



TOP TIPS FOR MEANINGFUL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

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MY STORY



After transforming my life by losing over 100lbs I became relentlessly determined to uncover the universal ingredients of behavior change and more importantly how I can bring them to the public to help people create meaningful change.

Here are my top tips on change...





1 SHOWING UP IS 92% OF THE BATTLE

Despite change focused on the “here and now”, maintaining a long-term focus is key to sustaining change. Most people don't show up and those that do tend to drop like flies. People who remove excuses and show up no matter how tired or how broke they are, are the ones who make change a reality. Simply showing up is key to sustaining change.

2 BUILD A PRE-CHANGE MOMENTUM

Lebron James tosses chalk and Tiger Woods pumps heavy weights before game play. From the outside a prep routine may seem senseless, a waste of time or down right stupid. But to the individual it creates consistency, builds momentum, motivation and helps prevent errors. Build your ritual and repeat it.

3 TAKE AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH

Instead of seeking perfection, the “best” information or wasting time contemplating the perfect approach try taking an experimental approach. Come up with ideas and strategies, test often, keep what works, remove what doesn't. It is an iterative approach to improving. Remember, failing is learning.

4 POSITION CHANGES WITH HIGH ENERGY

Some people wake up bursting with energy, whereas others are energized late at night. Putting change when we have high levels of energy can help us conquer even the toughest changes. Work with your body.

5 JUST DO IT

Nike couldn't have put forth more simpler, and effective advice. Instead of overthinking, contemplating and procrastinating – just do it.





1 REWARD YOURSELF FOR SHOWING UP

Change is rooted in showing up. Therefore, to maintain motivation one should mentally reward themselves for showing up. People drop like flies when they are tired, when it's cold, when money is tight, or there is not enough time. Reward what matters (showing up).

2 FIND THE IMMEDIATE REWARD

To develop an enduring motive for change seek out the immediate benefit with the activity. For example, when running we can concentrate on the stress reduction, or if for yoga one can focus on relaxation benefits instead of distance or weight loss which take time to change. Meaningful change needs immediate rewards.

3 LEARN WHAT TO IGNORE

Learning what to ignore is equally, if not more important than what to focus on. Too often distractions (social media, smart phones) disrupt our well-intentions. Find how to manage distractions or temptations (e.g., remove cable, less *Facebook*, limited news, avoid certain friends). Remember distractions disable change. If you can't ignore it, remove it.

4 DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN NUMBERS & RESULTS

Behavior change requires time. Focusing on results and numbers too early and often is a quick way to kill motivation. Most things we want to change requires time to appreciate the progress and results (weight, fat, distance, calories, money, interest). Fall in love first, focus on the numbers second.

5 STAYING MOTIVATED, PLAN FOR FAILURE

Things are bound to go bad in our behavior change routines. The goal is not avoid it, but rather prepare for it. It's OK to deviate from our savings plan or diet but to stay motivated we should expect it, plan for it and embrace it when it happens. Planning for slack in our behavior can keep us moving forward.

ON LIFE MANAGEMENT



1 REMOVE PEOPLE WHO KILL YOUR “CHANGE BUZZ”

We all know people that kill our mood, mindset and deflate our motivation. Start identifying these people (even if they are close friends) and manage the time spent with them. You may think you are able to “deal” with them, but over time it will likely erode you. Remove people that bring the negative energy.

2 FIND MORE FRIENDS THAT FUEL YOUR MOTIVATION

While there are the people who are buzz kills, there are also people who are burning with optimism, challenge and push us and offer essential feedback to act, grow, learn and achieve progress. Find the people that fuel change, and communicate with them often.

3 REDUCE EXPOSURE TO MARKETING

There is a reason why companies spend billions on marketing and advertising – it works! Brands are in the business of understanding consumers and have more energy, time, and resources to influence us in ways we may not want. Remove temptations – Skip the ads, hide from commercials or sell the TV.

4 CREATE A SUPPORT SYSTEM, NOT AN OXYGEN SUPPLY

We often hire services to provide sources of adherence – think financial advisors, life coaches, nutritionists. Although they help keep us accountable, the problem is when they leave so does the behavior. One solution is to use the service or supports intermittently. Another is to taper off them.

5 GOAL UP AND ANCHOR DOWN

Goals give us a direction, but anchors keep us from tracking on our goal pursuit path. Anchors are the frequent comparisons we base progress upon. Whether we compare success to friends, or on our personal past – where we anchor our comparisons determines how successful we will be in our goal pursuit.

ON WEIGHT LOSS



1 WHAT YOU DO TO LOSE IT, YOU MUST DO TO KEEP IT OFF

Quick fix approaches may be appealing, but at the end of the day, whatever we do to lose weight we must continue doing to keep it off. Extreme approaches (e.g., CrossFit, vegan) may work faster but are they sustainable in 5 weeks, 5 months, or 5 years? Choose a sustainable path to change.

2 FOCUS ON FOOD, NOT EXERCISE... IT IS FAR MORE EFFICIENT

It takes a 1 hour intense workout to burn the calories of a Caesar salad which takes 5 minutes to eat. Those who master weight loss learn how to master food by learning to regulate portions of food they eat. Consider exercise a frosting on the cake, better yet the sprinkles.

