

When I began the Opening Doors 3 day program I assumed that my experience would be routine. Silly me.? When the Opening Doors group concluded, I couldn't help but feel as if I was embarking on a new journey, yet I didn't know why. Truthfully, I was underestimating the significance of all I had experienced. In my mind, it was just another group. In the next few months following the conclusion, I would learn this to not be true.

At times I found myself repeating "LOOK, LOOK" over and over in my mind. I never paid attention to this until I started thoroughly examining my transforming power 'TP' card. It was then that I realized I had been screaming "LOOK" during times of turmoil and conflict. Again, I underestimated the significance of what I had learned in the 3 day program: 'LOOK FOR SOMETHING GOOD OR OF GOD IN EVERYONE.' Surely this couldn't have manifested so quickly and so simply. The group had lasted only three days. Nothing could make an impression this fast...could it?

When I became aware that I was actively practicing "TP" skills, I wrote out a list of skills that I would use daily as consistently as possible.

- Look—do for others what you want them to do for you;
- Believe—reach for common ground;
- Change/pause—take thoughts captive, don't react without thinking; and
- Practice—be patient and persistent; change can be hard work.

My first step was memorizing these skills to the point where they became second nature in thought and action. Although I have not totally mastered the transition, my relationships and interaction with others have changed for the better. Where there once was confusion and imbalance, there is understanding and a sense of balance. Where there was a wish for steadiness, there is now a sense of becoming steady. No matter what questions others may have, no matter how many of my own have yet to be answered, there is no question as to where I am determined to be. While the Opening Doors program doesn't provide the road map that will lead me there, it most certainly is a mile marker which played a vital role in keeping me on that path.

I would like to say to anyone considering participating in the 3 day program it is well worth the time. To anyone preparing for the program, open yourself and go with the flow. You will not be disappointed.

After the program I more or less went back to being the same way I was before. And I wrote the program off as a wonderful experience. Occasionally seeing someone I went through the program with and saying hi. I really didn't take anything I noticed with me except those acquaintances I met during the program. Then two to three weeks later I attended Kairos and that is when I would realize the real effect Opening Doors had on my life.

Kairos is a four day long religious retreat. You got fed and got to eat all the cookies you could, so I went. In the 3 day program when asked what someone wouldn't know about me, after meeting me for the first time, I revealed that I was an atheist.

Once again I revealed to the people in Kairos that I was an atheist. Now this is important because I was proud to be an atheist. In both instances I told Christians that I didn't believe in their god, yet there was no judgment in the eyes of those I told. During Kairos I felt what I now know to be the Holy Spirit pulling on my heart strings. I fought it and actually made it go away a couple of times, but after a few days I couldn't deny that what I was feeling was in fact the Holy Spirit. I had read the Bible and a lot of other literature that strengthened my belief that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God and that there really was no god; just us and possibly other life somewhere else in the universe. That knowledge could not shelter me from the Holy Spirit, so I got saved and yet again picked up more books that held evidence for God and Jesus Christ. I am now proud to say I'm a born again Christian.

I truly believe with all my heart and soul that Opening Doors planted a seed that was later watered to bring me to my Savior. This changed my life significantly. When I started my walk with God I realized how I was living and as I get closer with God I stop my old habits. I now use a lot of skills that I was taught in the Opening Doors 3 day--skills that I wouldn't have already had. The change is hard, but I struggle a little less each day. I try not to judge people and I actually give people a chance to show me who they are before I label them untrustworthy. And I have used my skills from opening doors when faced with a confrontational person. I'm not perfect but I'm definitely a work in progress. In conclusion Opening Doors plain and simply made a better person and I look forward to opening more doors.