

BECOME A CHANGEMASTER

THE 20 STEPS TO EXECUTE A SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

BEFORE YOU START

In order for this to help you, please set aside 20 minutes initially to thoughtfully go through the questions. Be very specific and intentional in your answers; write down specifics, not generalities. Do not avoid the tough questions or rush to complete this exercise. If you get stuck before #9, stop and come back to the exercise after you have had time to think about it. Remember: this is not a timed exercise that needs to be completed; instead, it's a way to make a change in your business and life.

PART 1: BE THE CHANGE

1. What is the change you want to make?

Insight: Be specific and keep it small to start. To fight the brain's not wanting to change, pick something that you see as incremental. Remember: big changes are very hard to make all at one time. Permanent change happens a little bit at a time. Example answer: I want to start reviewing my small business's profit-and-loss statement every month.

2. How are you currently doing the thing you want to change?

Insight: Do not judge it—just say it. Be honest and kind to yourself. Example answer: I review my profit-and-loss statement only when my accountant asks me to.

3. Why do you want to make the change?

Insight: Change must come from an internal motivation, but it could be thrust on you by outside forces. Express the pain or discomfort you are feeling that drives you to make this change. Example answer: I never have enough money at the end of the month to pay all my bills.

4. What will happen if you do not make this change? Be specific.

Insight: Typically, the cost of not making a change is a financial loss or at least emotional distress. A lot of change is made out of fear of what will happen if the change is not made. Example answer: I will not be able to pay my bills, and it keeps me up at night.

5. What specifically inspired you to make this change?

Insight: This must come from within, not from someone else telling you that you must make a change. Example answer: I do not have enough cash to do the things I want in my business or my personal life.

6. What makes you uncomfortable when you think of making this change?

Insight: Part of the fear of change is what will happen if we are successful. Example answer: That I will either become overwhelmed with the information because I can't understand it, or I will find that we are in a worse financial situation than I thought.

7. Who is one person that can support the change? Why are they the right person for this job?

Insight: Change happens only with a support system. This can be a friend or mentor who will keep you accountable but at the same time not judge you. Example answer: My mentor Rick. He always has an outside perspective based on his years of success and mentoring others.

8. What can they do to support you in this change? Name a specific action.

Insight: Is this a quick call, a longer conversation or an email check-in? How frequent is it? What action will they be obligated to take? Are they willing to make that commitment? Example answer: Once a month, I would like to email him to tell him about my progress or challenges and have him help me with my progress.

STOP! REREAD THESE TOMORROW AND MAKE ANY CHANGES TO ANY ANSWERS.

Repeat this step until you do not make any changes the following day. Even though you may want to, do not skip this step!

PART 2: MAKE THE CHANGE

9. What is the smallest step you can take to move toward this change? Be very specific. Insight: Think small and incremental. In this way you increase your chances of success. Example answer: Ask my accountant or bookkeeper to review just the sales and net profit from last month and to compare it to past results by the 15th of each month.

10. What positive affirmation or reward can you give yourself after you complete the first small step? Insight: Go ahead and pat yourself on the back! Rewarding yourself for completing this action will help you fight the discomfort of the change. This is a reward for taking any action, even if you were not successful. Example answer: Treat myself to a bowl of French fries with lots of salt.

11. Share the success or failure of this step with your support person.

Insight: Do this without self-judgement. Being too hard on yourself will increase your chances of quitting.

12. After talking with your support person, rate your success on accomplishing this step from one to five (lowest to highest). If the rating was not four or five, what could you do better next time? Insight: Be honest about your progress and rating. You can have your support person rate you as well.

14. How did your success (or failure) reinforce your inspiration or your fear of change? This step is not to criticize you but to learn from how the results reinforced either your inspiration or your fears.

15. What is the next small step you can take to move toward this change?

Example answer: Review the major expenses on the profit-and-loss statement and compare them to past results.

16. What positive affirmation or reward can you give yourself this time after this is completed to fight the discomfort of the change?

Reap the reward regardless of whether you were successful or not. The reward is for taking the action of the step. Example answer: Go for a bicycle ride during work hours.

17. Share success or failure of this next action or step with your support person.

Do this without judgment. Being too hard on yourself will increase your chances of quitting.

18. After talking with your support person, rate your success on accomplishing this step from one to five (lowest to highest). If the rating was not four or five, what could you do better next time? Be honest about your progress and rating. You may have your support person rate you as well.

19. How did your success (or failure) reinforce your inspiration or your fear of change? This step is not to criticize you but to learn from how the results reinforced either your inspiration or your fears.

20. What is the one thing that will help you not give up on making this change? Refuse to give up on this change until you have gone through all the steps. You may have to do this multiple times. If you consistently fail to complete the steps for this change, try the process again with another change that will be easier to accomplish first.
