

UNITED WISDOM

A Transition Without a Public Rite

Meaning and Direction

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

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@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

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Epigraph

> *“Never proclaim yourself a philosopher”*

Epictetus, Enchiridion XLVI, opening clause; Thomas W. Higginson translation.

What this article is about

Some changes occur without initiation, a gathering, or a ceremonial announcement. Someone revises their participation, notices a limit, or ceases to treat an earlier expectation as obligatory. Absence of a public rite makes neither an event imaginary nor an inward decision an automatic alteration of shared arrangements. This essay distinguishes personal meaning, expression of change, and recognition of a position. Matthew 6:1–6, Epictetus XXXV and XLVI, and William James’s selected discussion of central aims provide different grounds for these questions; they form no single psychological technology. A fictional community tool room brings ordinary actions into view: stating a time, handing over a key, and discussing expectations. Nothing requires concealing difficulty, refusing help, or proving maturity through silence. Expression can fit the actual change while a personal history remains unfinished and not completely understood.

I. An Event Nobody Announced

Imagine someone who has helped for years in a small community tool room. This is a fictional situation, not a reported participant’s history. They know where the keys are, answer questions, and occasionally stay beyond the agreed time. One evening, closing a cupboard, they notice that they no longer regard every request as an automatic obligation. There has been no ceremony and no change of clothing, office, or name. Others do not yet know about the change. So far, it concerns how this person intends to answer the next request; that difference still has to take shape within relationships.

We can call this a transition if the word is asked to mean only what is presently available. The person has reconsidered the limits of their availability but has not yet discovered how they will act. They have not thereby become unconditionally more mature, wiser, or freer. Their understanding of existing agreements might be mistaken. An inward decision can matter while its consequences remain open. This caution does not dismiss the event. It distinguishes a noticed change from a story in which everything has already ended well, although no new conversation has taken place and nobody has agreed to different arrangements.

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

The absence of a public rite does not mean the absence of any form. In this example, form might be modest: recording opening hours, returning a key to an agreed place, or naming who will answer an outstanding question. These need not be symbols of a new identity. They may simply be actions through which a difference becomes intelligible to others. Their adequacy depends on the task. Clear handover may matter more than a solemn promise when an object must be transferred. A timetable cannot replace a conversation about trust. A quiet transition need not resolve every question it affects equally quietly.

Three things therefore deserve distinction: experiencing a change, expressing it, and having a new position recognized. They may coincide, or have different timings and audiences. Someone notices that they no longer wish to answer at night; they may tell one person; revising a shared rota requires a group agreement. None of these levels becomes false because another exists. Confusion arises when authority is transferred between them. Personal conviction does not by itself revise other people’s expectations, while recognition of a role cannot prove that a particular inward feeling accompanies it. The distinction protects both the private event and the relationships involved.

II. Being Seen and Acting Before Someone

Matthew 6:1–6 distinguishes alms and prayer performed for human spectators from an address to the Father. This is a particular Christian context, not a general rule dismissing witnesses. Our question concerns the addressee. The same visible act can be described as helping someone, seeking recognition, or fulfilling a religious obligation. Attendance alone cannot disclose its whole meaning. Nor does the selected passage establish that every public event is insincere or every hidden event morally better. Its distinction invites a precise question about the direction of an action while retaining grounds that an ordinary secular example does not share.

The volunteer may want everyone to notice the new attitude. Perhaps this wish accompanies relief; perhaps it reflects weariness with earlier expectations. We do not need to guess. The next action requires a more concrete question. When availability is being communicated, the other person needs clarity about time rather than conviction that a profound transformation has occurred. Support can be requested if support is wanted. If these conversations merge without acknowledgment, a practical message becomes a test: has the other person recognized with sufficient seriousness that an allegedly different person now stands before them? Ordinary coordination then carries an unnecessary burden.

The freedom not to stage a performance does not cancel the freedom to speak about something important. Someone may want to explain to a trusted person why a small change carries considerable weight. That account can be precise, partial, or uncertain. It need not resemble a ceremonial speech, and a listener may not immediately find the desired response. Distinguishing disclosure from ceremonial recognition leaves room for conversation: one

person shares, another asks, and both clarify what is needed. An event need not wait for identical feelings from every witness before it can deserve thoughtful attention or be regarded as real.

