



LEADERSHIP insights

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AFTER THE WORKSHOP

Does it feel like this?

1. Go to a workshop
2. Get great ideas
3. Come back to work and keep doing things the old way because change is hard

Or your #3 could be: **Go home and do something different to get great results.** At our leadership workshops, our intention is that you develop skills you can apply right away. But last week, a participant asked at the end of a Time Management workshop, *"This is great, but how do I make myself go back and do these things?"*

It is true, change can be hard. Researchers* have identified **predictable stages of change** that can help us move forward more successfully in our efforts. Following are the 6 stages, using the time management example of someone who has been feeling overwhelmed, unprepared for meetings and generally behind in their work due to no time to plan. This person's desired change: *at the end of each day, spend 15 minutes planning for the next day.*

Stage 1: Pre-Contemplation - Ignorance is bliss. At this point, the individual has not conceived that a change is really needed, or the extent of the problem. In our scenario, this individual has not even thought about time management techniques, or of attending the workshop, but *perhaps the people who are frustrated or disappointed with him have thought of it for him!*

Stage 2: Contemplation - Oops, a colleague has expressed irritation that you continue to come to meetings without your assigned work done, even though you have explained you are so busy. You can't ignore this completely now but you are still wavering on if you really want to or could change. Inside you know you need to change but you remain on the fence and in fact wish you didn't have to change. **You are in charge of deciding when or if you take the next step.** This is a good stage to write down the pros and cons of making the change.

Stage 3: Preparation - This is where you will start to take some *initial* steps in making the change. You decide to try the 15 minutes planning thing today. It helps to have support for this, so think about who can help you and ask them to remind you. You'll think about the obstacles to making the change (mostly old habits), but you'll come up with some solutions (shutting your door, a reminder on your calendar, not answering the phone or email during that time, etc.). You'll try it, and you'll see the next morning that there is some payoff to doing it.

Stage 4: Action - Here is where you start making the 15 minutes planning time a habit. You'll think about what you are giving up to be able to do the new habit, but there will be some payoffs that will offset what you give up. **Tip for building new habits: the only part you need willpower for is getting started.** Once you start, the ball is rolling downhill.

Stage 5: Maintenance - Here it will feel weird NOT to do things the new way. Maintenance is the stage where consistency starts to come in. When something messes with your 15 minutes planning time, you miss it, and you'll notice that your next day doesn't go as well. Maintenance is where the 15 minutes planning time will just be a part of what you do each day, kind of like brushing your teeth. **Very often when we think of making a change, we think it starts HERE, but it doesn't. We can get disillusioned and want to give up. But there are a few stages to go through first so don't be hard on yourself when you are not 100% successful on day 1.**

Stage 6: Relapse - Think in advance about what could throw you off your new habit, then you will be less likely to be derailed by it.

These stages apply to all kinds of individual change or habits one tries to break. So, how about that new year's resolution?

*James Prochaska and Carlo DiClementa developed the Stages of Change Model at the University of Rhode Island.