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## Understanding.....Change

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” -*Reinhold Niebuhr*

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.”  
-*Maria Robinson*

It is said that change is inevitable, we change whether we like it or not, and change is the essence of life itself. Generally, change is difficult; whether it is for the better or not, it comes with problems and seems to have a domino effect on our lives. When things change in our life, other things are impacted and more change is created. We have all heard the definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome. Why is it we are generally so resistant to change?

**Ambiguity**-when a reason for change is not clear; it has not been communicated and/or understood.  
**A perceived threat**-the belief or idea the change will modify a current situation, position, power or relationship which will ultimately be damaging or negative.

**Collaboration**-we have not been involved in the change; we want to take some ownership and want to have a sense of power over the change in our lives.

**Benefit / Reward**-the outcome does not look as advantageous as the risk of changing; we want there to be more benefit than what it will cost.

**Trust**-not having faith in the outcome, or the person suggesting the change.

Sometimes even when the place we are, mentally, emotionally, or relationally is not healthy, we still feel more comfortable staying where we are than in making a change; even if the alternative would obviously be better for us. These are times when we can understand and go through the process of change in order to live more enjoyable lives and engage in more satisfying relationships.

### How do People Change?<sup>1</sup>

- They become interested in or concerned about the need for change.
- They become convinced the change is in their best interests or will benefit them more than cost them.
- They organize a plan of action they are committed to implementing.
- They take the actions necessary to make the change and to sustain the change.

### People Change When:<sup>2</sup>

- They are convinced of the problem or the need for change-**Motivated**.
- They are committed to making a change-**Willing**.
- They feel they have the ability to make change-**Able**.

I believe there are three basic concepts for change: **Awareness**-gaining knowledge and insight; examination and evaluation of different aspects of our life. **Acceptance**-making a decision, believing in what you have learned and taking ownership of it. **Application**-downloading all of the above; using and making it practical; living it out. Without this last step the prior two mean very little and will be *knowledge without wisdom*.

## **What can People Change?**

Themselves! Change begins with us. Just as we cannot change anyone else, only we can change our self. This may come in a variety of areas: our reality vs. expectations; assumptions, perceptions and the meaning we give to events and situations; worry, anxiousness and guilt; our fears; we can work on our self esteem and self worth; and probably the most important, we can alter our attitude. Most of us have the power in our lives to affect change:

- **Where we are-** our current situation or environment (change *where* you are).
- **What we do-** our effect on our environment, our influence, leadership, and actions.
- **Who we are-** attitude, perceptions, coping skills, thoughts, behaviors, assumptions, knowledge, we can set boundaries in our life.

It is true that life changes all around us, all the time. The real question is will we resist it, or will we be open and have a positive attitude toward change? Let's understand the need for change when it comes, be committed to it, and take the steps necessary to improve our satisfaction in life!

**“Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.”** *Unknown*

*Mike*

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<sup>1</sup> DiClemente 2003

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.