

## Why You Must Change and How to Overcome Resistance to Change

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Two of the largest impediments to our living better lives, having better careers, and being everything we are capable of being are (1) not changing, and (2) not taking the action necessary to get us to a new place. The more consistent action you take, the more you can grow, and the more you grow, the better you become. Since most people are motivated to improve and have better lives and careers, it stands to reason that to reach their full potential they also need to change, and in order to change they need to take action.

Many people do not change because they do not arouse enough desire within themselves to change. You need to become animated, angry, and impassioned in order to take action and change. To overcome the lethargy that is keeping you from changing, you should always be aware of what will happen if you do not change and understand what will happen if you do not change, versus what will happen if you do change.

I am here to tell you right now that you need to change. If you do not change, you are going to live a very sorry life and have a very sorry career in contrast to the excellence that you are capable of. No matter how successful you are, and how well you may have done in your career and life until now, you have only reached 5% of all that you are capable of. My goal for you is for you to realize your full potential and tap into that other 95%. I have met people who successfully tapped into that other 95%, and the results they have been able to achieve in their careers and lives are incredible. This is what you need to do.

Have you ever met someone who is much more successful than you, but who is not as smart, talented, and so forth as you are? I meet people like this all the time. What these people have been able to do is recognize what must be done in order for them to change and to take action.

Several years ago, I spent a day walking around a small southern town the day after a wedding. The wedding had been at a little inn in a sparsely populated beach community in the middle of nowhere, about 200 miles outside of Atlanta. Because everyone had to check out of the hotel by 12:00 the day after the wedding, we all decided to spend the afternoon in the small town.

As we walked around that day, many of us were struck by how depressing the place was. A good number of the stores were boarded up. There were abandoned factories all around the town. People seemed genuinely "out of it," and the town was in very bad shape.

The town had once been a giant "mill town" that made all sorts of fabrics and so forth, but apparently over the course of the past 25 years or so it had been completely decimated, as all of the jobs moved overseas and the mills closed. None of the houses seemed to have been painted in a decade. The area was a mess. You could tell that the town had once been bustling but that most of the people had left. The town was also quite isolated. There were no towns of more than 10,000 people for at least a few hours in any direction. I was with a guy who had spent a lot of his time living in the South, near this area, and he said something that day that I will never forget:

"What people always say about this town is that the only people left here are the people who are too stupid to leave. There are towns like this all over the South. For quite some time the stupid people have been breeding with other stupid people, and their stupid kids stay too. And the process repeats itself."

This statement really struck me. The more I thought about it, the more it seemed to make sense. This town was so *dead* that if you wanted a good job, an opportunity to get ahead and so forth, you most likely would have to be "stupid" to stick around. There are concrete reasons to stay in dying areas, such as family, investments in a house, and so forth; however, if there is nothing going on there, your career is likely to be problematic and stagnant, if you choose to stay.

In fact, there are areas like this all over the United States. There are so few opportunities available and so few things going on in certain geographic areas that if you stick around, you are putting yourself in a very bad position, one in which you, and then your kids if you have any, are likely to have problems. For example, the graduation rate in Detroit high schools is around 25%. No matter how smart your children may be, there is a good chance that going to school in Detroit would not necessarily be in their best interest.

What interested me most about this man's statement, though, was the idea of the people who "stayed." Staying in a bad situation is the equivalent of not changing--and not changing is the equivalent of not reaching your full potential. Not changing things when they are bad, or when you need to change, is among the most dangerous and problematical obstacles to your experiencing significant growth in your career and in your life.

*What do you need to change?*

In your life and in your career there is most certainly something you need to change:

- You might not be assertive enough.
- You might be in a bad job you need to get out of.
- You might be in a bad relationship.
- You might not be making the most of a skill you have.
- You might need to go to school and get training for a new job.
- You might need to start saving money.
- You might need to move somewhere to get a better job.
- You might need to lose weight.
- You might need to quit a destructive habit.

