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# CHANGING FOR GOOD

A REVOLUTIONARY  
SIX-STAGE PROGRAM FOR  
OVERCOMING BAD HABITS  
AND MOVING YOUR LIFE  
POSITIVELY FORWARD

## Changing for Good: A Revolutionary Six-Stage Program for Overcoming Bad Habits and Moving Your Life Positively Forward

*James O. Prochaska, John C. Norcross, Carlo C. DiClemente*

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How many times have you thought about starting a diet or quitting smoking without doing anything about it? Or lapsed back into bad habits after hitting a rough spot on the road to recovery?

To uncover the secret to successful personal change, three acclaimed psychologists studied more than 1,000 people who were able to positively and permanently alter their lives without psychotherapy. They discovered that change does not depend on luck or willpower. It is a process that can be successfully managed by anyone who understands how it works. Once you determine which stage of change you're in, you can:

create a climate where positive change can occur

maintain motivation

turn setbacks into progress

make your new beneficial habits a permanent part of your life

This groundbreaking book offers simple self-assessments, informative case histories, and concrete examples to help clarify each stage and process. Whether your goal is to start saving money, to stop drinking, or to end other self-defeating or addictive behaviors, this revolutionary program will help you implement positive personal change . . . for life.

The National Cancer Institute Found this program more than twice as effective as standard programs in helping smokers quit for 18 months.

## **Changing for Good: A Revolutionary Six-Stage Program for Overcoming Bad Habits and Moving Your Life Positively Forward Details**

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# **From Reader Review Changing for Good: A Revolutionary Six-Stage Program for Overcoming Bad Habits and Moving Your Life Positively Forward for online ebook**

## **Kurt says**

Excellent information on how we change and how to recognize where we and others are in the process of changing.

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## **Caroline Abbott says**

This book is brilliant. Do you ever wonder why someone just WON'T change? Could be they are not even contemplating change, they are in the pre-contemplative stage. Did you know there are different interventions that you should try with a person depending on the stage of change they are in? This book was so enlightening to me!

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## **Tim says**

How do people change? For generations, folk wisdom told us that changing an undesirable behavior was a simple matter of "willpower."

But beginning in the 1980s, psychologists James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente began research which would challenge the "simple willpower" model of change:

"Many people we have interviewed first tell us, 'I just woke up one morning and quit [smoking].' [But when we ask more detailed questions, they begin to remember....] [1] They remember the weeks prior to that fateful morning, when perhaps they switched brands and became increasingly disgusted with smoking. [2] They remember earlier attempts to quit smoking. [3] They remember when they avoided people and the places that were filled with smoke during the two weeks after quitting. [4] They remember enlisting the aid of several friends at work by announcing their attempt to quit smoking" (page 210).

In short, Prochaska and colleagues realized that change is not a simple event, but a *process*, including the above techniques of [1] Preparation [2] Relapse and Renewed Resolution [3] Avoiding Tempting Environments and [4] Making one's Change-Commitment *Public* and tapping Helping Relationships to increase one's chance at success.

In the end, Prochaska and colleagues finally modeled change as a Five-Stage Process. They devote a chapter to each such stage in this book:

Chapter 4: **Precontemplation**: where a person isn't even considering changing a behavior, is in denial about it.

Chapter 5: **Contemplation**: where a person begins to be receptive to information about their problematic

behavior, begins thinking about changing it...maybe in the next six months.

Chapter 6: **Preparation:** where a person makes the commitment to change, sets a date, and creates an "action plan" for changing.

Chapter 7: **Action:** where the person puts their Action Plan into gear, usually spending their first six months meeting a host of basic temptations, challenges, and distresses of actually changing their problematic behavior.

Chapter 8: **Maintenance:** where the plan is in place. The person tries to maintain their new/changed way of life. While temptations to stray are fewer at this point, the person has to be ready for sudden surprises which might knock them off the beam.

Of course, even the best-made plans can go awry. ("Everyone has a plan," boxers often say, "until you get punched in the face.") In fact, *most* people fall off the beam the first time they try to change some behavior (smoking, drinking, overeating, etc.). For this reason, Prochaska and colleagues added the stage of "**Relapse/Recycling**" to their model (Chapter 9). Happily, they've found that, even when people lapse in their change-program, many of them "recycle": they (1) try to learn from their lapse and then (2) return to their change-commitment, this time a bit wiser than before.

