

A. Understand the Process of Change

1. Like many things, the process of change is really very simple, but not always easy. The essence of this process is eloquently described in the following essay by western born spiritual adept Franklin Jones:

The Secret of How to Change

True change and higher human adaptation are not made on the basis of any self-conscious resistance to old, degenerative, and subhuman habits. Change is not a matter of not doing something. It is a matter of doing something else, something that is inherently right, free, and pleasurable. Therefore, the key is insight and the freedom to feel and participate in ways of functioning that are right and new.

The tendencies and patterns of our earlier adaptations are not wrong. They were appropriate enough in their own moment of creation, and there is no need to feel guilt of despair about them. Likewise, efforts to oppose and change them are basically fruitless. Such efforts are forms of conflict, and they only reinforce the modes of self-possession.

What is not used becomes obsolete, whereas what is opposed is kept before us. Therefore, the creative principle of change is the one of relaxed inspection and awareness of existing tendencies and persistent, full feeling orientation to right, new, regenerative functional patterns. If this is done consistently... free growth is assured.

Have no regrets... All that has been done by anyone had its logic in its time. Whatever is your habit in this moment is not wrong. It is simply a beginning. No habit is necessary, but it is only tending to persist, because it has not yet been replaced by further growth. Hear the Teaching of Truth, and understand what is the right, ultimate, and regenerative pattern of each function of Man. Feel free of all negative judgments about what you have done and what you tend to do. Turn with full feeling-attention to the creative affair of new adaptation...

B. Have an Intention to Change

1. The stronger your intention to change, the greater your motivation to achieve the change will be.
2. Make up a list of all the things that you would be able to do if you didn't have the particular behavior that you are trying to change. Do this in more than one sitting and really use your imagination. The more benefits you can find for changing the behavior the stronger your motivation will be.

C. Overcome Your Fear of Change

1. Fear will fall away if you move slowly, but surely, through the process of change. Never take on more than you can handle at the time.
2. Fear will fall away during the process of inspection. There can be no fear where there is knowledge. As you develop awareness and understanding of the behavior, your concerns will diminish.
3. There will be no fear where there is no denial or loss. The goal is not to quit anything, but to develop superior new behaviors to replace the old ones which will fall away through disuse.

D. Develop Awareness of Your Behaviors

1. Some behaviors will fall away just through the 'weight of inspection,' and without further effort.
2. The real secret to this process is to closely inspect your feelings. This is because your emotions control your behavior, and your feelings are your conscious awareness of your emotional state. They are the 'tattle tales' of your subconscious mind. They reveal exactly what you truly think and believe. Ultimately, it is your true beliefs that control your emotions, which in turn control your behavior.

BELIEF > FEELING/EMOTION > BEHAVIOR

3. It is most helpful to temporarily keep a journal or diary, and to log every aspect of the behavior you are trying to change.
4. During the process of inspection you should try to answer the following questions:
 - a. What do I do?
 - b. When do I do it?
 - c. Where do I do it?
 - d. How often do I do it?
 - e. How do I do it?
 - f. How do I feel before I do it?
 - g. How do I feel while I am doing it?
 - h. How do I feel after I do it?
 - i. What is the 'net effect' of doing it?
 - j. What are the perceived benefits of doing it?
 - k. What are the beliefs that I hold that create this behavior?(See Worksheet at end.)
5. It is not important to know 'why you do it' or what the original cause of your behavior was. The purpose of this process is to discover what you would do if you didn't engage in your current behavior.

6. Break down big behaviors into smaller component behaviors for closer inspection. For example, if you're 'hooked' on shopping, is it the browsing or the buying that 'turns you on'? Inspect each one separately. Often it is one subtle little feeling that sets off a whole chain of behaviors.

E. Develop New Behaviors

1. Try to determine what superior, new and positive actions you could perform that would provide the same 'net effects' and benefits as your old behaviors.
2. In addition to new behaviors, you will also have to develop new thoughts and beliefs to accompany them. Some behaviors will fall away just with a change in your 'belief system', and without further effort.
3. One way to develop alternatives is to read books and articles about the specific behavior you are trying to change, or to listen to taped self-help programs.
4. Talk to other people who have succeeded in eliminating the same behavior.
5. Get yourself in a relaxed condition and then write out on the top of a sheet of paper 'What could I do instead of _____?' Then proceed quickly to write out the first 10 or 20 ideas that 'pop' into your mind. Don't judge them or edit them, just write them down as fast as you can. Do this for several days in a row and eventually a few really good ideas will emerge.
6. Try using hypnosis, self-hypnosis or creative visualization techniques to develop alternatives.
7. You might consider using various pendulum techniques for developing or testing out new behaviors.
8. If you are so inclined, occult methods such as 'I Ching' or 'Tarot' might be useful.

