

## Let's Make Some Changes!

### Dr. Pejic's Introduction on Change

This document will help you make a change in your life. By change I mean changing a bad habit, addiction, behavior, career or leaving a relationship. Change is a natural and basic part of life. Change usually occurs in a series of distinct stages that progressively move you from point A to point B. Note that change is not a singular event, but rather a series of stages. Specifically the five stages are: not contemplating change, contemplating change, making a plan, putting the plan in action and maintaining the plan.

While you are noting your current stage, there are some additional very important points to keep in mind. First, you DO have the power to change. We know through research that the power lies within you. I see patients successfully make change every day, yet only when they chose to do so. Next, keep in mind that you may fluctuate between stages of change. So, don't give up if you fall back into an earlier stage, this is normal. The reason patients fluctuate between stages is from ambivalence.

Ambivalence is the swaying balance from one old behavior to the new one. This swaying back and forth is a normal part of the human experience. We tend to think that if we drink or smoke after months of abstinence that we are again a "smoker" or "drinker". Yet, in actuality we are just exhibiting ambivalence and taking a step backward on the stages of change. You need to recognize this and remember that the change is a fluid and dynamic process. If you doubt your motivation or desire for change, think about a time when you have made some kind of change. You may have decided to get fit one season or to get out of a chaotic relationship. You may have quit smoking for a few months, or stopped drinking for a few weeks. Remember that these changes count. You are always on that path whether you know it or not. The key is in you recognizing this fact. Ok, now let's get busy.

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1. What problematic behavior do you want to change?

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2. Are you seriously considering making this change over the next six months?

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3. What is the endpoint regarding this change? (i.e. reduce or abstain behavior)

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4. What goals in your life is this behavior preventing you from achieving?

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5. Why or How did this problematic behavior begin?

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6. Is this behavior in line with your values, beliefs or opinions?

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7. Is this behavior affecting your relationships, employment, education or health?

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8. Please list the pros and cons of change on the next page!

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<b>Change Behavior</b>	
Pros	Cons

  

<b>Continue Behavior</b>	
Pros	Cons

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9. What emotional or external circumstances impact you making this change?

Emotional: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

External: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What makes you feel more hopeful in making this change?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Please list three large or small changes you have successfully made in the past?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Please mark and X under the month that this problematic behavior took place and link it to other problems.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Problematic Behavior												
Substance Use												
Health Problems												
Legal Problems												
Work Problems												
Weight Gain or Loss												
Marital/Family Problems												
Depression or Anxiety												



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17. List three things or people that will serve as your support system while making this change. (note: does the person know you are making this change?)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

18. What date will you begin making this change? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Circle the stage you think you are in:

Pre-contemplation      Contemplation      Planning      Action      Maintenance

### REMEMBER:

1. That change is a normal part of our lives
2. That ambivalence is a normal part of change
3. The changes that you have already made in your life

*Handbook of motivation and change: a practical guide for clinicians/edited by Petros Levounis, Bachaar Arnaot. – 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, APA Publishing. 2010*