



the MIND reader

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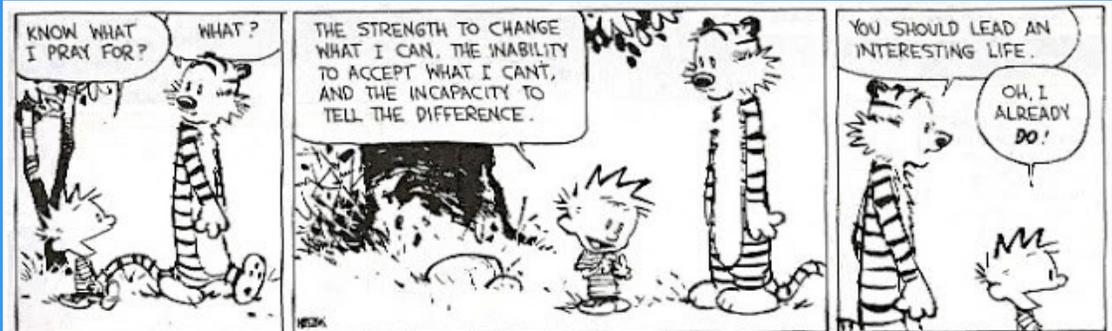
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Change, Death & Taxes By: Doug Blocksma

I was 22 and had arrived in Santa Cruz California two weeks prior, having landed a gig at a youth camp set amongst the states famous redwoods. The man who had hired me had asked me to join him for a cup of coffee, on a day that had turned out to be his 44th birthday. As friendships between men do, I quickly enjoyed pointing out that Bob was turning exactly double my age that day, and that he was essentially electable to be carbon dated at any moment. Bob smiled back at me (never a good sign) and had the audacity to be kind and thoughtful in return. "You know, I enjoyed being 43, but I'm excited to find out what being 44 will actually be like. I feel like I learned and saw a lot last year, which makes me hope that it can only continue, you know?" I had no response for such genuine and mindful repartee.

CHANGE AHEAD ↑



Stage Your Change

By: Mark Russell

Did you know that there are universally identifiable stages to the change process? If you can identify where someone else might be in the "stages of change"*, then you might be able to more effectively help them move into the next stage, which is one step closer to action. The following is a crash course in each stage and what you can expect in the change process:

1. Pre-contemplation – You are not ready for change. You are either unaware that something needs to change or are just not interested in changing. Even when directly confronted with the need for change, you will likely downplay some of the reasons for change and focus more on the reasons NOT to change. A simple example would be a smoker who is uninterested in quitting despite being warned by his physician of the damage it does to the body.
2. Contemplation – You start to desire to change; however, you are still not in a place to engage in actual change. This is an excellent time to gather information and consider exactly what you want to change and why. To follow our smoker example, he begins to accept the negative impacts of smoking (on health, social life, finances, etc.) and develops a small desire to quit.

IN NEXT ISSUE: The Oscars

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Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

By:
Sheri Fluellen

~ God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. ~

effectively (concrete behaviors as defined by their values) in the presence of difficult or disruptive “private” (cognitive or psychological) events. While changing the behavior *may* lead to a change in feeling, the emphasis remains on changing the behavior regardless of accompanying emotion.

For example, when a guy doesn’t go to work because he is anxious about a confrontation with his boss, it is encouraged that he goes to work while feeling anxious. Recognizing that he can live with anxiety reduces and may ultimately eliminate the control that the anxiety exerts in his life.

One way to remember the principles of ACT can be described as:

- A- accept the effects of life’s hardships
- C- choose directional values, and
- T- take action. (2)

“Acceptance of what has happened is the first step to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune.”
~William James

“Acceptance doesn't mean resignation; it means understanding that something is what it is and that there's got to be a way through it.”
~ Michael J Fox

The idea of acceptance is not new. The serenity prayer was adopted as the mantra of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) many years ago. The psychology world has also come to understand the importance of acceptance in the process of change.

It almost seems counter-intuitive though. If you come to accept something, then don't you give up on changing it? Think again. The idea of acceptance in change (as purported in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) is this: rather than fighting the feeling attached to a behavior (i.e. shame of overeating), you can observe yourself as having the feeling but still act (have shame while changing eating habit). Said another way, it helps you consistently choose to act

Stage Your Change (Continued)



“If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.”
~ Maya Angelou

3. Preparation – You are now centered on planning. You have done your research and understand your desire to change. Now you can begin to explore how you would like to make your change. Our smoker friend is concerned about health risks, so he wants to quit cold turkey. However, he feels like that could be difficult and looks into using a nicotine patch to cut the cravings. He may also talk to friends who have successfully quit to learn what has worked for others.
4. Action – You are now actually carrying out your plan for change. The smoker has thrown away his cigarettes, started wearing a nicotine patch, and has found a friend that wants to be available to talk when cravings are particularly bad.
5. Maintenance – You are now doing what needs to happen to keep the new behaviors intact. This stage is particularly important in order for changes to be lasting. We often get excited about change but fail to successfully keep it going. Our smoker has not had a cigarette in six months but notices that he is having frequent cravings especially when he is around other smokers. A quick text to his or her friend is enough remind him or her that the change is worth it even if it is difficult.
6. Relapse/Termination – Sometimes change is successful and is maintained without a hitch (which would be termination because change is complete). However, more often than not a very real part of any change is relapse to old behaviors. Recognizing that relapse is a very common part of the change process can help you to continue to work on your change rather than giving up because of a relapse. Our smoker caved and had a cigarette last night. By reminding himself that this relapse is normal, he is able to refocus and continue working toward completely quitting without losing momentum.