Privacy is not evidence of depth. An empty promise can be hidden, while a genuine change can be announced publicly and responsibly. The presence of spectators and the direction of an action are separate questions. Matthew’s selected passage retains its religious grounds; the contemporary example offers an editorial distinction of our own. That distinction avoids converting the source into praise of unobtrusive people as a superior class. A passage without a rite may be important or still unclear. Neither elevation for having no stage nor dismissal for lacking an announcement, established sign, or special day is required.

III. When a New Attitude Becomes Conduct

In Enchiridion XLVI, translated by Thomas W. Higginson, Epictetus contrasts proclaiming oneself a philosopher with actions expressing assimilated principles. This concerns Stoic learning rather than every life transition. It nevertheless permits a specific question: what shows a difference besides a new name? In the tool room, an answer might be an availability limit stated beforehand and a handover completed. Announcing a new attitude cannot substitute for these actions. Equally, their performance proves neither personal infallibility nor completion of a supposedly obligatory stage of moral development. We are identifying a practical expression, rather than awarding a new rank.

At first, acting differently may feel unfamiliar. The person says they will leave at the agreed time and then does so, leaving an intelligible note about an unfinished task. The following day reveals something overlooked. Perhaps the chosen place for the key was inconvenient, or notice came too late. Such feedback need not cancel the decision to reconsider automatic availability. It shows how a decision meets shared life. Handover can be improved while the limit remains. An error can be acknowledged without returning to permanent availability or interpreting a practical criticism as an attack on the whole of a newly claimed identity.

External confirmation has a limited task here. Someone can confirm that a message is clear, a key has arrived, or a new rota is agreed. These are valuable facts, without being certificates of inward transformation. Looking for such a certificate in every response turns checking an action into evaluating a person. A simple observation about timing can then seem to deny an important event. A narrower question may be kinder: is tomorrow’s arrangement understood? It does not exhaust the transition’s meaning, but it prevents a practical agreement from being asked to explain the entire experience and issue a final verdict upon it.

Conduct should not become an endless examination either. One lapse need not mean that the change was invented; one successful response need not mean that it is complete forever.

Repetition, adjustment, and inconsistency can be discussed in ordinary language. These words diagnose nothing and confer no spiritual rank. A person remains able to learn, reconsider, or admit that they do not yet know how to enact a decision. Passage without a public rite need not become an invisible ceremony of perpetual proof, in which every day demands renewed evidence of entitlement to a different attitude and immunity from making a mistake.

IV. Change Does Not Always Have One Date

In Lecture IX of The Varieties of Religious Experience, William James describes change through the aims that become central for a person. His language belongs to historical psychology of religion, rather than contemporary diagnosis. Here the selected discussion offers a question about the position of interests: something formerly important may recede, while a peripheral concern begins to guide action. It proves no hidden mechanism of every transition and supplies no measurement based on one feeling. An announcement’s date may differ from a change’s history. A personal event need not be assigned a ceremonial instant after which everything supposedly became entirely different.

In our example, attention to personal time may have emerged gradually. At first the volunteer merely noticed that late messages interrupted other activities. They began answering in the morning and later realized that the limit should be stated in advance. This sequence is not an obligatory model. Someone may recognize a decision at once, struggle for words over time, or revise conditions with others before understanding what the event means. Without a public rite, these different timings need not be concealed to produce an elegant story. Change may have begun before it could be described, with some consequences still unclear and open.

A date can nevertheless help someone remember. A calendar entry, brief letter to oneself, or retained object may mark an event without assembling spectators. These forms need not claim more than the person is ready to say. The date might belong to a conversation rather than the birth of a new character. An object might recall a question instead of proving completed transformation. A personal sign can thus remain a means of attention. It need not impose a duty to reproduce the same feeling, retain the first interpretation, or conceal later uncertainty for fear of damaging an important account of oneself and one’s future.

