

Change in One Page

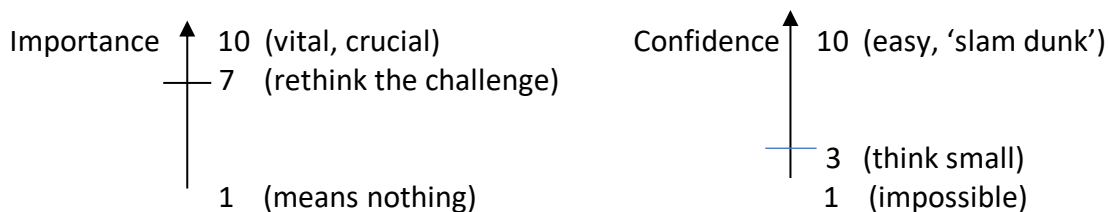
Here are two scientifically supported approaches to change.

The Prochaska *Stages of Change* model suggests that we go through five stages on the way to permanent change.

1. *Precontemplation* is the name given to the stage where we cannot yet see the problem and are not shopping for a solution. For example, if I drink too much I may offhandedly dismiss someone raising a concern or become defensive and annoyed. NOT READY.
2. *Contemplation* is the stage wherein we begin to think about the benefits of stopping our problem behavior, for example, drinking or smoking. But we're not yet ready to change even though we are weighing the benefits and costs. MAYBE.
3. *Preparation* finds us creating an action script because we find merit in making the desired change. A smoker may delay the first cigarette for thirty minutes or a drinker may cut back. This is a tough stage. It is tedious and requires a conscious set of steps such as reading and talking to others as we create a program to support change. PLANNING UNDERWAY.
4. The *Action* stage may require several restarts. Smokers/drinkers may lapse many times before maintaining change and managing anxiety/irritability through regular practice. DOING.
5. The key to the *Maintenance* stage is relapse prevention. Remember, a lapse is not a collapse. A bad mood can't stop our progress. No need to blame. GOING FORWARD.

The *Health Behavior Change* model. The two key issues: How important is it for me to change this behavior and how confident am I that I can do it? The method in 4 steps.

1. Rate the importance of the change. For example, this change (stop drinking/smoking) is crucial or vitally important (a ten on the scale) or it means nothing to me (a one).
2. Rate your confidence in success from certainty, 'slam dunk' (a ten) to hopeless, impossible (a one).



3. If I rate the importance of the change at seven or below, I want to review the costs/benefits of change to increase the importance. Stages 2 and 3 above.
4. If I rate my confidence at seven or below, I must break the task into smaller parts, for example, start exercising fifteen minutes daily, not an hour. Stages 4 and 5 above.

- Prochaska, J. (1994). Changing for good. New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Rollnick, S., Mason, P., & Butler, C. (1999). Health Behavior Change. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone.

