

Explanation of the checkChanges.pdf

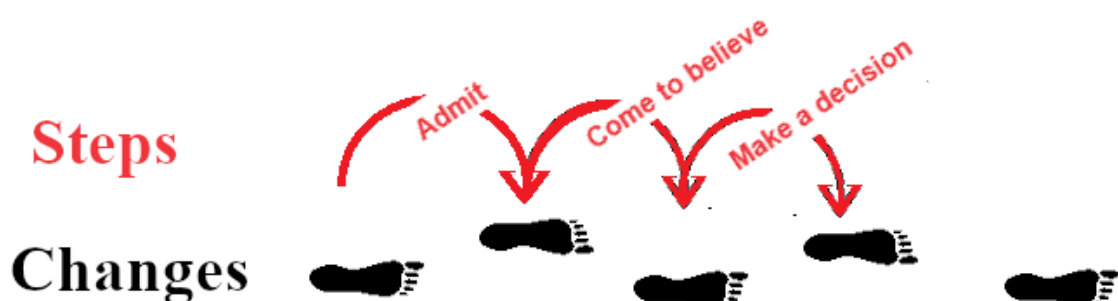
What is the check list and where did it come from?

The check list is a way to inventory one's recovery process. It lists the changes in a person's life that transform it from one dependent on a substance or unhealthy behavior, to a better life, free of the problem. You can use it to decide whether to do more work, even if you've finished whatever approach you used. If you're new, you can use it as you go along, to make sure the work you do produces the changes you need.

The list derives primarily from the 12 steps and secondarily from the advice people give newcomers to recovery, plus my own experience. The picture below shows in red what we hear so much about in meetings, and in black what we assume the steps will do for us.

The assumption behind telling each other to work the steps is that our lives will change as a result. For this to happen, each step I do needs to produce one of twelve changes in my life, changes that add up to a major transformation. We talk a lot about the steps--the instructions for producing change--but not about the changes themselves. In particular, we don't check that the work we've done produced the change it needs to. So it took me a lot of years to notice that the steps don't work for me as written. The harder I try to follow those instructions, the worse my results; letting myself modify works much better.

So this check list is a way of checking your results--regardless of whether you're using the original steps, alternative steps, or some other approach entirely.



I have identified 13 changes in a person's life that the steps are meant to produce. (I view Step 6 as needing to produce two changes.) In addition, there are changes not associated with any step. We often hear about these as advice for newcomers, and they support the whole recovery process. I've also added a step 0: Decided what behavior needed to change. That lets me use this same process for problems I run into along the way, things like expecting too much of myself and others, avoiding emotions instead of embracing them, blaming others for my problems...you know, little stuff like that. Lastly, I've added a change I *don't* hear much about in meetings, learning to use emotional pain to grow out of my chronic mistakes instead of forever coping with them. The result is 18 changes, listed below:

Support

Identify resources to help you change.

Develop access to the power to stop or avoid craving.

Become able to ask for help.

Use big feelings to grow out of chronic problems instead of always coping with them.

Preparation

Define what behavior needs to change.

Become willing to stop doing what I have been doing that doesn't work.

Become willing to seek a solution that works.

Choose the guiding principle that you want shaping your new life.

Identify the obstacles to adopting a new way of life.

Get outside perspective on the list of obstacles (outside your own blind spots). Record what you learn about your blind spots so that the new perspective doesn't recede back into them.

Identify triggers and unmet needs driving compulsive behavior.

Face the feelings brought up by change.

Change

Seek new solutions for the problems identified, including effective strategies for meeting needs.

Consolidation

Integrate the new answers into social thinking.

Integrate the new answers into relationships.

Integrate the new answers into daily habits.

Broaden your application of the new answers to other areas of your life. Improve impulse control through meditation.

Apply the new answers to the future you're building.

You should now have a life free of the problem behavior

Categories

You see that I've grouped the changes into four categories: support for the whole process of growth; preparation for change; change, or finding new answers to old problems; and consolidation of the changes.

For the check list, I've turned the changes into questions: has your life changed in this way? I've also listed ways I know of that people use to produce the needed change. So the changes go into the first column and the steps plus all other methods for producing each change appear in the last:



CHANGE	YOUR ANSWER	EXAMPLE METHODS FOR MAKING THIS CHANGE
<i>Support</i>		
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.
<i>Can you access the power to stop</i>		Ask your subconscious mind how to get access to the power to

How to use the check list

For each item on the list:

Type your answer to the question into the blue box beside it.

If you like your answer, pat yourself on the back.

If you don't like the answer, consider whether this is something you want to work on some more. The methods in the last column might be helpful. Anything there inspire you?

Or perhaps you have other ideas. You can add them to the blue box or go do them right now...

If you are interested in reading more about this results-focused view of recovery, download <https://rivenwoodbooks.com/whatToExpect.pdf>