

## ***What Does it Take to Change?***

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As we begin the New Year many people make resolutions to make important changes in their lives. Whether this is to be a better parent, quit smoking or start exercising you should first consider what it takes to change. Many who fail to achieve their resolutions have not carefully considered this question.

One of the risks of change is venturing into the unknown. Uncertainty can be very unsettling and anxiety-producing. Some people remain in familiar situations, even if they are bad situations, in order to avoid the unknown. In order to begin changing, we have to risk venturing into unfamiliar territory. Change does not come without a cost and part of the cost is trying a new and different approach. Although this may not be easy, the rewards that come with change can be great.

It also takes a conscious effort to change. You must make a strong commitment to accomplish your goal. Make the act of change important and expend time and energy to make it happen. Give yourself obvious reminders on a daily basis at home and at work. Make your goals known to your spouse, friends and co-workers so they can support your effort and praise you for the progress they witness.

Change requires a shift in priorities. You have to make up your mind and “go for it”! It has to be one of the top three most important things in your life until it becomes ingrained as a new routine. It takes about three weeks to stop an old bad habit or to begin a new good habit. Make this your priority for three consecutive weeks, every day without exception, and it will become second nature to you.

Finally, it may be necessary to take small progressive steps to change. You can only work on changing a limited number of things at once. Take time to rank order the steps you want to accomplish. Focus on one or two of them first and move on to the others once these are reached. Continue this way until you have achieved all of the steps toward your goal.

When is the best time to make changes in your life? RIGHT NOW! You can find all kinds of excuses but they will simply lead to defeat. Take the risk, make the commitment, set your priorities and take small steps toward your goal. The thrill of success and feeling of satisfaction will propel you to accomplish further positive changes.