

Paradigm Shifts

Point of the Assignment: 1) To understand paradigm shifts (seeing reality differently). 2) To help you figure out if you are experiencing one. 3) To give help for dealing with paradigm shifts.

What is a paradigm shift? *A paradigm shift is a fundamental shift in how we view reality.* Before the shift, we assume reality is one thing, and after the shift, we assume reality is something else. Paradigm shifts are usually brought on by a triggering event, and may last up to several months (sometimes longer). During a season of a paradigm shift, we recall prior experiences and re-process them based on what has been learned through that triggering event. **We are trying to make new meaning out of those experiences. Once that new meaning has been established, there tends to be a renewed sense of peace about those prior experiences.**

Paradigm Shifts tend to be very painful to experience for several reasons: 1) We usually do not understand what is happening to us, and therefore might start to question ourselves and/or our sanity. 2) The process is usually very long (several months on average). 3) Having our perception of reality shattered is very frightening. 4) Since we don't understand what is happening, we will have difficulty explaining what is going on. 5) As we react to these shifts, other people will probably notice something is wrong, but may not know how to respond to it, and therefore possibly add to our stress level.

Paradigm Shift & Class Application

As mentioned before, pursuing a college education is usually an emotional roller coaster ride for most students. There are several reasons for this, and one of which is paradigm shift. Therefore, this subject is being introduced in this class for two reasons:

- 1) What you will be learning throughout your educational journey will likely cause you to experience multiple paradigm shifts before you are through.
- 2) Statistically speaking, it is expected that approximately 10 – 20 percent of students in this class will likely experience a major paradigm shift as a result of the Self-Awareness process (especially the Myers-Briggs) and/or the Self-Direction process. If this happens, the sooner you recognize what is happening to you, the less uncomfortable the process can be.

What To Do If You Suspect You Are Experiencing A Paradigm Shift:

- 1) Determine if this validation is enough. For some people, just understanding what is happening to them is all they need to reduce the discomfort. For others, they will need more support.
- 2) Find someone to talk to. If you experience a paradigm shift as a direct result of something you learn in a class, then talk to your instructor. S/he is probably accustomed to dealing with this, and it probably has happened to other students before you.
- 3) If receiving validation from your instructor is not enough, then seek counseling. If you are a student, you can go to the Student Health Center to find a counselor. They are skilled at helping people process such shifts. If you are not a student, find a professional skilled-helper who can find appropriate help for you.
- 4) **Most Important:** Try to avoid making major life choices (*relationships, school, career, etc.*) or engage in destructive behavior (*drinking, drugs, violence, etc.*) until you have been able to make

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the new meaning sufficient to be able to explain it to someone else; because how you feel about the situation will not be the same before, during and after a paradigm shift.

Paradigm Shift – Personal Application

1) **Think of a time in your life when you experienced a paradigm shift.** *(Describe the situation.)*

2) **What did you think reality was before you experienced the triggering event?**

3) **What was the actual triggering event that caused you to reprocess your prior experiences?**

4) **As you were experiencing the paradigm shift, did you understand what was happening to you? If not, what did you think was happening?** *(Did you think you were going crazy or something was wrong with you?)*

5) **How did you respond to experiencing that paradigm shift?** *(Panic, seek help, engage in destructive behavior, etc.)*

6) **After you had completely processed everything, what was did you believe was reality?**

7) **Did this paradigm shift change how you felt about yourself? How did you feel about yourself and life in general, after you finished processing?**

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8) **Based on your prior experiences, what can you learn so that you can respond positively the next time (and eventually you will) you experience a paradigm shift?**

9) **Do you think you may be experiencing a paradigm shift as a result of something you are learning in this class? If so, based on the information provided, what can/should you do about it?**

Test your understanding:

What is the main point of this assignment?

Why were you expected to do this exercise?

What type of person would need to do this exercise?

How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?

Reflection: *(Write down your response after completing this assignment.)*
