

January is the month for change. It's when personal New Year's Resolutions are identified. And, it's also a time when supervisors may want to put new workplace resolutions to the test. This month's issue looks at how to make successful change at work. (This same model can be used to make changes in one's personal life.)

*We are interested in your feedback. Email your questions and comments to the EAP at [askeap@eapsolutions.com](mailto:askeap@eapsolutions.com)*

*I've decided this year is going to be different at work. I am finally going to get on top of things. I'm going to organize my office, keep a better schedule and not get stuck on trying to do the impossible. Any suggestions to get started?*

This is quite a list. Each of these areas is a big one in itself.

Let's begin with some general 'getting started' pointers. These are based on the book Changing for Good by James Prochaska, Ph.D., John Norcross, Ph.D., and Carlo DiClemente, Ph.D.

- (1) *Make some quiet time to think.* Successful change is built on a plan. Planning takes both thought and time. Consider the following:
  - **Priority:** Of the things you listed, what is the most important to work on right now? Taking on too much at one time leads to frustration.
  - **Specificity:** What exactly do you want to achieve? For example, "I want to develop a filing system."
  - **Method:** Whatever area of change you begin with, identify how you will work the change into the day. Nothing will happen on its own. There is no "workplace change fairy".
- (2) *Consider how you have made successful change in the past.* All of us have made changes in our lives. We tend to forget what we did to be successful and instead remember the failures. Learning from the past is important and supports success now. Write down what you did and how it worked.
- (3) *Take a deep breath and give yourself permission to work on this over time.* Think back to that successful change....It didn't happen all at once. The strategies you used took time and likely evolved. And, this change you are taking on now will happen the same way. So, take that deep breath

and tell yourself that this is a process you are committed to and will stay with.

- (4) *Learn from struggles along the way.* The Changing for Good authors point out that once an individual starts to tackle a problem and take action, there is likely to be a time of failure where one gives up for awhile and then gets back on track. Successful changers don't get down on themselves; they figure out what they need to do differently and move on. Self correction is a necessary part of change.

Changing for Good provides a model of success which builds on small steps and supports learning and self correction. The steps are:

- **Pre-contemplation:** one has no interest in change; may try to please others with no successful results.
- **Contemplation:** beginning to seriously think about change; working to understand the problem and identify possible solutions.
- **Preparation:** planning change in the next month and making final adjustments before beginning. May still be convincing self that change is best.
- **Action:** actively changing behavior by implementing a plan; learning from struggles and continuing with the planned change.
- **Maintenance:** focus is on keeping the changes going; identifying what can trigger old behavior
- **Termination:** the old behavior or problem is gone with no threat of return. You are now on the other side of change.

We wish you success in making whatever change you choose to focus on. The EAP is available to support you in this process. Call the number below to set up a telephone or in-person consultation.