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Over 80% of New Year's resolutions are abandoned within a week. ***If change were easy, we'd all be wealthy, fit, and happy.*** It's frustrating when you know what you want to do, but you can't get yourself to do it consistently. If the new behavior would obviously be of benefit, why isn't that change easy to make?

Change is challenging for several reasons:

- 1. Habits are strong and pervasive.** The average person has far more habits than they realize. Each morning, you wake up and follow the same routine. You take the same path to work. You think the same thoughts as you did the day before. Much of your day and night is a repeat of the last 500.
 - When you feel bored, you soothe yourself in the same 2-3 ways each time. You only eat a few foods regularly. You talk to the same people.
 - Habits avoid thinking. They're done automatically. Anything that minimizes thinking seems to be your brain's preference. The fewer decisions, the better.
 - ***To change, you must be certain that change is in your best interest. Otherwise, your habits will always win.***
- 2. Change is hard because it's uncomfortable.** You already know how to lose 25 pounds or how to find a better job. But the thought of taking the actions necessary to accomplish those goals creates discomfort.

3. **What you're doing is already working, sort of.** Your brain is preoccupied with your survival. Our brains are programmed to resist change, because what you're doing is allowing you to live. Any change could potentially lead to death. You might be unhappy today, but you're still alive!

- Most of us prefer misery than facing uncertainty.

4. **You've tried to change in the past and failed.** You're no dummy. If you've tried to change several times and failed, part of you says, "*Obviously, I can't change. What's the use in trying?*"

It isn't easy to change, but change is possible. ***The primary issue keeping you from following through on your plan to change is attempting to change too much, too soon.*** Smaller changes are easier to accomplish and to maintain.

How You Can Change

Change is possible with an effective approach:

1. **Be prepared to change.** Expect that change will be challenging. Your odds of success improve if you're prepared. Have a plan.
2. **Start small.** *To minimize the discomfort that change creates, only change a little each week.* Meditating for two minutes each day is easier than starting with 60 minutes. The key is to get in the habit of doing the new behavior each day.
3. **Have patience.** It can take months to make a change permanent. It's often quoted that a new habit requires 30 days to instill. That's not true. Studies show that it can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months, depending on the habit and the person.
4. **Be willing to change yourself and face the consequences.** Changing yourself is scary, because you don't know what the results will be. Accept that your life will

change in some way. Discomfort isn't always a bad thing.

5. **Expect to relapse.** Falling off the wagon is to be expected. **Attempt to enhance your approach and keep going.** Aim for 90% compliance. That's all you need. Perfection is an illusion that will only serve to destroy your confidence.

Change requires patience with yourself. **Understand why it's so challenging to change and choose to make changes slowly and incrementally.** Imagine how much you could change over a few years if you changed just a tiny amount each week. The results would be staggering! How much have you changed over the last few years? Give slow change a chance.