

It is relatively easy to list the process required for deep change in a person. The type of change that can see a person whose personality and demeanor take on a new form. Or the type of change which sees a person's whole life turn around. A listing of the qualities for change may go something like this:

- Insight
- Disrupt the Unwanted Action, Emotion or Thought
- Introduce the New Action, Emotion or Thought
- Bring Forceful Will and Intent.
- It Takes a Lot of Time
- Persist, Persist, Persist

The above is closer to a loose framework rather than something written in stone. Still it is a remarkably consistent set of characteristics which makes up most of the deeper and longer lasting change that many seek. A more symptomatic approach to simpler unwanted phenomena could be taken by points 2 and 3 alone. Often, they are enough for simpler forms of change. Usually though more is called for than just behavioral and cognitive strategies.

As the years have rolled on, I have grown into a recognition that insight has a limited function when it comes to deep change. The main difficulty comes in the proposition that insight itself creates change. If we are conscious of our behavior that is espoused as enough to create change. But often, even when people are conscious of their inner workings and behaviors they remain stuck in life. In my own life, I have had occasion to know what I had to do and know where the problematic behavior, thoughts or emotions stemmed from, but still found myself repeating the same pattern over again.

Mostly it is because the unconscious has become stuck in some way which translates into a difficulty of letting go of an unwanted behavior. We are attempting to help the unconscious move forward by giving it new options and new strategies to help alleviate the problem. By necessity things often need to be brought into consciousness so that we gain a better sense of what is causing the stuckness and how to best proceed from there.

From this perspective, insight serves the purpose of allowing a person to identify patterns which have kept them stuck. Knowing how our patterns form and when they are most likely to rear their heads gives us an edge into combatting them. In life, it is extremely important to know what has contributed into making the individual that we take ourselves to be.

Sometimes this can involve our family's histories and intergenerational transmission. At other times, it can involve attachment patterns and how relate with others in the world. There is a lot to be gained from an exploration of our inner worlds and the dynamics which go on in them.

Another benefit of insight is that it can help highlight where we want to be in our individual journeys. We might tell ourselves that we want to be happy, but exactly what does this mean. By exploring what it means to be happy in more detail we develop a clearer roadmap to take in life. Happiness for some might be spending more time with loved ones, for others it might be experiencing joy and for others still it might be devoting time and energy to worthy causes. The more specific we can be about a desired outcome the more likely we are to achieve it as the [self-fulfilling prophecy](#) testifies to.

The word insight tends to denote a cognitive understanding of what goes on in our inner worlds. To a considerable extent its true. But insight could involve how to better use intuition or how to listen to our bodies. It can involve subtle emotions or learning a new set of skills. Insight is not solely the domain of an aha experience, but can often involve a simple recognition of patterns and potential remedies to unwanted patterns.

Once we are clear in our minds about what needs changing then we need to interrupt and disengage from the unwanted behaviors. For instance, as someone who wants to go from

Once we learn to interrupt the action, emotion or thought, we want to do our best to ensure that the interruption also involves the introduction of a new action, emotion or thought. A person can interrupt being mean spirited by stopping the behavior or using alternate methods like distraction. Then they introduce the new behavior of being kind hearted. As they keep practicing stopping the new behavior and repeatedly introduce a new behavior the brains malleability kicks in. Our brains love repetition which can work in our favor. By repeating the new behavior new neural connections are made and then strengthened. If we like being kind-hearted then the emotional centers associated with more positive emotions become activated. A positive type of triggering occurs.

I made mention that we can interrupt unwanted behavior by stopping it. While it is a simple instruction it is by no means easy. The difficulty is that we have become programmed to respond in a certain way. This programming is so ingrained in our physical structures that deep change is often difficult to achieve. We should bring the full attention of our intent and will to action onto a problematic behavior to achieve some change. This often requires us to pay attention multiple times during the day. A mindfulness practice can be helpful because it allows us to create a little daylight between the difficulty and ourselves. This is one way of interrupting which many have found useful.

No matter what the practice, it is prudent to note that our intentions and will have to be greater than the pattern we want to extinguish. For instance, we must want to change more than we want to stay the same. This is not just a lip service but has to be of such sufficient quality that it almost borders on the all-encompassing. Our will and intent must surpass our tendency to drop of a desired outcome in a few weeks or months time.

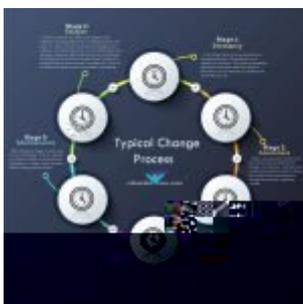
The last set of ingredients are related to time and persistence. Deep change can take a few years to occur. We might only get the first inklings of change months down the track. These inklings can be so small that we might even wonder if change has occurred or not. It is not at all unusual for it to take six months or more before something a bit closer to progress can be identified. Given societies tendency for instance remedies and magic pill solutions it is no wonder that so many people are under a false impression when it comes to change. The truth of it is that it can take a considerable amount of time and often does.

Then we must persist and persist and persist. We not only have to persist with our will and intention but also our actions. We will become what our actions are if we persist in being kind-hearted then we take on all the qualities of a kind-hearted person.

It should be remembered that what is being discussed is deep psychological change or personality change. Other things which are simpler in origin and usually only involve behavior can be changed much quicker. For instance, phobias typically do not require lengthy periods of therapy to change that behavior. If it is at the level of a symptom then usually it can be modified relatively quickly. If it is at the level of psyche, soul or deep patterns of behavior then it typically is going to take some time. It is important to have the right expectation when wanting to change, since persistence and time are absolute non-negotiable aspects of change.

The above should be taken more as a guide where change can be a very different process from one person to the next. Nonetheless, the above has proven to be consistent over the years in my experience.

As a follow on to this post consider reading the following <https://edwardtraversa.com/how-to-create-a-wonderful-life/>



The Change Cycle