The adopted James passage also retains a limit on explaining individual causes. In this reading, that limit discourages confident interpretation of someone else’s event. Even an apt name cannot reveal every influence operating in a life. Explanation is not therefore useless; personal account, observable action, and conjectured cause simply deserve distinction. A transition can be heard without demanding a final theory. We may not know why a decision became available at this particular moment while still understanding the action someone wishes to discuss and the conditions needed in the near future. That practical clarity need not wait for an exhaustive account of the past.

V. Privacy, Silence, and Needed Help

A private event need not be a secret. Someone can decline an audience without withholding significant information from people who depend on an agreement. Personal meaning can remain private while a practical consequence is communicated. The volunteer need not explain their entire history of responding to requests before stating a departure time. Yet an inward decision cannot simply cancel a promise to hand over a key. Quiet transition becomes a more precise idea when it allows both a protected personal sphere and a concrete response to someone who has grounds to count on an agreed action. These two needs can coexist.

Silence should not be demanded as evidence of inward strength. Someone may need conversation, advice, professional assistance, or ordinary practical help. In this essay, absence of a rite means freedom from a compulsory public performance; it does not mean refusing support. The religious image of a closed door must especially not be used to conceal harm, threats, or a situation requiring protection. No such demand is derived from Matthew. A passage about prayer cannot become an instruction to endure alone, hide danger, or regard asking for assistance as a failure of faith, maturity, or personal independence. Privacy and accessible help need not be opponents.

One trusted listener may be enough for what someone wishes to share. Sometimes no suitable listener is presently available. The absence of a witness does not prove that an event never occurred, but neither does it guarantee that every consequence is safe and understood. Both distinctions should remain. Personal meaning needs no vote, while a decision affecting others needs an appropriate form of coordination. That form might be a brief message, meeting, written handover, or question about available conditions. The actual situation guides the choice, rather than a contest between showing everything and never allowing anyone access to what is happening.

Sincerity does not require complete transparency. A person can honestly say that they are not ready to discuss causes but can explain a proposed timetable change. Another can honestly say that the timetable needs agreement, without claiming the whole personal history. Both boundaries remain. The conversation may be difficult and may not produce the desired agreement. It nevertheless contains fewer hidden conditions: support is not purchased through confession, and privacy does not release someone from every response. The passage remains personal in its meaning and becomes shared where the actual arrangements of a common activity are changing. This distribution need not be fixed forever.

VI. A Personal Decision and a Shared Position

If someone inwardly ceases to regard themselves as keeper of the tool room, the keys have not thereby reached another person and shared responsibility has not automatically changed. The distinction between meaning and position is especially clear here. A role may feel finished before its agreed ending, or obligations may end before a feeling of completion arrives. This essay determines no institution’s rules and replaces no legal advice. It helps avoid presenting personal certainty as an automatic alteration of shared arrangements. Where formal obligations are involved, their conditions require appropriate clarification. A compelling transition story is not a document, consent, or release from handover.

This does not mean an institution must authorize personal experience. Permission may concern a specific action rather than how someone understands their life. The questions can be distinguished in one conversation: participation is being reconsidered; timing, objects, and unfinished tasks need clarification. Such language does not make another person the judge of an inward event. It acknowledges that action takes place among other people and things. With this distinction maintained, disagreement about handover need not become a dispute over whether someone is entitled to experience change at all or use their own language to describe its significance.

A public rite in a particular community may have meanings and conditions of its own. Our topic neither cancels them nor claims that a private decision always performs the same function. Someone need not classify an ordinary change as religious initiation; that does not mean recognition has already been obtained where a community provides a different procedure. The possibility of transition without a rite is not substitution for a rite. Distinct names can matter: personal decision, conclusion of an agreement, initiation, return, or beginning an activity. Their differences permit respect for individual history and an event’s particular setting without appropriating recognition from others.

The fictional tool room may need only a modest new agreement. The person continues helping one day a week but no longer holds the sole set of keys. For them this is a significant passage; for a visitor it is a different access arrangement. Nobody needs to select one true description and cancel the others. Personal significance can differ from an event’s position in a shared timetable. Acknowledging this frees the event from having to be equally large for everyone. It need not express coldness: someone can understand the arrangement and attend to the story’s importance without pretending to know its entire inward scale.

