

Checklist of Changes

Below are the changes in a person's life that make it free from the compulsion to engage in problem behavior. You can use it to assess where you are in the recovery process.

CHANGE	YOUR ANSWER	EXAMPLE METHODS FOR MAKING THIS CHANGE
Support		
Have you identified resources to help you change?		Read, talk, listen. Ask your subconscious mind what you need to do to be ready for what's coming.
Can you access the power to stop or avoid craving?		Ask your subconscious mind how to get access to the power to stop craving or turn away from temptation. Discuss it with your cat, dog or sponsor. Try imbuing a talisman with this power. Resolve each morning to turn away from temptation.
Can you ask for help?		Start with program people. Ask for phone numbers at a meeting. Get a sponsor. Investigate what stops you from asking.
Can you use big feelings for healing?		Release them through tears, laughter or pillow-pounding. Heal the source. Investigate the feelings. Write your feelings in a journal to slow them down and get some perspective on them. Vent them with a willing helper. Develop tolerance for feelings Set aside time to pay attention to difficult emotions instead of avoiding them. Develop listening relationships where each of you can vent. Read https://rivenwoodbooks.com/Spiritually%20Assisted%20Emotional%20Healing.pdf
Preparation		
What do you want to change? If you have named a behavior (thinking is behavior), you are good to go. If you've written another person or a situation you want to change, fill out the worksheet, https://rivenwoodbooks.com/Workshop/step%200.pdf		List the behaviors you never want to do again. Decide to go to a 12-step meeting, with the choice of meeting helping focus on the problem behavior. Find the underlying need https://rivenwoodbooks.com/Workshop/step%200.pdf Consult with someone else.
Are you willing to stop trying to change this behavior using methods that fail? You need to stop trying things that don't work. If you're not willing to stop now, how can you become willing?		List the strategies you have used to try to control the problem behavior. Honestly assess the results you've gotten with them. Are you willing to stop the ones that haven't worked? Write how you know your old way won't work. Write out your story, with the price you paid for failing. Accept you have a problem that trying harder won't solve. Admit you're powerless. (Step 1) Listen at meetings. Stay late and talk to old-timers. What are the pros and cons of changing? Stop trying to change and allow change to happen.
Are you willing to assume there is an answer that works, and look for it? If you really don't believe there is an answer, you won't try very hard to find it. What would convince you the effort is worth it?		What do you see in meetings to suggest a solution exists? If your own judgement is batting 0, perhaps it's worth the risk to trust someone else's. Assume that there is something you're not seeing. If you can't assume it, write why it's possible. Listen to others' wisdom and see what you think. Talk to someone after a meeting. Turn the question around: Why do you think you can't stop? Identify the reasons. Step 2, any version.