In this book, Prochaska et al describe each of the change-stages in detail, pointing out that certain coping-techniques are more appropriate to different stages of change. For example, while book-learning ("consciousness raising") is very helpful in the Contemplation stage, Action and Maintenance require more active coping techniques--such as learning Relaxation, or including an Exercise regimen, or learning to "talk back" to tempting thoughts (nicely summarized on page 54).

Even more fascinating, Prochaska et al point out (page 26) that different styles of psychotherapy/counseling might be more helpful to people at different stages of change. Contemplators, for instance, can profit greatly from traditional analysis (Freudian/Jungian/Gestalt/Transactional/etc). On the other hand, people at the Action/Maintenance stages might profit better from more behavior-and-relationship based therapies (Behaviorism/Cognitive/Humanistic/Existential Counseling).

But most important, this book aims to be a very detailed guide for readers who not only want to learn the psychology of change, but also want to *apply* this model to their own lives. For this reason, Prochaska et al (1) Walk the reader through the five stages; then (2) explain the coping techniques most helpful to each stage, (3) give real-life examples of people at each stage and the actions they took at each stage. Finally, (4) Prochaska et al apply the Stages of Change model to specific behaviors at Chapter 10: smoking, drinking and coping with psychological (di)stress.

Of course, no book can be a panacea--change is difficult no matter how much psychology one has read. (The authors are well-aware of this, and point it out repeatedly.) But this book offers a reader an eyes-wide-open vision of how real people really change, and what kinds of preparation and specific coping skills can best ensure success in changing one's life.

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### **Diana says**

It was a good read, despite not the easiest. The way it was written was a bit boring.

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**Joshua Caraballo, PsyD says**

I love, love, love this book and all its contents. :-)

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**Brandon Wilkins says**

Really interesting study of how people change. In my opinion, from a Christian and Reformed perspective, it could supplement well a study on sanctification or counseling to someone stuck in addictions or bad habits.

Reformed Christians understand that true heart change is a work of grace, and yet there is always a human component to change. In biblical terminology, we do "work out" our salvation (though we do that because God "works in" us). And so one, I think, can read a book like this seeing in it as a thorough discussion of the human effort side of the ledger in change.

A lot of common sense into human behavior.

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**Kat Robey says**

Good overall and concrete look at the process of change-examples of smoking, drinking, and overeating as habits are used to address offer a framework to explore underlying reasons for the choices we make. Rather than thinking the book is only targeted to these three issues or habits—Case examples, studies, statistics, and exploration of psychological paradigms offer context such that the reader can apply strategies to ANY behaviors s/he would like to improve.

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**Michael McCluskey says**

I'm taking a Habit Change 12-week online class for credit this Fall semester at the community college where I work. I appreciate the science, but it's much like most other such works, glossing over specifics. Interesting and useful for the habit I plan on confronting for the class, soda-drinking.

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**7jane says**

(I'm thinking about changing a bad habit or a few, not just ones mentioned here. The book doesn't look much, but surprised me.)

This book is about overcoming bad habits—  
like smoking, alcoholism, overeating, drug addiction, gambling issues, overworking, sexual irresponsibility,

anxieties

- in 6 clear steps, though the authors clearly say that not all habit can be done without a professional therapist of some sort. That said, this is a pretty clear (it was meant to be quite simple), and amazingly stretchable, form of changing that does tell you that the road is not always all A to B, but relapses may happen a few times before success.

To start on this, one must know what one's stage currently is (there is a test for that in the book). If you're going to conquer more than one at the same time, the stage may vary with *\*each\** habit. The first three stages are most likely, in my opinion.

The stages are:

1. Precontemplation (resisting, but with some unease) - denial and excuse-making
2. Contemplation (admitting and pondering) - needing facts but not rushing from others
3. Preparation (for action and unexpected challenges) - information-search, planning for challenges and how to reward good steps
- there's an action-readiness test here before next step, in the book-
4. Action (making change after thorough preparation) - replacing with healthy substitutes, control of environment, using rewards
5. Maintenance (most common stop-point) - vulnerable, avoiding overconfidence in abilities, knowing how to do in temptation situations

5.2 Knowing what to do with relapsing

6. Termination (not available to everyone; sometimes age can help) - knowing the signs of this stage if you're the lucky one.