VII. Witnessing Without an Examination of Depth

A witness can help without certifying completed transformation. They can remember earlier conditions, hear new words, and ask about a next step. This response need not be an initiation. When someone says they will answer only during specified hours, the hours deserve understanding first. If the decision was difficult, that difficulty can also be heard. Separating these responses avoids demanding the impossible from a listener: verification of a soul’s condition, prediction of a decision’s durability, and a guarantee of future success. An ordinary conversation can be attentive without becoming a ceremony of recognition, an assessment of maturity, or proof that everything preceding it has ended.

The opposite extreme treats any wish for a witness as dependency or weakness. That judgment is equally hurried. Someone may want to share joy, anxiety, or relief without transferring decision-making authority. A witness to key handover may simply improve clarity. A telephone call afterward may answer a wish not to be alone. Such actions need not turn private passage into a spectacle. What matters is the authority participants receive: listening, clarifying, helping with a task, or delivering a binding verdict on a new identity. Naming the role more precisely reduces the need to guess at an unspoken demand.

No single sufficient response can be specified beforehand. One event requires a signature, another an agreed time, another an opportunity to speak without immediate interpretation. Someone may not yet know what they want and discover it through conversation. That uncertainty need not be failure. It can belong to an event still finding expression. Instead of demanding that tone of voice communicate everything, space can remain for questions. What needs hearing now? What requires a decision? What need not yet be assessed? These questions permit respect without assuming that another person can already perceive every quiet passage and recognize it without error.

Epictetus XXXV does not require every action to be hidden from others. This is an important boundary in reading it beside XLVI. Declining to proclaim oneself a philosopher differs from fearing visibility. A contemporary person can enact a new agreement openly without staging a performance of inward depth. Visibility can occur without becoming the purpose. This distinction prevents quiet transition from becoming a cult of invisibility. The Stoic text nevertheless supplies no ready ethical authorization for our scene. A particular action’s justification concerns its grounds and consequences, rather than one selected quotation or a narrator’s confidence that an event matters.

VIII. Continuing Without Fixing a New Identity

When the tool room’s arrangements change, life has not reached a final version. The volunteer may still stay late by choice without returning to automatic availability. The new limit may prove too rigid or too vague, and a different form of participation may be wanted a month later. Every adjustment need not be described as betrayal of an important event. Personal decision permits continuation involving new information and other people. Absence of a public rite may make revision easier, without guaranteeing it. A ceremonially marked event can also be understood flexibly when its sign is not asked to stop all subsequent history.

A new self-description becomes burdensome when it forbids ordinary variation. Someone has decided to undertake less and now fears offering any help: others might conclude that the former person has returned. The transition’s label then directs action rather than helping it become intelligible. A more precise account retains an object: a particular expectation was reconsidered, an obligation changed, or refusal of certain requests became possible. None of these establishes a ban on helping altogether. Someone can avoid restoring an earlier arrangement without organizing a new identity around continual proof of difference from yesterday’s self, acquaintances, or their imagined opinions.

Ordinary language matters particularly when a passage does not feel elevated. Tiredness may remain, embarrassment may appear, or nothing resembling celebration may be present. This essay treats such states as neither signs of success nor signs of failure. It prescribes no emotional accompaniment. Known facts can be named: a conversation occurred, a date was stated, an object transferred, or attention changed. The rest may remain unclear. This does not abandon personal meaning. It gives meaning room without requiring immediate proof of value through emotional intensity, a striking image, or a persuasive story that must sound identical to every listener.

Transition without a public rite is therefore no higher stage of life. It is one way to describe an event in which personal change does not require compulsory collective performance. Witnesses, religious forms, formal conditions, and assistance retain their places where they genuinely belong to a situation. In our example, a changed attitude toward availability can be distinguished from transferring keys and wishing to speak about something important. A passage can continue quietly, be expressed through conversation, or receive a sign later. Its worth is not measured by audience size. Having no spectators does not remove the need to consider others and be precise about promises, or the freedom to revise one’s own explanation.

What this means in practice

One can begin by naming an object of change rather than an entirely new identity. In the fictional example, this is availability beyond agreed hours. Personal meaning can then be separated from what others need to know: response time, key location, and unfinished tasks. This is an invitation to reflection rather than a universal transition procedure.

