

The Stages of Change: Become Your Own Lifestyle Coach!

No *one* stage is more important than another—it's a process.

Stage of Change: Nurture the 9 P's...	Ways to Motivate Change
<p>Pre-contemplation—Not even thinking about changing. Not ready yet!</p>	<p>Increase awareness of the effects of the problem behavior. HOW are your present choices harmful to you or others? Take responsibility.</p>
<p>Contemplation—Beginning to think about risks and benefits of change.</p> <p>Contemplate & Prioritize!</p>	<p>Many people experience a "triggering event": illness, mental or emotional distress. The goal is to decrease uncertainty about wanting to make changes by identifying pros (benefits to you) and cons (hassles) of change. Are the long-term benefits worth the short-term costs? These times can be filled with guilt, shame, hopelessness, and desperation. See ideas below on how to sort things out. Get support for yourself.</p>
<p>Preparation—Plan for a change, but you don't know what to do. You begin to think of ways to change.</p> <p>Plan & Prepare—gather tools for yourself!</p>	<p>Evaluate your life, get advice and help. Seek information: perhaps make phone calls, attend meetings or seminars. You're in the process of gathering tools for yourself. Listen to your "self-talk" about the value to you of making changes. <u>Make an action plan</u> with specific steps. Set a date. Identify rewards.</p>
<p>Action—Making changes. Committing time and energy to practice new behaviors.</p> <p>Action = Practice!</p>	<p>Start small. Set specific, achievable, meaningful, short-term goals. Work to solve problems as they arise. Action is PRACTICE. New behaviors will feel uncomfortable to you at first, and you won't be very skilled at them. You'll make mistakes. New habits are the most "fragile" to revert back to OLD habits during the first 6 months.</p>
<p>Relapse—Returning to former patterns. <i>It will happen.</i> Choose to learn from it. Can last five minutes or five years! This is the KEY stage in being successful for life.</p> <p>Apply Positive & Powerful Problem Solving! Learn to cope.</p>	<p>RELAPSE IS NOT FAILURE. IT IS LEARNING. It can happen at ANY stage, especially between pre-contemplation and contemplation, and during times of crisis. Be kind with yourself and honest. NOTICE what has happened. Determine what you can learn from the experience, and plan ahead for the future. Problem solve: use your knowledge as a tool for your next stage. Keep a journal to notice and unravel patterns. Plan behavior substitutions. Don't give up. Don't give up. Just begin again! Seek out helpful resources on www.balancedweightmanagement.com and in your community.</p>
<p>Maintenance—Continuing new behaviors with increased confidence. Have awareness of what triggers a relapse and make plans to avoid it.</p> <p>Persist with Patience and have FUN!</p>	<p>Remind yourself of reasons for having changed--never forget WHY you wanted to do something different. See Bob's story, <u>Emotional Area</u> for examples of reasons. Reevaluate and redefine your tools and your plan. It will get easier to maintain new behaviors over time. Be patient and persistent. Change is a process, NOT an event. Practice self and <u>stress-management skills.</u> Notice if you have fallen back into a chronic, unhealthy patterns again and use the self-evaluation tools (use the <u>Daily Personal Check-In</u> section on Bob's Website). Congratulate yourself for having the courage to do it!</p>

