

PICK UP YOUR TOOLS

Let's begin by taking three simple steps to change:

1. Understand the difference between the Present, the Past, and the Future.
2. Disassociate yourself with the Past.
3. Appreciate the unpredictability of the Future.

Improve your communication skills and you'll change your outlook

Listeners make the best communicators: fact! Over the coming days, whether at work, home, or just out in public, follow these simple alterations and you'll be surprised by just how much you missed before.

Work on the following:

- Use your internal voice to communicate with yourself in a positive manner; think about the words you use.

Do they communicate in the positive or in the negative? Adopt a positive communication plan and change any negative.

- Look at your surroundings; clear your mind of any thoughts and just listen. This task can seem strange to start with, but just as a hunter listens to their environment for potential food, your mind will feed on the learning we once only appreciated subconsciously.
- Focus on others; the more you focus on others the more you are able to learn about what really makes them tick. Is it the way that they smile? How do they use their voice, and how do they use their body movements to show how they feel?
- A step towards a better you; improve your posture. It is said that 55 per cent of our communication is delivered through our body language. Make a conscious effort to correct your posture, as even a slight alteration can bring about a totally different perspective on external and internal events.
- Set yourself a target of pausing in between listening and speaking; allow your mind to digest the thoughts and then communicate knowing the full picture rather than second-guessing the remaining interaction.

Get into the present

A lot can be said about ensuring that your heart and your mind are on the same path. From my own experiences, if they are not, a lot tends to be missed or there's a lack of motivation to make it work. The reason for this is a question of values.

If there is a discrepancy between our deeper values and the process being acted out via our conscious thought, then there is a non-congruent sensory output that will affect our behaviour on a subconscious level. The key to successful change is to align both.

Remember your legacy statement

One thing that has always interested me is whether change can make you happy. By this I mean: will change in the many areas of our life that we usually reflect upon when thinking about life *actually* make any difference to happiness? These areas are usually divided into career, relationships, health, etc.; however, the question being asked shouldn't be "Will this make me happy?" but "How is this going to make me happy?"

The reason for this is very simple; the small change in linguistics will make a huge change to the way you produce the results internally. To understand at a deeper level, you must agree that happiness is something you *can* achieve, that it's a strength you hold within you, and something you are able to work towards – effectively a goal.

Knowing the meaning:

Happiness means something different to each of us, and no two people will define it in the same way. This means that finding your own motivation is key to finding *your* understanding of happiness.

Ask yourself:

- What is the most amount of motivation you can deal with?
- What would you be feeling if you were to achieve motivation at its peak?
- How would it feel, and how would you know that you had achieved it?

These are the sorts of questions you should use to start your happiness wheel moving. The more you increase the speed of the wheel, the faster your change will come about.

Make change happen

Deciding *what* you want to change is a great starting point, but the statement must then evolve into “*How* can I change?” If you can master the answer to this question in a way that’s specific to you then you will be able to *make change happen*, no matter what the circumstances in terms of relationships, work, money . . . the list goes on. Identifying your strategies for change is your goal, *not* the by-product of change.

What we believe is true is what will become the truth . . . this has become an affirmation I use on a regular basis, especially when faced with a task that just seems to be a struggle. Another is “If someone else has done it then so can I,” and these simple affirmations have carried me through many, many challenges, both physical and mental (including Tough Guy adventure races, marathons, and business matters).

Take moment to think about a change that has been delayed in your life, and ask yourself what *not* making the change has restricted you from doing. You might find it helpful to write a physical list, or perhaps just meditate on it for a while and visualize a turn of events where the change has already happened.

Lasting change is the ultimate change

So what's the difference between change and lasting change? Do you see them as one and the same? In fact, they are very different. Change can happen and then revert back to the former situation; a relationship may dissolve only to reunite, for example, and the weather is constantly changing! Just as changes in the weather can generate positive or negative emotions – happiness on sunny days, sadness on rainy days – changes in your life can generate a similar effect.

Lasting change or permanent change is change that involves taking radical (massive) action to change the imprint of your life. These are directional changes that will positively scar your life and become a point you can reflect on and learn from for the rest of your life. Daytime TV is littered with people who have made radical changes; they may, for example, have complained about the British weather so much over the years that they upped sticks and moved to a climate that has allowed them to remove that “lifestyle complaint”!

In the process of making a lasting change, you'll meet more external resistance. I am always reminded of resistance when

changing the tyre on my car! It's not the easiest of tasks, but without the resistance the wheel wouldn't stay in place and keep my family safe. When removing the wheel from the car, a degree of resistance is required in order for change to happen, but further resistance is required when making the change. Resistance is therefore a two-way process; it happens when attempting to make the change, but also when the change is happening.

This analogy can be applied to making change happen in your life, but unfortunately it's not often used the right way. The more change is seen by those who are not making changes in their own lives, the more they will tell you that there is *no need* for change.

Over the years, as my success has grown, the number of "true" friends I have has dwindled. This is not because I have changed as a person, but because their representation of me has changed. Although it preyed on my mind at first, after a small amount of reflection and going through the tools I use with clients, the answer became clear: others feel threatened when you appear to be moving and they appear to be standing still . . . stagnant.

Choose not to stand still; choose to move forwards, one step at a time, on *your* journey towards building a temple and leaving a lasting legacy . . . *your* legacy.