

## CHANGE is Coming

As in any aspect of life that is difficult to approach, changing lifestyles, career paths, habits, beliefs or behaviors can be a daunting task. Sometimes it may seem impossible. Changing the way in which we do things takes a process. I find that there are periods in my life in which I am growing and changing very much and other periods I do not seem to be making any headway. In some areas I have been able to make successful changes effortlessly and in others it is slow, painstaking, seems sometimes non-existent.

Research shows that when you try to accomplish changes that you are not ready for you set yourself up for failure. I work with clients who want to make changes and early on in their coaching I typically assess with them their readiness for change and where they are in the change process. Knowledge of where you are in the change process will determine what necessary processes and tools you will apply in order to make progress.

In James Prochaska's book, "*Changing for Good*", he describes his change model which is extremely powerful in telling us a great deal about how people prepare to change their lifestyles and how they can change successfully.

**He outlines six stages of successful change as:**

- 1. Pre-contemplation**
- 2. Contemplation**
- 3. Preparation**
- 4. Action**
- 5. Maintenance**
- 6. Termination**

You will be far more successful at making changes and sustaining them by taking valuable steps in each stage of change. I will cover the first 3 stages in order for you to be ready to take action. It is important to know that you may go back and forth through stages even as you approach one area.

### **Pre-contemplation**

In pre-contemplation you are not aware YOU need to change in order to impact an area you desire change in. You want things to change in your personal life, at work or in business but not recognizing your contribution to why it is not

changing. Most people who have a strong desire for improving an area of their life will make necessary changes if they know what and how to change. In this stage it is helpful to do some fact finding and reflection toward gaining self-awareness.

Describe the problem at hand and what are you not doing or doing that contributes.

What obstacles have you placed and what do you see you do to maintain those obstacles?

What beliefs or patterns of behavior might you be maintain that keep you stuck?

What would *others* suggest you could do to affect change?

*When you recognize there is something for you to change, you may be ready for the next stage.*

## **Contemplation**

Here you have the intention to change but not ready for action. You have been thinking about changing, wanting change and even knowing how to change yet feel stuck, worried, or fearful of change. Jumping into action at this point would actually result in failure. Instead it is time to understand your motivation for change and how important it truly is to you.

It is time to consider,

What will the effects of not changing produce?

What changes will you need to make toward success?

What are the pros and cons of changing?

What will your future look like if you do change?

What are you giving up or leaving behind in order to change?

It is not enough to have an analysis of why you can benefit from change. Such analysis is not a motivator. Instead seeing a truth that may even feel uncomfortable will influence your behavior. Feeling the desire instead of just knowing what you want will make an important difference.

*Once you feel your desire to change coming from within, feeling excitement and anticipation you may be ready for the next stage.*

## **Preparation**

You are getting ready for action and first need to develop a well thought out plan. This plan can include anticipating obstacles and handling your ambivalence about changing. This stage sets up what is necessary for change to happen and that is commitment to action.

Focus on your desire and solutions instead of the problem.

Create solutions with Plan A and Plan B to those anticipated obstacles or habits.

Be creative and define the action which is most suitable for you.

Make change a priority. Build into your life time and energy to work on your goals. This may require tough choices.

Know your strengths which you can bring to your action plan. Go to [www.authentic happiness.com](http://www.authentic happiness.com) to take a free self-assessment to learn more about your strengths.

Begin to build your support network by announcing your plan to change.

*Now that you have taken necessary steps in preparing for change you may be ready for ACTION.*

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**Coaching** assists clients who want to make transformational changes in their lives. If you desire to change an area or areas of your life, feel free to contact me at (978)686-5693 or [lisa@baystatecoaching.com](mailto:lisa@baystatecoaching.com) for a **FREE consult**.

**I thank you in advance for forwarding this newsletter** to any of your friends and family who may be interested.

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