

Change for the better!

Dr. Larry Ohlhauser

Change. It is not always easy. Dissatisfied with the status quo, are you looking for some thing challenging, but too resistant to change? The very thought of change makes you tired and fear you can't handle more demand on your time and you feel you haven't anything left to offer? Change means leaving the place we know and going some where that's new, strange. There is safety and comfort in what we know, even if it's not the best place for us to be. Change can be frightening because there is no guarantee that the new territory - or the new you - will really be worth the effort or that you can even make it happen in the first place. **To some degree, all change is a leap of faith.**

When you have a **positive past experience with change**, new territory is less daunting. Change can be very good: changing a diaper, changing a light bulb or changing your oil. We're pretty convinced before we make those changes that positive gains lay on the other side. Tremendous benefit lies on the other side of the deliberate and positive changes you make in your lifestyle. The way you approach change can make it much less daunting and much more appealing – very much like and adventure!

The very process of change, not only the outcome, can be extremely rewarding.

First, let's at how we actually create change. Here are the essential ingredients for real and lasting change, in business and in every other area of life.

- **Knowledge**
- **Attitude**
- **Preparation**
- **Action**
- **Evaluation**

Let's examine each of these in more detail.

Knowledge

Knowledge is the first key to change because we change only what we recognize needs improving. The knowledge may come actively or passively. Here are some examples.

- You discover that your blood pressure is out of control because
 - A. you went for a routine physical, or
 - B. you collapsed and landed in the hospital.
- You discover that your partner is feeling neglected because you

- A. you noticed that he or she has been withdrawn and you simply asked why, or
 - B. he or she just tore a strip off of you.
- You realized that the bank has made an error because
 - A. you found it when you received your statement online or
 - B. you suddenly don't have enough money this month to cover your mortgage.

We discover how well our lives are working through deliberate observation or through untimely, often very emotional wake-up calls. Once we recognize that change is necessary, gathering accurate and relevant information helps us decide how best to produce results.

- Do I understand what the real problem is?
- Is there more than one problem?
- What's the best solution?
- Do I know what I have to do?
- What will be the benefits of making this change?

We've all heard, "It's not what you know, it's who you know." The truth is, it's both. Information and insights are gained in three primary ways.

- Personal experience (Like the time I learned that my mother was right, don't touch the frozen steel pipe, with your bare fingers in the middle of the winter.)
- The experience and knowledge of others (Consulting people who have more experience and knowledge than we do.)
- Reading or research. (Great books and internet sources.)

Knowledge gives us insight into where change is needed, informs how best to progress through that change and provides the necessary incentive to commit to change. Knowledge is truly power.

Attitude

Literally, attitude is an outlook, a mindset or way of thinking. It also speaks of our positive. Our attitude is our stand point, viewpoint or stance. So where do you stand? It is critical to identify both what we stand for and why. Some things are our responsibility and others are not. When we identify a problem, we must honestly determine if it is ours to solve or if it is someone else's responsibility.

We are the only ones with the power to alter our circumstances, lead our lives and take ourselves where we really want to go. If we don't assume responsibility- we won't get anywhere, and we'll have no one to blame but ourselves.

Fundamentally to any *change that counts* is framing it within a larger, life sized “why.” This kind of “why” has to do with quality of life, personal satisfaction and principles of life purpose.

Clients have given me some reasons than want to lose weight:

- I’ve realized that I’m putting my health at risk.
- I want to have more energy
- I want to look younger
- I want to hike the Grand Canyon

Have you asked yourself, “**Why do I want to be healthy?**” What life-sized “why” might good health address? How does this goal contribute to my life purpose?

Preparation

Only a fool would try to climb Mount Everest without first preparing carefully and adequately. Good preparation becomes the difference between life and death. It is also the difference between success and failure. How many times have you gone into an important meeting – one where contracts, your job status, your reputation or serious dollars were on the line without preparing adequately? You probably did your homework diligently and carefully first. The more there is at stake, the more important preparation becomes.

To facilitate change you map out how you are going to make it happen. You come up with an effective game plan. You think strategically and set goals.

Action

While research and planning are necessary to achieve any goal, if you never get started, or if you never implement your strategies, they are useless. The course of action should be clear if you’ve made good goals. You’ll be able to actualize your plan by taking individual, calculated steps toward your chosen destination. Remember progress is made by taking a series of same but deliberate action steps. Each step is vital to racing your goal. Resist the temptation to procrastinate, quit or take shortcuts; keep going no matter what.

Evaluation

When you go on a long journey through unfamiliar territory, you check from time to time to make sure you are on-course and still have every thing you need. Evaluating your progress at regular intervals keeps you on the right tack. Reassess regularly and don’t be afraid to revisit your goals and make adjustments. Tweaking the process is much better than just giving up because it’s not working. To maintain your initial motivation and drive, build a system of reward for each time you reach a certain milestone.

For example:

- For every 10 pounds you lose, treat yourself to a new outfit or a night out to show yourself off.
- For every relationship milestone treat yourself to a fun date
- For every debt you pay off, reward yourself with a modest splurge on a luxury item.

Real change is possible. You have the power to make it happen; but you must take the lead.

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