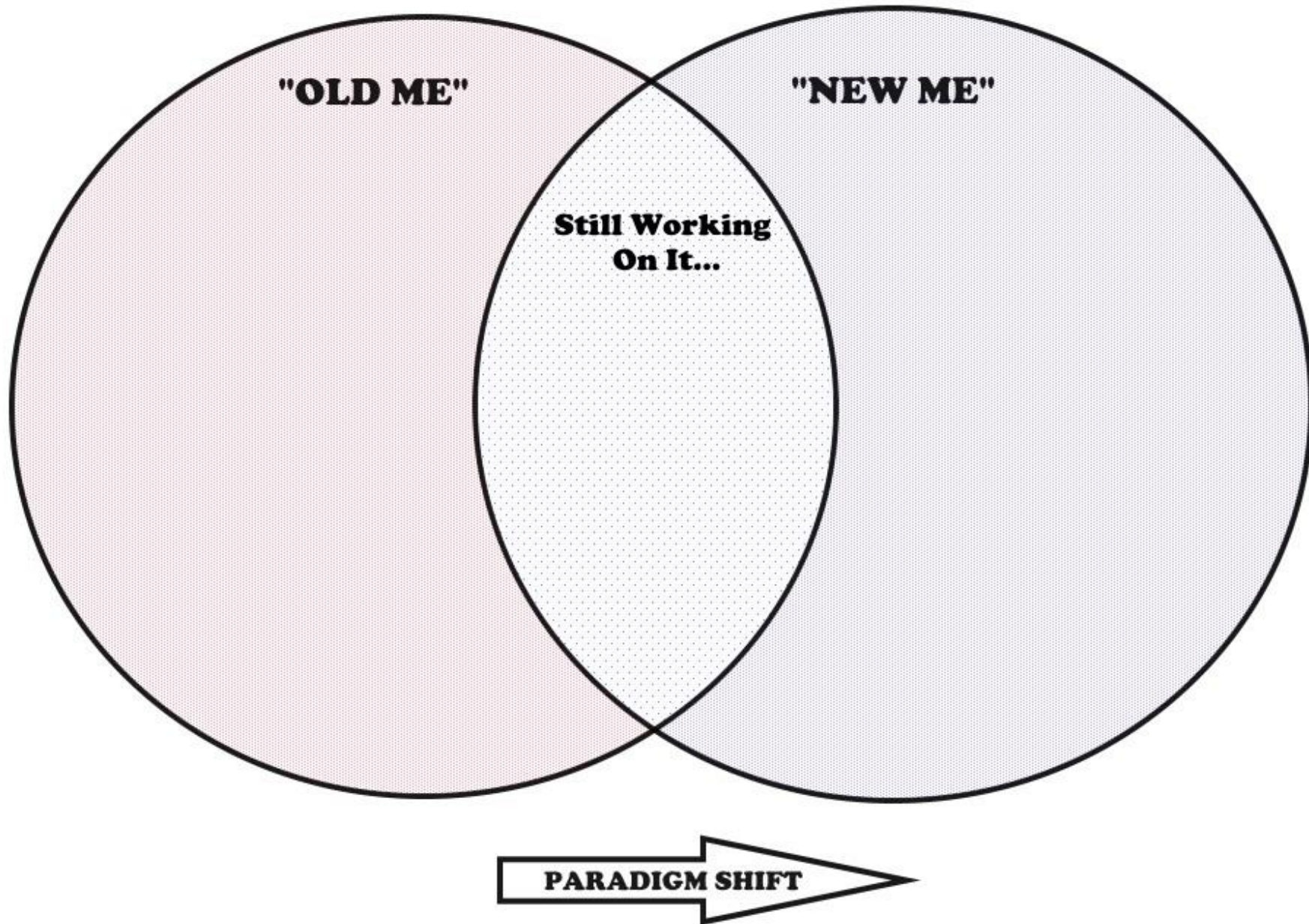


Sample Paradigm Shift Diagram:





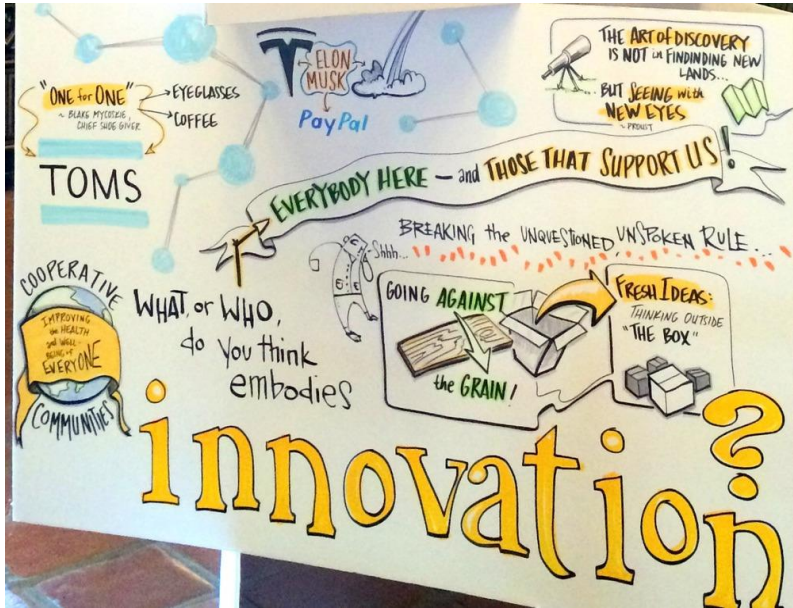
Complete your own Paradigm Shift Diagram and when complete discuss the positive changes you are making and will continue to make





Additional Group Exercise – “The Wall of Wisdom”

Directions – Use available computers, tablets, smart phones, and other reading material that is around to collect some wise sayings that appeal to various members of the group. If devices are limited break into smaller groups and share. Everyone in the group should come up with at least one, or two or three wise sayings or pictures. When everyone has found something, as a group make a “Wall of Wisdom” by putting up the group’s work on a wall. This can either be done as a collage or a large group drawing. Be creative. Some examples provided below



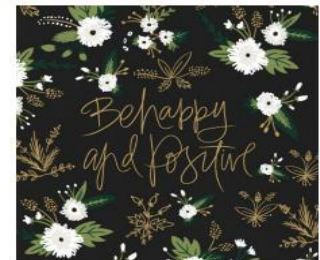
Live simply.
Dream big.
Be grateful.
Give love.
Laugh lots.

When you love
what you have,
you have
everything
you need.



GET IT
girl

*I never dreamed
about success.
I worked for it.*
ESTEE LAUDER



Don't let
yesterday
take up
too much
of today

go the
extra
mile
It's never
crowded

