

**You are encouraged to read the whole book, and please make a proper citation if needed.**

Mezirow, J. & Associates (2000). *Learning as Transformation*. Jossey-Bass.

**Ch.1 Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory**

P.3-4	That is why it is so important that adult learning emphasize contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions, and validating meaning by assessing reasons. The justification for much of what we know and believe, our values and our feelings, depends on the context—biographical, historical, cultural—in which they are embedded. We make meaning with different dimensions of awareness and understanding; in adulthood we may more clearly understand our experience when we know under what conditions an expressed idea is true or justified. In the absence of fixed truths and confronted with often rapid change in circumstances, we cannot fully trust what we know or believe.
P.4	<i>Our understandings and beliefs are more dependable when they produce interpretations and opinions that are more justifiable or true than would be those predicated upon other understandings or beliefs.</i> Formulating more dependable beliefs about our experience, assessing their contexts, seeking informed agreement on their meaning and justification, and making decisions on the resulting insights are central to the adult learning process. Transformation Theory attempts to explain this process and to examine its implications for action-oriented adult educators.
P.4	<i>Transformation Theory adds a fifth and crucial mode of making meaning: becoming critically aware of one’s own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation.</i>

P.6-7	<p>Transformative learning, especially when it involves subjective reframing is often an intensely threatening emotional experience in which we have to become aware of both the assumptions undergirding our ideas and those supporting our emotional responses to the need to change.</p> <p>As language and culturally specific social practices are implicated in learning, understanding will be enabled and constrained by the historical knowledge-power networks in which it is embedded. The assumptions of these historical networks and their supporting ideologies need to be brought into awareness and critical reflection by the learner to make possible a greater degree of autonomous learning.</p>
P.7-8	<p><i>Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight.</i></p>
P.8	<p><i>Habermas (1984) has helped us understand that there are two major domains of learning with different purposes, logics of inquiry, criteria of rationality, and modes of validating beliefs. One is instrumental learning—learning to control and manipulate the environment or other people, as in task-oriented problem solving to improve performance. The other is communicative learning—learning what others mean when they communicate with you. This often involves feelings, intentions, values, and moral issues.</i></p>
P.9	<p>Understanding in communicative learning requires that we assess the meanings behind the words; the coherence, truth, and appropriateness of what is being communicated; the truthfulness and qualifications of the speaker; and the authenticity of expressions of feeling. That is, we must become critically reflective of the <i>assumptions</i> of the person communicating.</p>
P.10	<p>In communicative learning, we determine the justification of a problematic belief or understanding through <i>rational discourse</i> to arrive at a tentative best judgment.</p>

P.10	Communicative competence refers to the ability of the learner to negotiate his or her own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than to simply act on those of others.
P.11	Reflective discourse involves a critical assessment of assumptions. It leads toward a clearer understanding by tapping collective experience to arrive at a tentative best judgment. Discourse is the forum in which “finding one’s voice” becomes a prerequisite for free full participation.
P.12	Discourse requires only that participants have the will and readiness to seek understanding and to reach some reasonable agreement. Feelings of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy are essential preconditions for free full participation in discourse.
P.13-14	To more freely and fully participate in discourse, participants must have the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More accurate and complete information</li> <li>● Freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception</li> <li>● Openness to alternative points of view: empathy and concern about how others think and feel</li> <li>● The ability to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively</li> <li>● Greater awareness of the context of ideas and, more critically, reflectiveness of assumptions, including their own</li> <li>● An equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse</li> <li>● Willingness to seek understanding and agreement and to accept a resulting best judgment as a test of validity until new perspectives, evidence, or arguments are encountered and validated through discourse as yielding a better judgment</li> </ul>
P.16	<i>A frame of reference is a “meaning perspective”, the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions. It involves cognitive, affective and conative dimensions. It selectively shapes and delimits perception, cognition, feelings, and disposition by predisposing our intentions, expectations, and purposes. It provides the context for making meaning within which we choose what and how a sensory experience is to be construed and/or appropriated.</i>

P.18	<i>A habit of mind becomes expressed as a point of view. A point of view comprises clusters of meaning scheme—sets of immediate specific expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and judgments—that tacitly direct and shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge, typify objects, and attribute causality. Meaning schemes commonly operate outside of awareness. They arbitrarily determine what we see and how we see it—cause-effect relationships, scenarios of sequences of events, what others will be like, and our idealized self-image. They suggest a line of action that we tend to follow automatically unless brought into critical reflection.</i>
P.18	Our values and sense of self are anchored in our frames of reference. They provide us with a sense of stability, coherence, community, and identity. Consequently they are often emotionally charged and strongly defended. Other points of view are judged against the standards set by our points of view.

P.19	<i>Learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind.</i>
P.19	<i>Transformation refers to a movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives.</i>
P.20	<i>Transformative learning refers to transforming a problematic frame of reference to make it more dependable in our adult life by generating opinions and interpretations that are more justified. We become critically reflective of those beliefs that become problematic. Beliefs are often inferential, based on repetitive emotional interactions and established outside of our awareness. Frames of reference may be highly individualistic or shared as paradigms. Transformative learning is a way of problem solving by defining a problem or by redefining or reframing the problem. We often become critically reflective of our assumptions or those of others and arrive at a transformative insight, but we need to justify our new perspective through discourse.</i>

P.23-24	A mindful transformative learning experience requires that the learner make an informed and reflective decision to act on his or her reflective insight. This decision may result in immediate action, delayed action, or reasoned reaffirmation of an existing pattern of action. Taking action on reflective insights often involves overcoming situational, emotional, and informational constraints that may require new learning experiences in order to move forward.
P.25	Learning theory must recognize the crucial role of supportive relationships and a supportive environment in making possible a more confident, assured sense of personal efficacy, of having a self—or selves—more capable of becoming critically reflective of one’s habitual and sometimes cherished assumptions, and of having the self-confidence to take action on reflective insights.
P.26	<i>Adult education may be understood as an organized effort to assist learners who are old enough to be held responsible for their acts to acquire or enhance their understandings, skills, and dispositions. Central to this process is helping learners to critically reflect on, appropriately validate, and effectively act on their (and others’) beliefs, interpretations, values, feelings and ways of thinking.</i>
P.28	<i>There are obvious inequities in the social structure reflecting asymmetrical power relationships and perpetuating inequalities that profoundly influence the way one understands experience. Learners need to become critically reflective of how these factors have shaped the ways they think and their beliefs so they may take collective action to ameliorate them.</i>
P.31	Adult educators create protected learning environments in which the conditions of social democracy necessary for transformative learning are fostered. This involves blocking out power relationships engendered in the structure of communication, including those traditionally existing between teachers and learners. Central to the goal of adult education in democratic societies is the process of helping learners become more aware of the context of their problematic understandings and beliefs, more critically reflective on their assumptions and those of others, more fully and freely engaged in discourse, and more effective in taking action on their reflective judgments.