

## WHAT IS A PARADIGM SHIFT?

In 1962, Thomas Kuhn wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and fathered, defined and popularized the concept of "paradigm shift" (p.10). Kuhn argues that scientific advancement is not evolutionary, but rather is a "series of peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions", and in those revolutions "one conceptual world view is replaced by another".

Think of a Paradigm Shift as a change from one way of thinking to another. It's a revolution, a transformation, a sort of metamorphosis. It just does not happen, but rather it is driven by agents of change.

For example, agriculture changed early primitive society. The primitive Indians existed for centuries roaming the earth constantly hunting and gathering for seasonal foods and water. However, by 2000 B.C., Middle America was a landscape of very small villages, each surrounded by patchy fields of corn and other vegetables.

Agents of change helped create a paradigm-shift moving scientific theory from the Ptolemaic system (the earth at the center of the universe) to the Copernican system (the sun at the center of the universe), and moving from Newtonian physics to Relativity and Quantum Physics. Both movements eventually changed the worldview. These transformations were gradual as old beliefs were replaced by the new paradigms creating "a new gestalt" (p. 112).

Likewise, the printing press, the making of books and the use of vernacular language inevitable changed the culture of a people and had a direct affect on the scientific revolution. Johann Gutenberg's invention in the 1440's of movable type was an agent of change. Books became readily available, smaller and easier to handle and cheap to purchase. Masses of people acquired direct access to the scriptures. Attitudes began to change, as people were relieved from church domination.

Similarly, agents of change are driving a new paradigm shift today. The signs are all around us. For example, the introduction of the personal computer and the Internet have impacted both personal and business environments, and is a catalyst for a Paradigm Shift. Newspaper publishing has been reshaped into Web sites, blogging, and web feeds. The Internet has enabled or accelerated the creation of new forms of human interactions through instant messaging, Internet forums, and social networking sites. We are shifting from a mechanistic, manufacturing, industrial society to an organic, service based, information centered society, and increases in technology will continue to impact globally. Change is inevitable. It's the only true constant.

In conclusion, for millions of years we have been evolving and will continue to do so. Change is difficult. Human Beings resist change; however, the process has been set in motion long ago and we will continue to co-create our own experience. Kuhn states that "awareness is prerequisite to all acceptable changes of theory" (p. 67). It all begins in the mind of the person. What we perceive, whether normal or metanormal, conscious or unconscious, are subject to the limitations and distortions produced by our inherited and socially conditional nature. However, we are not restricted by this for we can change. We are moving at an accelerated rate of speed and our state of consciousness is transforming and transcending. Many are awakening as our conscious awareness expands.

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Reference: Kuhn, Thomas, S., "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", Second Edition, Enlarged, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970(1962)

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