Accomplishing change

If you've ever made a New Year's resolution on January 1 and abandoned it on January 2, you understand how reluctant human beings are to change. Our habits are something we can count on and they give us a sense of certainty about life.



Attempting to break a bad habit or acquire a new one, even if it's for the better, can make us feel uncomfortable and can lead us back to the familiar.

The truth is, our chances of successfully achieving change are greatly determined by the thought we put into it. Let's see what we can do to help guarantee that the process is successful.

Tips and tools you can use

Don't expect change to be achieved all at once. Here are some great tips to get you going:

Take one small step

- Thinking about all the work involved in changing a habit can stop us before we start.
- Instead of picturing the task as overwhelming, remember that change happens with that first small step.
- It is with the accumulation of all those little steps that you will reach your goal.

The key to change

- Habits take time to acquire and it takes time to revise and eliminate them or add new habits.
- The key to behaviour change is to define exactly the behaviour you want to change.
- Then set yourself realistic goals and reward yourself for every step you take towards change.

Be specific

- The statement "I want to get some exercise" is a start towards defining a behaviour change but doesn't set forth exactly how you're going to accomplish it.
- A much more specific plan with a realistic goal might go like this: "I will set aside 20 minutes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to take a walk."
- Later, if you want to increase the time you spend walking, it will be easier because you have already taken the first small steps towards your goal.
- After one week of meeting your commitment, consider rewarding yourself with something you enjoy, such as buying a book or going to the movies.
- Show enthusiasm for what you're doing and keep a sense of humour.
- Perhaps little steps should get little "smiley faces" to remind you how well you are doing.

Record your goals and progress

- Write down your overall goal and the specific steps you will take to reach it.
- Keeping a diary and recording your accomplishments can make the process more fun.
- Or post a chart on the wall to see what you've done.
- Positive feedback does wonders for motivation.

With a little planning and some clever strategies, we can all make the changes we want. But successful change takes time as you develop new habits and learn to settle in with them so don’t be discouraged if you don’t meet your goals or see the results that you want right away.