If a witness is wanted, their role can be clarified. Is listening needed, assistance with handover, discussion of conditions, or company after a difficult conversation? Support need not become initiation, and absence of ceremony need not impose solitude. Personal causes can remain private while practical consequences are communicated.

Before acting, personal decision deserves distinction from existing agreements. Formal obligations require appropriate clarification; this essay alters none. Danger, harm, and a need for protection are not made secret to preserve an attractive image of quiet change. Seeking suitable help remains compatible with a private event.

Afterward, what occurred can be distinguished from what is unknown. Clear handover proves no complete transformation; awkwardness proves no absence of change. Arrangements can be adjusted, words reconsidered, or a sign chosen later. None requires compulsory growth, identical feelings among participants, or a final account of oneself.

Key quotation

> *“when thou hast shut thy door”*

Matthew 6:6, fragment within an instruction about prayer; King James Version.

Connections between traditions

1. **The addressee of an act: Matthew 6:1–6; Epictetus XLVI, 300–302.** Prayer’s address and philosophical conduct differ from seeking an appearance before people. The shared question concerns the addressee, not attendance. Comparison separates an action’s content from its presentation, permitting quiet change without automatic superiority of privacy. Address to the Father is nevertheless not Stoic learning. Neither text establishes a general prohibition on public rites or certifies the sincerity of hidden action.

2. **A changed aim and an enacted principle: James IX, 1216–1227; Epictetus XLVI, 300–302.** James distinguishes central from peripheral aims; Epictetus distinguishes principle from proclamation. Their shared question asks what difference participates in action. The comparison keeps a new name beside practical expression, preventing an announcement from

standing for a completed passage. Historical description of religious change is nevertheless not Stoic prescription, diagnosis, or proof of the cause of a contemporary decision.

3. **Private action and limits of explanation: Matthew 6:6; James IX, 1228–1231.** Prayer behind a closed door has a particular addressee; James's explanatory limit leaves individual causes unknown. The shared question asks what visibility cannot give a spectator. Comparison separates religious direction from investigative knowledge, preserving private meaning without confident interpretation of another's soul. God is not reduced to a psychological observer; ignorance verifies no theology; privacy justifies neither concealment of harm nor refusal of assistance.

4. **Visibility without compulsory performance: Epictetus XXXV, 267 and XLVI, 300–302; Matthew 6:1–6.** Distinguishing conduct from proclamation need not require fear of visibility; Matthew distinguishes action for human spectators. The shared question asks whether a witness's presence equals the purpose of impressing them. Separating these features permits open coordination without staging a new identity. Epictetus's judgment of right action and Christian prayer nevertheless retain different grounds. Comparison supplies no ready authorization for every visible or hidden act.

5. **Description and demand: James IX, 1180–1181 and 1228–1231; Epictetus XLVI, 300–302.** James describes religious process and limits of causal explanation; Epictetus instructs a learner in enacted principles. Their shared question concerns what transition language can claim. Keeping description distinct from prescription prevents absence of a rite from becoming compulsory silence, and action from becoming an examination of required growth. Historical psychology establishes no contemporary health norm, Stoic instruction represents no whole collection of traditions, and neither source guarantees our fictional example's outcome.

Primary sources

Only listed passages are adopted. Matthew was read in the King James Version and Epictetus in Higginson's identified translation; both Russian quotations are United Wisdom's own translations from these English texts. James was read in original English. Ancient originals were not collated. Christian address, Stoic learning, and historical description of religious process retain different grounds. The fictional participant is not presented as an observed case.

- Matthew 6:1–6, King James Version; all six verses of selected passage, BibleGateway.
- Epictetus. Enchiridion XXXV and XLVI, Thomas W. Higginson; complete selected chapters, Project Gutenberg 45109.

• William James. The Varieties of Religious Experience, Lecture IX; definition 1180–1181 and analysis 1212–1231, original English, printing 1917, Project Gutenberg 621.

Tags

transition, privacy, personal change, rite, publicity, witness, recognition, participation, responsibility, agreement, attention, action, principle, Epictetus, Matthew, William James, prayer, Stoicism, aim, expression, conversation, assistance, boundary, time, handover, role, unfinishedness, promise, visibility, autonomy

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.