



NINE STEPS to Making Change Easier

By Kelli Richards

Change doesn't have to be hard; here are some tips to make it a smoother process. This is a time of the year when many of us seek to make changes and adjustments to our lives. Some find making changes to their behavior a challenge because they've been unsuccessful, but change doesn't have to be hard and you can set yourself up for success. Change is easier to take on when you make simple small adjustments vs trying to overhaul things in one fell swoop.

A big part of change is based on your mindset and attitude. One thing to consider is to look at the changes you'd like to make as an experiment – hold them lightly with curiosity and a “what if” mentality around possible outcomes if the changes you adopt create your desired results.

Here are some things to try to help you make change easier and to set yourself up for success:

- 1.** Begin by making small changes that are manageable so you don't overwhelm yourself and give up. Doing so will make you feel better and create some wins that make you comfortable as you're adjusting whatever it is you seek to change. And proving to yourself that you can do it.
- 2.** Link changes to established daily routines and habits. Weaving them into what's already working well for you will support you in making the desired change happen much more smoothly.
- 3.** Going with the flow helps you accept change vs resisting it. If you remain flexible yet focused and committed, you'll be able to embrace the thing(s) you seek to change in a more fluid way.

Learn what works best for you vs trying to force something artificial and being overly rigid.

- 4.** Remember that all change involves some learning and experimentation. Keep the perspective that after an initial adjustment phase you'll be that much wiser and more self-aware as a result.
- 5.** Also know that ambiguity and disruption are often parts of any change or adjustment. While we can anticipate certain things that a change may bring, it's impossible to know with full clarity everything that will or could happen ahead of time. Be prepared for unexpected developments,

some of which could be better than you anticipated, you won't be as easily thrown, and you'll be better able to cope with the realities as they unfold versus your original vision.

- 6.** Don't feel like you have to go through the changing circumstances or pressures of making a change on your own – big or small. Talk about what's going with a friend or trusted others, or write about it in a journal. Share your feelings and observations which can bring you some much-needed perspective and relief while helping you gain support and strength to carry on.

- 7.** Give yourself time to accept and integrate the changes that you are making into your life. Allow yourself time to acknowledge and reconcile your feelings. This makes big changes feel less taxing and more manageable. Again, retaining perspective reminds you why they're good.

- 8.** If you're trying to change a behavior pattern or navigate yourself through a pivotal life change, don't assume it has to be easy. It can be messy, and being emotional during a change phase is natural and normal. By contrast, don't assume making a change needs to be hard. Sometimes, changes are meant to be easy – and in all cases, your attitude really can make all the difference.

- 9.** If your desired outcome has real meaning for you, allow a vision of your future self to motivate real change from the other side after it's already taken place – feel how it feels to have made the shift and what your new experience is as a result. This is a strategy that most people never consider, but it turns out to be a simple yet powerful and effective tool once you practice it.

Be the Change You Want to See

I'm limited by space constraints with this article, but I could easily have added another dozen tips. Of the ones I've laid out which resonate the most with you that might even look forward to trying on for yourself. What other things have you tried yourself (or experienced others have utilized) that have worked well when making changes that you didn't see listed here. I'd love to know. In the meantime, I'd love to challenge you to play with some of these tips. Try them on, and see if you can't make whatever adjustments you need with more success and greater ease.

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