Pre-contemplation	Contemplation	Determination/Preparation	Action	Maintenance	Relapse/Recycle
	 Fence				
		0-3 Months	3-6 Months	Over 6 months	
No; Denial	Maybe; Ambivalence	Yes, Let's Go; Motivated	Doing It; Go	Living It	Start Over; Ugh!!

* In 1977, James Prochaska and his colleagues developed what is called the Transtheoretical Model, which has come to be called the stages of change). (1)

MIND SPA

By: Sheri Fluellen

Mind Spa has been focused on helping the community of Cheyenne in various ways since its inception in 2010. There are countless ways in which we have been blessed and thus able to grow (by adding to our team, increasing specialties and adding to our physical space).

In March, 2014, we are approaching an exciting

physical change— **Mind Spa is moving to a new location!** Even though it is only 5 blocks from our current locale, the new location has easier access to main roads, to the bus stop and greenway, and most importantly is large enough to unite all our team members under one roof



and allow for continued growth. It is historic home in Cheyenne, located at 719 E 17th Street. While our location is changing, you will find that the rest of Mind Spa is staying the same.

- The feel of our office will not change. You will always be greeted by a warm face and a bowl of candy.
- Our accommodations will continue to be warm, inviting, and comfortable. We often hear people say, “I would love to live in a place like this!”
- Our culture will not change. You will always be treated sincerely and with respect. You’ll also hear and see humor often.
- Our ethics will not change as we work hard to do the best thing for each person we have the privilege of working with.

In celebration of this transition for Mind Spa, keep your eyes and ears open for our community open house after we have officially moved in.

How to Make Your Brain Work For You: Executive Functioning

By: Sheri Fluellen

Executive functioning refers to the process of how your brain work to complete complicated tasks. Three essential processes that occur in the context of executive functioning are: attending, inhibiting, and working memory. (FYI- For those of you that have ADHD/ADD, you will notice that one or more of these three functions are naturally difficult for you.) These are three critical features that you can also harness intentionally when you are considering change. Let’s explore them a little further.

Attending: You need to focus your attention on whatever it is that you want to remember and integrate into your life experience. This means that you need to intentionally pay attention to what you want to change.

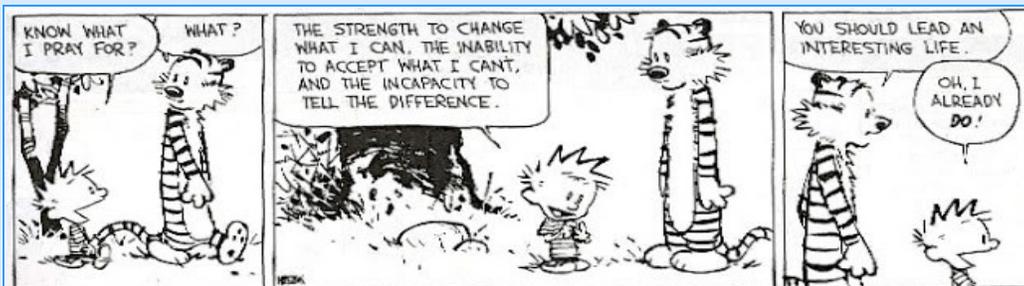
Inhibition: You need to inhibit your attention from being distracted to the things that aren’t really important and that you don’t want to integrate into your life experience. It isn’t enough to just focus on what you want. You concurrently need to focus away from what you don’t want.

Working Memory: You also need to keep what you are attending to in the “forefront” of your mind. You need to constantly remind yourself of what you are wanting and where you are headed. The reality is that if you focus on what you DON’T want, then that is where your mind is living, what it is breathing, and what it is feeling. It can be overwhelming and stifling. Your mind can get stuck in a rut of the negative, what you don’t want. Working memory is all about keeping your mind on what you want. You are breathing change, positivism, motivation, and will find yourself far more successful. A practical example of working memory is trying to remember a phone number. 307-632-6391 (I hope this isn’t anyone’s real number!) You repeat this phone

number to yourself over and over again to remember it.

If you get too distracted (lacking inhibition) for long enough, you lose the number.

So don’t let yourself get distracted from your goals and the change you are headed towards.



Change, Death & Taxes (continued)

Being at least a decade on now, along with the development of not just age but relationships, family and everything else I try to remember this conversation with Bob when I feel like change is carrying me along like a rapid river, and my boat has capsized a mile back. Bob had opened himself to the possibility that while change was not always subjectively *good*, it certainly always was (eventually) a blessing. And while he didn't state it exactly, he was striving to live in a posture of a balancing act: live in the moment, be hopeful and expectant for the future and not bring along the past any more than you really need to.

Living in this balance is certainly a dynamic arrangement: there are times when you focus on the near future and rightly so, as well as times when you can reminisce with friends. But to live permanently in either realm is folly. As I look up at another birthday on my own calendar, I think about Bob and my desire to live in the moment as it passes by, and to allow myself to hold loosely but faithfully to my hopeful future and the past, regardless of the content or the tone. Because if change really is inevitable, I'd prefer to sit in the here-and-now and accept it rather than get caught up in the riptide.



Look, I can't promise I'll change, but I can promise I'll pretend to change.



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