Each one has its particular techniques to use on that stage, and some from previous stages may still apply on next ones.

The authors explain how they came to this form of stages (not easy, not quickly-arrived-to, but does give good results). Some info shows the date when the book first arrived, so Internet is not heavily given, but very few parts show it anyway. :) There is specific guidance for three bad habits (smoking, alcoholism and anxiety stuff). The info for seeking therapy-level help is pretty clear, though US-centric, and I don't have the knowledge how good it really is, but I feel the authors tried their best.

But in the end, I feel that this is perhaps one of the best 'change bad habits' book I've read. Plain but clear, with stretch-room and applicable for so many things to change. So if you get this, it can give you much good information and support to start from. It has certainly inspired me to thinking of trying soon. :)

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### **Kara says**

This book changed my life, and I witnessed it change many others'. I worked at a therapeutic boarding school for troubled teens that used this book as an outline for their clinical model and it worked beautifully. I saw kids change in the 15 months that they were there. If you are a smoker, or trying to diet, or dealing with bipolar, depression, anxiety, or substance abuse - even family or attachment issues - this book can help you. Read it with an open mind - and take this from someone who is not accustomed to (or accepting of) self-help books.

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## **Paul says**

In this book, James Prochaska provides a model of behavioral change that attempts to reconcile hundreds of other models; hence the name of Transtheoretical Model of Behavioral Change. It has been labeled as a "revolution in the science of behavior change" but I find the work important because it offers a simple framework in which much self-change can occur. The model is composed of six different stages and Prochaska points out that success in adapting a healthier behavior relies on the individual understanding where they are in the process and not rushing.

Stage 1 is Pre-contemplation when an individual can't see or accept the problem or behavior and they resist change.

Stage 2 is Contemplation where a person acknowledges that change needs to occur and they think about solving it but there is no commitment. Many get stuck here in the "I will someday" mindset.

Stage 3 is Preparation with planning to take action and this includes some level of commitment.

Stage 4 is Action where steps are taken to modify the behavior.

Stage 5 is Maintenance which is composed of a struggle to permanently adopt behavior. There will be lapses.

Stage 6 is Termination where the behavior (or lack of it) is now a habit.

The book details methods for working through and provides indicators of success for each stage. It includes a number of examples of how people used the model to successfully bring about positive change.

The processes outlined lend themselves to implementation within the professional coaching relationship and the author's attitude towards change aligns with my own personal views. I've found the insights provided by this model to be quite useful in my coaching business.

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## **Carrie Mullins says**

This is a well-researched yet common sense guide to changing bad habits. The authors explain six stages of change they recognized after studying thousands of people who have made positive changes on their own. These stages do indeed feel universal, and somehow remind me of Joseph Campbell distilling the universal phases of the Hero's Journey after studying thousands of human stories. Anyone who wants to make a positive change would benefit from reading this. I'll definitely be reading it twice.

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## **Martijn Euyen says**

Changing for Good biedt een transtheoretische benadering voor verandering. De schrijvers onderzochten duizenden personen die erin slaagden om te veranderen, variërend van het stoppen van alcoholmisbruik, drugsgebruik en het omgaan met mentale problemen. Daaruit leidden ze het zes fasen model voor verandering af. Enorm leerzaam en hoopvol boek dat niet alleen bruikbare inzichten biedt voor het ondersteunen van veranderingen van individuen, maar zeker ook voor organisaties!

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## **John says**

A great book about change and how it happens (or doesn't). It takes a well documented approach that sets most of change theory on its head.

Conceiving of change as a multi-level, multi-faceted process instead of a one-time, winner-take-all decision is a significant shift (at least in my thinking) for individual change. Institutional and group change has seemed to work that way, but individual change has always seemed to work differently.

The additional insight of Prochaska's book is that the process of change is not linear. You don't enter it at one end and emerge at the other. Instead you may enter the process at any point and proceed from there. Also, the skills that you learn at one stage of change may not (probably won't) work at another stage of change. In fact, they might be a hindrance. So identifying what stage of change you are in or approaching will dictate your strategy and tactics for that stage.

While it is a bit cumbersome to read, the research and insight are worth the struggle. The quick measuring instruments and self-reflective questions that come at various points in each chapter are also helpful in seeing how the principles in the book can be effectively applied.

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## **Ally Aleks says**

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