F. Implement New Behaviors

1. Just start performing the new behaviors with no concern for the old, even though they might persist for a time. If they coincide or conflict, do the new behavior over the old one and always before. For example, if you're now going to eat fruit instead of cookies, eat the fruit first then the cookies.
2. Use affirmations to help establish your new behavior. Whenever possible, use the terms 'effortlessly and easily' in your affirmations to make the process of change as pleasurable as possible. Here's a useful transition affirmation to help you remember your new behavior:

"If ever I feel like _____, I will _____ instead!." **OR;**

"If ever I start to _____ . I'll remember to _____ instead."

3. Visualization is a very powerful tool for implementing new behaviors, since the mind cannot tell the difference between an imagined experience and a real one. Use your 'awareness journal' to identify the times and places you are most likely to engage your old behavior and then visualize yourself performing your new one instead. Do this often and with as much feeling as possible.
4. Even though your old behavior will persist for a time, simply refuse to accept it without resisting it. A good affirmation for this purpose is:
"No! No! No! This is not so. I refuse to accept this behavior!"

G. Do Not Resist Old Behaviors

1. Whatever you resist you give energy to. When you resist your old behaviors you keep them before you and they continue to control you.
2. To eliminate unwanted behaviors through counter efforts and resistance is known as the 'white knuckle' approach. It is ultimately unsuccessful for most people, and the strong willed folks who are successful are usually not very pleasant to be around.
3. The same principles that work in 'weight lifting' (resistance training) also apply to our behaviors. 'What you resist you strengthen!' That's the principle. Consider the fact that your behaviors are nothing more than habitual muscular activity. So when you resist them, they only grow stronger and when you neglect them, they atrophy through disuse. The same principle works in reverse to strengthen new positive behaviors. You might even say that behavior modification is a form of 'psychological weight lifting'.
4. It is the uncomfortableness of resistance that makes so many people reluctant to change anything about themselves. This is the very source of the fear that seems to accompany change.

H. Evaluate New Behaviors

1. The continued use of a journal has proven to be an excellent way to evaluate the effectiveness of your new behaviors.
2. If you can see no results from a new behavior after about 3 weeks let it go and try something else.
3. If you can determine even a slight improvement from a new behavior, stick with it. Perhaps you may want to modify or intensify it or even add some other new behaviors to it.
4. Expect new ideas to keep 'popping up' as you proceed in the process of change. Incorporate them when appropriate.
5. If you encounter great resistance to a new behavior don't discard it, just set it aside. It may be that you're just not ready for it yet.

I. Persist In the Process

1. The secret of success in the process of change is 'persistence'. You would not have the desire to change if you didn't already have the ability to make that change. You must simply persist until you do.
2. It's alright to give up on a particular idea or new behavior, just don't ever give up trying new ideas and behaviors.
3. There's no way to tell how long it may take to change an old behavior. It may take days or weeks or months or even years. But if you persist it will always come about.

J. Additional Ideas

1. Don't try to change all your old behaviors all at once. You'll be more successful if you take them one at a time.
2. If you're involved in highly addictive and destructive behavior patterns, such as drug abuse, you should seek professional help.
3. Try to make the process of change as pleasurable as possible. Be humorous about it and try to turn it into a game.

K. Additional Reading

1. 'Act of Will' - Roberto Assagioli
2. 'Frogs into Princes' - Bandler & Grinder
3. 'Positive Addiction' - Glasser
4. 'The Potent Self' - Feldenkrais

Changing My Ways Worksheet

- a. What do I do?
- b. When do I do it?
- c. Where do I do it?
- d. How often do I do it?
- e. How do I do it?
- f. How do I feel before I do it?
- g. How do I feel while I am doing it?
- h. How do I feel after I do it?
- i. What is the 'net effect' of doing it?
- j. What are the perceived benefits of doing it?
- k. What are the beliefs that I hold that create this behavior?

My Affirmation for Change

"If ever I feel like _____, I will _____ instead!."

"If ever I start to _____, I'll remember to _____ instead."

Name: _____ Date: _____