

## **When It's Time to Change**

The first challenge that most people face is accepting that there is something in their life that needs to change. So whether it be unhealthy relationships, unhealthy behaviors, career or work/life, or simply wanting to be a happier person, making the decision to change must come first. In many people, denial that there is any kind of problem can be very strong and can leave them feeling stuck for long periods of time.

Unfortunately, gaining insight about why change is necessary is often gained only through crisis or consequences. Perhaps a serious health scare, or loss, or being turned down for a promotion or even just a simple inability to feel joy and happiness can motivate and stimulate change. It's often through some negative consequence or experience that the problem and its solution become a priority, and this provides the catalyst and motivation for change.

For some people, the decision to change comes easily. They experience a different kind of challenge.... Having a desire to change but not knowing how or where to start. The process can seem really overwhelming, so they don't start at all. Still for others, one of the obstacles to making changes and transforming lives is their desire to be perfect. If someone's expectation is that change will happen suddenly or smoothly, then he or she is bound to be disappointed. The likely reaction to this is to say, "To heck with all of this! It's just too hard. I'm doing my part, why aren't things happening for me?"

Here is what I tell people: Transformation is not an event, or epiphany, or accomplishment. It is a process that can be lengthy and arduous at times. The inability to accept change as an ongoing process, (rather than as a one-time event,) has led many to people to relapses, failed weight loss goals, problems in relationships, and feeling like a failure as a human being.

The fact is this: Change is hard and it takes time and consistency and patience with the process. And that starts with being patient with oneself, and giving up the need to perform, meet expectations, or be perfect in any way.

### **For Women (although these apply to men, too!)**

In my work as a trainer and business owner, I work with men and women who share a common goal: wanting to improve their lives by improving their health and fitness. With the right program, support, and attitude, I have seen hundreds of men and women transform themselves and change the way they live their lives. That is an amazing thing to see!

In my work as a Coach, though, in addition to working with clients on physical goals, I have the opportunity to work with people on their

personal goals, career goals, and their focus and energy with which they approach life. Yes, I work with both men and women in my coaching practice; however, when it comes to making changes and transitioning from one way of life to another, I find that women face some challenges and seem to have some things in common – among them self sabotage, being hard on themselves, being overly self-reliant, and giving up on themselves and others before they have the opportunity to see change.

The next section of this book focuses on the patterns I've seen in women's behavior in regard to change. Keep in mind that these are NOT UNIQUE TO WOMEN and this does not in any way preclude men from facing the same issues or challenges. Some of you men may see yourselves in these self-defeating behaviors and patterns as well. And if you do, then Congratulations for having that insight. There just might be something here for you, too.

### ERRORS IN PERCEPTION

What I have noticed in my work with women is that one of the biggest issues we face as females is how we see ourselves. We often hold a completely inaccurate perception of our lives, our partners, our looks, our bodies, and who we are as individuals. Our ideas of how we are perceived by others and see ourselves – physically and emotionally are often not only more wrong than right – but skewed negatively.

For women concerned about their bodies, or their weight, for example, I often hear women describe themselves as “fat” or “flabby,” although they are healthy, and appear of normal size, and weight. As our own worst critics, women who obsessively cling to ideals of what they should look like, will rarely find peace or self acceptance.

### SELF CRITICISM

It is imperative that women evaluate the truthfulness of their “self-talk,” and break the cycle of self-criticism and judgment that keeps them trapped and unhappy with themselves and their bodies. As long as the focus is on what the body ISN'T, women will continue to suffer, be dissatisfied with themselves and others, and will likely be resistant to change, and will never really truly know joy and happiness.

There may be a strong professional woman who prides herself on her assertiveness, but is concerned about being perceived as “bitchy,” in business, and in personal relationships as well. Women may worry excessively about appearing too needy or overly emotional and then that same excessive worry about how the world perceives her is what motivates a lot of behaviors that are actually inconsistent with her true self. Of course this leads to anxiety and fear, and an external focus that blocks her ability to gain insight and tap into her own power to make change. So this may lead her to feeling victimized or

misunderstood or even some people describe feeling like a fraud if the face that they show to the world contradicts who they truly are.

#### NAME CALLING

Another issue that women face is often labeling themselves and engaging in a lot of negative self-talk. The labels and words that we use to describe or talk to ourselves have a lot of power, and the words often infiltrate our thoughts and become the reference for how we feel about ourselves. If a woman uses words like “fat” or “bitchy” or “needy” to describe herself, or if she see herself as overly emotional or undeserving of love and success, then what she in turn pays attention to as she lives her life and walk through the world, are the things that just serve to reinforce those negative beliefs about herself.

#### THINKING THAT BECAUSE WE THINK IT MAKES IT TRUE

We ARE evidence seeking individuals. Once we come up with a theory or belief, our tendency is to only see the things that prove it to be true and then we mistakenly magnify their importance. So if you think of yourself as unattractive, then every time that you look in the mirror you’ll look for examples and evidence that you are unattractive. We see women who obsess about their weight, or the way they look in a certain pair of jeans, or the flab on their upper arm, or their skin, or the size of their nose.... It’s endless and destructive. Not only that – but it is this constant fault-finding that takes a significant toll over time and affects how they think about or treat themselves. And that is how they then present themselves to the world.

#### PERFECT AIN’T ALL IT’S CRACKED UP TO BE

Another monumental challenge that many women face is the pressure to be perfect. It is hard to accept that true change and progress come only when we’re only willing to admit to ourselves that we have flaws. In fact, all humans have flaws. Wisdom comes when we accept that they are just a small part of us, and not who we actually are as a whole and true person. True personal growth comes when we accept all those flaws and imperfections in ourselves, and can do that without shame. We heal when we can admit them and even display them to the world and to people that we love and walk through the world with. Believe it or not, it IS possible to recognize physical flaws or character defects without magnifying their importance or taking them on as evidence that we are unworthy, worthless, hopeless, or unattractive.

#### DOING INSTEAD OF BEING

Another thing that I see as an issue for women, is being so focused on getting things done that they forget that they are human beings and cannot do it all, and shouldn’t try, if we want to be happy. The important part in the term “human being” is the word “being,” - realizing that we are NOT human doings, we’re human BEINGS.

Many women identify their value as individuals with the roles that they play in the world: as mothers, or wives, or sisters, or employees etc., and they are focused on the external behaviors that give them a mask or façade. And yet it's their ability to be able to look inside and accept their wholeness. Their wholeness includes all their strengths and unique abilities, as well as their faults and flaws. So if women find themselves feeling distant or disconnected or if we feel as if we are acting a part to the world then we are prohibited from actually developing strong connections with people in an honest and authentic way, and will be trapped by feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness.

---

IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU ARE READING and would like to know more about Jana and her Coaching / Mentoring services –please contact her at (520) 444-9188. You may order a copy of her book directly from her – or through Amazon.com (coming soon)

---

Jana L. Beutler (formerly Holland) M.Ed. is currently based in Tucson, Arizona. She is the Founder of Life in Motion Coaching and is a Certified Personal Fitness Trainer, therapist and life coach. She is also Owner of SWAT Fitness a personal training and fitness company specializing in transformational weight loss and fitness.