

## **Holiday Stress Relief: The Art Of Possibility**

*by DOC ORMAN, M.D.*

The final stress relief book I want to recommend to you this week is *The Art Of Possibility: Transforming Professional And Personal Life*. This New York Times bestseller was written by Rosamund and Benjamin Zander. Roz Zander is a psychotherapist and designer of innovative personal and professional development programs. Ben Zander is a teacher and conductor of the Boston Philharmonic.

### *Transformation And Possibility*

The best way to sum up this fantastic book is to focus on the two most important words in the title: transformation and possibility.

The constant theme throughout this book is there are two distinct worlds each of us inhabit simultaneously. The first is the world we typically see and know, which the authors describe as the “downward spiral,” where life is dominated by the twin imperatives of survival and competition.

The second world we live in is the world of Possibility (with a capital “P”). When you step into this world, you view life as a moment-to-moment product of your own creation, based upon the stories you consciously choose to tell. In this world, you can continue to choose to view life from a survival/competitive perspective, or you can

choose to view yourself and your life in more empowering, fulfilling, and cooperative ways.

Both worlds are always available to us every moment of every day. The first one shows up effortlessly, without much conscious direction on our part. The second world—the world of Possibility—only shows up when we actively create it. And the purpose of this book is to invite you to spend more time living in, and exploring, this very rich world, by giving you concepts, strategies, and “practices” of thought that you can use every day to transport yourself here.

*Warning: You May Never Be The Same*

In my opinion, this is clearly one of the best books you will ever find for living life happily. I actually recommend that you get the audiobook version, because the stories both Roz and Ben tell in their own words and in their own voices are extremely powerful, moving, inspiring, and transformational.

Now, many people today casually use the word “transformation” without much clarity, precision, or understanding about what it really means. For me, the word transformation means something very unique and special that isn’t easily produced and that doesn’t happen very often. But when it does occur, both you and your life—going forward—are never quite the same.

You can tell true transformation by its unmistakable footprints:

1. The way you view yourself and the world is changed dramatically.
2. This change is almost always for the better. In other words, it allows you to accomplish things, or feel better, or solve problems that have limited you for many years.
3. Once a transformational change occurs, it lasts forever. In other words, you never go back to seeing the world or thinking about the world in the ways you previously did before the transformation occurred.
4. In short, you don't just gain some new information. Who you are as a human being is changed for the better—permanently!

Now, it's entirely possible that additional transformations might occur for you in the future, that once again will change the way you view the world or think about important things. But the hallmark of true transformation is that once this happens for you, you never go back to your old ways of thinking. The primary reason for this is that your new way of looking at things brings you so much joy, happiness, success, and other meaningful benefits that you wouldn't trade it for anything (except perhaps an even better way for look at and understanding life).

Here are just a few examples of personal transformations that tend to be permanent once they occur:

- Going from being a person who hates physical exercise and struggles to stick to a regular fitness regimen to a person who thoroughly enjoys exercising daily and who wouldn't dare pass up an opportunity to exercise unless something extremely urgent intervenes.
- Going from a person who frequently gets angry, multiple times each day, and who is constantly irritated and frustrated by life's minor inconveniences, such as traffic jams, long waits in checkout lines, etc. to a person who almost never gets angry anymore, and who calmly and happily takes most small inconveniences in life in stride.
- Going from a person who is habitually consumed by fear, dread, and great physical discomfort just by the thought of having to speak in public to a person who can stand up in front of a group of people and deliver a spontaneous, unrehearsed talk with incredible calm, self-confidence, enthusiasm, joy, and great anticipation of the very next time you'll have an opportunity to speak in public again.

These are the types of powerful, positive, and permanent life-enhancing changes that I am pointing to when I use the term transformation, and it's also the same view of transformation that the Zanders surely adopted when they created this wonderful book for us to read (or listen to).

I'm not saying that by reading this book, you will achieve the specific types of transformations that I listed above. In fact, I'm pretty sure you won't, because none of these changes are expressly addressed in this work.

But if you really engage with this book, and let it sink in, you may never be the same in many important life-enhancing ways. That's another reason why I prefer the audio version of this book. Because the lessons it contains are so very helpful, that I can listen to them over and over again while driving in my car.