<p>Do you know what you want guiding you into your new life? What will ensure that the new life is better than the old? What qualities making life worth living (e.g., love, honesty, health...)</p>		<p>Make a list of the intangible qualities that you value and want in your life and decide to serve those values. List the powers that can help you stop problem behavior. Adopt a new guiding principle. If you use the idea of God, list the qualities that make God worthy of your allegiance. If you aren't willing to "go to any lengths," what <i>are</i> you willing to do? You can go forward as far as you are willing and then see where things stand. Step 3, any version.</p>
<p>Have you identified the obstacles to change? What happens when you stop the old behavior? The thoughts, feelings and situations that push you back toward the old are the obstacles need to be addressed. Any sustained urge toward old behavior probably comes from an unmet need. As you list obstacles, it's helpful to watch for the needs that underlie them.</p>		<p>Stop the behavior and see what happens. Write the thoughts and feelings when you are tempted toward old behavior. Why do you do this problem behavior? When do you do it? What are the triggers for the behavior? Make a list of things that bother you. Make a list of things that bother you, then add columns to help connect these to unmet needs. Possible column headers: what happened? what were you feeling? what were you thinking? what did you need? what strategy did you use to get what you need? what price did you pay for going about it this way? Answer questions in a workbook (e.g., Al-Anon's <i>Blueprint for Progress</i> or OA's 12x12 workbook). Use the method in the AA big book, pages 64-71. What changes need to happen to be free of the problem behavior?</p>
<p>Have you gotten outside perspective on your breakdown of the problem? Anyone who is not you has a perspective that can be helpful. The best choice is someone who cares enough to think about you but is also willing to tell you things you don't want to hear; your personal friends might not be willing.</p>		<p>Pick one or more people and try sharing the obstacle. Write your feelings, particularly when tempted toward old behavior. Bring up an item from the list as a meeting topic. Read one item at a time to people who have given you their phone number.</p>
<p>Do you know the triggers and unmet needs driving the problem behavior? In your list of obstacles, look for the unmet needs that motivate you. Why do you do what you do?</p>		<p>Write about the blind spots exposed above. Group the items in your step 4 list by strategy: what were you trying to accomplish with this behavior, and what did it actually accomplish—what will you lose by changing problem behavior? Write about the history of your unmet needs. Look at your problem thinking instead of identifying with it. Make a table with these headers and fill it in from your 4th- and 5th-step notes: Strategy, Cost, Benefit, Need I'm trying to meet, Why did I adopt this strategy? Write pro-con analyses of your choices.</p>
<p>Are you ready to trade in flawed strategies for meeting your needs with ones that are effective, ethical, loving, and healthy? It's no good stopping addictive behavior if you kill yourself or trade for a more destructive addiction. Other people may push back when you change; are you ready for that? Your misgivings will loom larger when you stop hesitating and act; can you stay the course?</p>		<p>Feel the feelings that dysfunctional behavior has been masking. Make practical changes to address obstacles, such as finding a new place to live, cancelling risky activities, making arrangements to avoid temptation, ensuring that you aren't dependent on someone unreliable. Open your thinking to solutions other than the ones you've been using. Where you lack the power to solve a problem, adopt a course of action you can live with.</p>
<p>Change</p>		
<p>Have you found solutions that work? That is, new strategies to meet your needs and protect you from triggers. If your old strategies were ineffective, unethical, unloving or unhealthy, now is the time to find better strategies</p>		<p>Ask other people, read, make it a topic at a meeting, try doing what you see other people do. Remind yourself each morning what answers you're watching for today. Stop the old behavior and see what new ideas you get. Ask your subconscious mind for answers. Write pretty reminder cards and read them frequently. Expect to discover new solutions to old problems. Step 7, any version.</p>

Consolidation		
<p>Have you integrated those solutions into your social thinking?</p>		<p>Make a list of past things that could have gone better than they did. How would you handle each situation now? What amends do you owe yourself? For each new strategy in your step-7 list, think of the last time you needed it. Imagine using it in that situation. How would you have recognized the need? Will you be prepared in the future? How will you stay centered? Review incidents from step 4. Review events leading up to step 0. Step 8, any version.</p>
<p>Have you incorporated new strategies into existing relationships? Can you "do over" anything on your step 8 list? If you apologize for speaking disrespectfully to a friend, your chances of repeating the mistake in the future are much reduced; making amends is protection against relapse. How can you turn the people around you into allies for your recovery? How can you practice your new social behavior in a setting you have arranged, rather than waiting for the need to arise and perhaps getting caught unawares?</p>		<p>Mend anything you broke in the grip of old behavior: return what you stole, lift up anyone you put down, consider those you took for granted. Tell your associates the changes you're making and ask their cooperation. Let people know what to expect if you've decided to change your behavior (e.g. "I'm off sugar, so please don't offer me dessert."). Commit to a recovery buddy in advance the new behavior you will practice in an upcoming situation. Step 9, any version.</p>
<p>Have you turned the solutions into habits?</p>		<p>Start each day with a reminder of the situations to watch for and new answers to use. Nightly inventory of new strategies you used and those you forgot. Daily check in with an ally. Schedule quiet time for yourself. Post-it notes with the things you're trying to remember. Review your list of new strategies from step 7 to identify which have become habits and which need attention. Make amends as soon as you notice you owe them. Decide on flags that should alert you to use new strategies. Step 10, any version.</p>
<p>Have you extended the solutions into other areas of your life beyond the original problem area?</p>		<p>Think about the changes in your life and where else they might apply. Try meditation. Where else can you replace compulsive behavior with sober behavior? How do your new attitudes and strategies go with your philosophy, your goals, your self-image? Do you use your guiding principles in all areas of your life or just some? Step 11, any version.</p>
<p>Have you built the solutions into your future plans and relationships?</p>		<p>Share with others. Perfect your self-care. Sponsor people. Do service to the fellowship. Do service to people in your life. Set boundaries early, let people see who you are. Use all your new strategies from the beginning of new relationships. Write a maintenance plan for the rest of my life. Step 12, any version.</p>