

Breaking the Cycle

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Stages of Change

The stages of change model is as follows:

- Precontemplation (Not Ready) – People are not intending to take action in the foreseeable future, and can be unaware that their behaviour is problematic. Some people leave this stage out of the actual change model since there is no possibility of change while in this state.
- Contemplation (Getting Ready) – People are beginning to recognize that their behaviour is problematic, and start to look at the pros and cons of their continued actions
- Preparation (Ready) – People are intending to take action in the immediate future, and may begin taking small steps toward behaviour change
- Action – People have made specific overt modifications in modifying their problem behaviour or in acquiring new healthy behaviour.
- Maintenance – “People have been able to sustain action for at least six months and are working to prevent relapse.”

Of course, there is also Relapse – were individuals digress one or more steps. They can even go to precontemplation, giving up on the change all together.

The Change Cycle

We get into ruts in our thinking and thus our lives because we fall into this cycle. Have you experienced the change cycle before? Where are you in the cycle now?

1. Discontent
2. Breaking Point
3. Decision
4. Fear
5. Amnesia
6. Backtracking

Discontent is like contemplation, you know you want or need to change but you haven't decided to actually make that change. Then you reach a breaking point either from pain or lack of joy/fulfillment and you make a decision to change. You can then go to action unless fear or amnesia stops you. Fear of the change either failure or success often limits our ability to change. Amnesia is forgetting why you were contemplating the change in the first place. And backtracking is just like it sounds, it is the equivalent to relapse in the Stages of Change model.

Making it Real

Can you see how this change cycle has impacted your life?

Are you ready for it to stop?

Knowing now how the cycle works, what choice are you going to make regarding what will “snap you out of it”? (CIRCLE ONE)

1. Extreme Pain

OR

2. Self-Honesty

Are you ready to be honest with yourself, even if it is hard, because you are tired of being dissatisfied?

Are you ready to take responsibility for your life and create the one you want?

Consider the following reasons you may have been allowing yourself to fall victim to this cycle: (CIRCLE ANY THAT ARE APPLICABLE)

You don't want to change.

You don't know what you want.

You're letting your fear or anxiety control you.

You are attached to your problem.

You're benefiting from your problem.

For those you've circled, explore these more with yourself and/or your health coach. Just a few suggestions, to get you started:

You don't want to change. What would help you to want to change?

You don't know what you want. Do a Life Inventory and/or Wheel of Life.

You're letting your fear or anxiety control you. Get a book on CBT like Dr. David Burns “Feeling Good Handbook” or other similar book. Yes, a book can actually help!

You are attached to your problem. Do the “Letting Go” exercise.

You're benefiting from your problem. Do a cost/benefit analysis. Make a list of all the benefits and the issues with your problem.

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