3 FOCUS ON EATING LESS INSTEAD OF EATIER “HEALTHY”

The #1 eating problem is we overly focus on food quality instead of quantity. Eating less food is objective and quantifiable (e.g., 3 eggs, 1 tbsp dressing). Healthy is highly subjective which can lead us down Trying to find what’s “healthy” is impossible as there are no agreed up healthy foods. is highly subjective. Focus on quantity.

4 CHANGE YOUR FOOD FRIENDS TO CHANGE YOUR EATING

Our food intake generally mimics the people we spend time with most, especially who we eat with. It is amazing how easy eating improvements can be achieved by simply changing the people we spend time.

5 IDENTIFY TOP 2 STRESSORS AND REMOVE THEM.

Many people eat in response to stress. By finding activities that can help reduce the stress can remove the eating impulse. For example, if we are stressed we can go for walk or listen to music to subside urges to eat. Outsmart our bad eating habits.



1 EATING IS AN INDIVIDUAL SPORT

What tastes good to you, tastes gross to others. What fills you up, will leave others still hungry. Taste, portion sizes and "healthy" eating is all relative. Focus on constantly improving YOUR choices (food comparisons).

2 DOWNSIZE YOUR DISHWARE

Most of our portion sizes we eat are largely guided by environmental cues – package size, plate size or what restaurants serve. By using smaller bowls, plates, spoons, cups we create mental cues that help control our portion sizes.

3 99% OF DIETS DO WORK

We often blame diets for not working but in reality it is not the diets that don't work it is our adherence to them. Instead of trying to adhere to a diet, experiment with multiple diets and take bits and pieces of each to create your own structure. It is the plan and structure we crave!

4 DON'T CONFUSE FEELING WITH FACTS

Don't get caught up in food feelings. Hunger is no longer physiological (from our stomachs - as we can go weeks without food). Instead we eat out of psychological hunger – we are conditioned to eat based on the smell or sight of something delicious. Avoid using "food feelings" to determine when we are hunger or "feel" full.

5 BE A FOOD SKEPTIC

Most food marketing is unregulated. Natural, healthy, fresh, farm raised, etc. have no official legal definition. Skittles can be natural, Cheetos can be caged free, and Pringles can be Vegan. While it's almost impossible to ignore this information – question it and see if it makes logical sense.



1 WHY ARE YOU EXERCISING?

Many goals such as weight loss, toning, or leaning out boil down to reducing body fat which is easiest achieved by eating less. In many cases it's better to start exercise after we figure out our diet to prevent exercising and "rewarding" ourselves which can ruin our workouts. Start exercise, after food is under control.

2 EXERCISE 3X A WEEK AND SITTING THE REST DOES NOT MAKE YOU ACTIVE

Working a job that requires constant physical activity will create larger long-term health benefits than someone who sits all day and goes to the gym 3x times a week. Exercise is only small piece in the health puzzle so start looking at new ways to move more (stairs, walking meetings, biking, etc.).

3 FIND AN ACTIVITY THAT GETS YOUR MOVING AND FALL IN LOVE WITH IT

People think it is just going to the gym. Anything that produces movements provides benefits. Walking, running, yoga, soccer, basketball, cleaning the house, walking upstairs... Anything that demands energy, gets you off the couch and keeps you moving adds up.

4 1 HR GYM IS NOT 1 HR EXERCISE

If we calculate the time actually spent moving weights as opposed to resting or socializing we may be in for a big surprise. A one hour gym trip generally equates to 15 minutes of actual moving weights. Instead of going heavier or faster, try reducing time resting between sets.

5 CHALLENGE YOURSELF WITH THE UNFAMILIAR

The body is best challenged by unfamiliar. Are you a lifter, try yoga or Pilates. Are you a yogi, try picking up some weights. Do you like fast and high intense, try slow and controlled. Typically what we don't like or haven't done is what we could use more of.

ON SERVICE SELECTION



1 THE BEST SERVICE PROFESSIONALS GET YOU ADDICTED TO THEIR CRAFT, NOT THEIR SERVICES.

If you give a man a fish they eat for a day, if you teach a man to fish they eat for a lifetime. Sustainable change is built on acquiring an intrinsic motivation for an activity which is achieved by learning a craft, not reaping the benefits of a service.

2 ASK A QUESTION OUTSIDE THEIR SCOPE OF PRACTICE.

It is amazing how far peoples competence extends. Ask a couple questions and see how far people are willing to answer. A quality service provider will acknowledge when they don't know.

3 DO THEY PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH?

Would you rather take advice from an millionaire who acquired his money from mom or a self-made millionaire? We need to do less assuming and size up your sources – doctors, scientists, practitioners... Do they put their money where their mouth is?

4 ASK “WHY THEY DO WHAT THEY DO?”

Does someone get rise in your money or thrive on seeing your success? Asking people what got them into their craft can give insight into which people are best suited to help.

5 DO THEY HAVE A “ONE SIZE FITS ALL” APPROACH?

A one size fits all approach is great for business but not necessarily for health and behavior change. We are all unique in our challenges and receptiveness to change so our services should accommodate for these.



INTERESTED IN CREATING CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE OR HAVING A MASSIVE IMPACT IN THE WORLD?

The starting point with any success
is change. Start changing now!

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