

Coaching Up Prochaska: adapting the change stage to change process matching to the coach approach.

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Changing for Good by J. Prochaska, J. Norcross and C. DiClemente, published by William Morrow and Co. Inc, 1992, is available in paperback at several online bookstores as of this writing.

Prochaska's Stages of Change

1. Precontemplation - no thought of changing, now or later. Others who care about us may repeatedly urge us to take action on our problem but at this stage, we are deaf to their pleas.

2. Contemplation - thinking about changing, about why one follows the bad habit, what its payoff is. Bring both the rational mind and the emotions into play to move yourself to a commitment to change.

3. Preparation - remove temptations, plan how action will be taken, arrange support and understanding from family, friends, perhaps a support group. Arrange substitutes for the missed habit or activity or substance. Beware of substituting a new problem (over-eating, over-spending) for the old.

4. Action - the stage most of us picture, actual practice of the new way of being.

5. Maintenance - Prochaska shows that many people benefit from learning the difference between a lapse and a total relapse, (a complete collapse back into the old way). Being prepared to recognize a lapse and take immediate action can save the effort.

(**Recycling** - back to one of the previous stages) *Changing for Good* shows that it is entirely possible for a person to fail at one stage or another, only to make a second or subsequent attempts that succeed.

6. Termination - depending on the desired change and the person, total termination of the problem behavior may not occur. Instead, there may be a lifetime of careful maintenance. In other cases, the problem is conquered and temptation to renew the poor behavior ceases. The authors state that confidence that one has really succeeded peaks after a year but that temptation continues for two or three years.

The work shows that it is best to consciously move oneself through the stages, taking time for picturing the desired change and getting ready. Moving yourself consciously through the stages improves the chance of success.

Some of the tools and activities helpful in changing:

Learning the facts about the personal costs of a poor habit.

Realizing the burden and disappointment one puts on family, friends and society with the poor habit.

Getting emotionally charged with the prospect of making the change; recognizing one's abilities and past accomplishments that show the capacity to make the change.

Carefully considering how one started the bad habit and why; untangling guilt, shame, pride, fear from the bad habit.

Making a deep commitment to the desired change.

Rewarding oneself appropriately for real progress in changing.

Knowing, recognizing and countering thoughts that keep one in the bad habit.

Stripping the environment of temptations as much as possible.

Arranging help and support from others.

CHANGE PROCESSES

1. Consciousness-raising
2. Social Liberation
3. Emotional Arousal
4. Self-Reevaluation
5. Commitment
6. Countering
7. Environmental Control
8. Reward
9. Helping Relationships

CHANGE IS A PROCESS NOT AN EVENT

CHANGE IS A SPIRAL MODEL OF CYCLING AND RECYCLING THROUGH THE STAGES OF CHANGE

MATCH THE CHANGE PROCESS TO THE STAGE THE CLIENT IS IN

While the work of Prochaska, et.al. looked at change in the psychotherapeutic setting and much of their research was on smoking cessation and alcohol treatment, there can be a great deal to be gained by looking at this model through the eyes of a life/wellness coach.

Prochaska rightly points out that the helping process has to match where the client is at, right here, right now in their stages of change. He points out that common mismatches are when we attempt to help someone with a change process and it's techniques that are suitable for a stage of change different than where the client is at. In the coaching world, a common error is to "jump to action", pre-maturely urging the client to take action, challenging them with "So, what are you going to DO about it?"

Prochaska matches up these Stages and Processes as follows:

MATCHING WHICH CHANGE PROCESSES ARE MOST USEFUL FOR THE STAGE OF CHANGE THE PERSON IS IN

1. Precontemplation:
Consciousness-raising

Social Liberation

2. Contemplation
 - Consciousness-raising
 - Social Liberation
 - Emotional Arousal
 - Self-Reevaluation
3. Preparation
 - Social Liberation
 - Emotional Arousal
 - Self-Reevaluation
 - Commitment
4. Action
 - Social Liberation
 - Commitment
 - Reward
 - Countering
 - Environmental Control
 - Helping Relationships
5. Maintenance
 - Commitment
 - Reward
 - Countering
 - Environmental Control
 - Helping Relationships

CHANGE PROCESSES – Quick sketch descriptions

1. Consciousness-raising
 - a. Increasing levels of awareness
 - b. Increasing levels of information
2. Social Liberation
 - a. New alternatives provided by external environment
 - b. Physical (non-smoking areas, better menus)
 - c. Organizational/social (advocacy groups)
3. Emotional Arousal
 - a. Dramatic release
 - b. Catharsis
 - c. From real-life events (relative with new cancer diagnosis asks you to quit smoking)
 - d. From therapeutic process
 - e. From external stimuli such as films, etc.

4. Self-Reevaluation
 - a. Thoughtful and emotional reappraisal
 - b. Future self imagined
 - c. Examination of values conflicts
5. Commitment
 - a. Acknowledgement of self-responsibility
 - b. Private commitment
 - c. Coach/Therapist commitment
 - d. Public commitment
6. Countering
 - a. Substituting healthy responses for unhealthy ones
 - b. Counterconditioning
 - c. Example: call a friend instead of isolating and becoming depressed
7. Environmental Control
 - a. Restructure environment for external change support
 - b. Reduce probability of problem-causing event to occur
8. Reward
 - a. Reinforcement of healthy behavior
 - b. Self-praise
 - c. Presents to self
 - d. Incentives (external, e.g. company prizes)
9. Helping Relationships
 - a. Enlisting or eliciting the support of others
 - b. Alliances – informal – friends, family
 - c. Alliances – formal – coach, therapist, clergy, etc.

Some of the change processes lend themselves naturally to the coaching process. Some are the natural realm of the therapeutic approach. Some overlap a great deal. Some are the forte' of health educators. Some are not.

Let's discuss the ways we can adapt this model, derived from a therapy model, to our wellness approach to coaching!

WHEN IS A PERSON READY FOR ACTION?????

PROCHASKA'S SIMPLE SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR IDENTIFYING STAGES OF CHANGE READIENESS

Respond (Yes, or No) to all four of the following statements:

1. I solved my problem more than six months ago.
2. I have taken action on my problem within the past six months
3. I am intending to take action in the next month.
4. I am intending to take action in the next six months.

1. Precontemplation – Answers No to all
2. Contemplation – Answers Yes to #4 and No to all others
3. Preparation – Answers Yes to #3 and #4 and No to all others
4. Action – Answers Yes to #2 and No to #1
5. Maintenance – Answers Yes to #1 (truthfully)

Again, remember that Prochaska's model comes mostly from clinical work with addictions, etc., so the use of the term "problem" fits his research.

How can we adapt this to language suitable for a wellness/personal growth oriented clientele?