- You might need to spend more time with your family.
- You might need to focus your efforts on one thing instead of multiple things.

Whoever you are and whatever stage of life you are in, I am sure that there is something that you need to change about yourself and your life. If you do not change there are going to be consequences. You need to change if you do not want these consequences.

If you do change, there will also be positive consequences. There are several reasons that people do not change, and why they do not change when they need to.

**People Say They Do Not Change Because "They Have Not Had the Chance."** This is how most people approach the idea of change. Most people are victims in life. They spend their time waiting for circumstances to change--before they will change. For example, someone who is living in a town with no opportunity may make all sorts of excuses and justifications for remaining there, despite the fact that there is no opportunity:

- They may say they are waiting to get out of lease so they can move.
- They may say they need to convince a boyfriend or girlfriend to move.
- They may say they need to save up money to move.

Someone who smokes cigarettes may blame not quitting on:

- a spouse who stresses them out
- a boss they cannot stand

You frequently hear people say things like:

*"Once I get done with this difficult project, I will quit smoking."*

*"She stresses me out so much that I cannot stop smoking."*

People who blame external circumstances for their refusal and inability to change are going through life as victims. This is something a great many people in the world do consistently, and it is extremely limiting--because the odds are very good that the world will never change. People often make others the cause of their conditions, instead of accepting responsibility for the conditions that they are in.

These rationalizations of why you are not changing could, conceivably, occur over your entire lifetime--and for most people they do. If you look closely at your world and your life, you will likely see numerous examples of how you have justified and rationalized, blaming external circumstances for the life you are living, the career you have, and anything else you are not changing. But external circumstances will never change. Instead, *you* must change.

Everyone knows people who have gone through relationship breakups, divorces, and so forth. The thing about people who go through these breakups is that when you speak with them, they rarely blame themselves for the problems. It is always about the other person. You will almost never hear someone say:

*"The relationship is ending because I am a horrible person. I have done everything wrong."*

Instead, people find any number of reasons to blame the other person for the relationship ending. They find reasons the other person is at fault. They rationalize all sorts of reasons why the other person needs to change. It is never about themselves, and it is almost always about the other person who created the problem.

When you are looking for another job, or expecting a better career, don't just sit there wishing and wanting for something else to change. *Wishing and wanting will not bring you the results you are seeking.* Instead, you need to take action in order to make things change--if you really want things to change.

Justification, rationalization, wishing, and wanting are all things that prevent change from occurring. Do not allow your life to be controlled by external circumstances; you control your external circumstances.

**In Order to Change You Need to Understand What Will Happen if You Change, and What Will Happen if You Do Not Change.** One of the most effective methods for changing is to be *brutally honest with yourself* about what will happen if you do not change, and what will happen if you change.

When I finished my first year of middle school, I received pretty much all Cs. I did not do well at all. My father was traveling on business all summer and I remember receiving a letter from him. The letter said, "If you keep this up, you can expect a life of mediocrity, and you will never be good at anything." The letter was a bit harsh, but it woke me up because my father showed me what would happen if I did not change. That line in that letter was something that I remembered for years, and it ultimately ended up changing the course of my life. You need to understand what the consequences will be if you do not make a change.

If you are currently in a job in which there is no opportunity and which you do not enjoy, you can easily understand what will happen if you do not change. The odds are that you will continue being unhappy and not earning the income you are capable of earning. In addition, you will constantly be in a situation wherein you are not making the most of your potential. Because you are unhappy in your job, other areas of your life may also be negatively affected, including your relationships. To deal with the stress of your job you may even abuse food or other substances, and this will shorten your life span. Doing something you do not enjoy may ultimately shorten your life span and make you unhappy in numerous respects. You may not be respected by others as much as you could be, and you certainly will not set an example for future generations of your family.

In contrast, if you make the decision to *change* and *get a new job*, find a new way of doing things, and move forward, you may find that changing was not all that difficult. You may find a job that you enjoy and you may become happier. You may make more money. You may have much more satisfaction in your job. You may become a better mother or father. Your life and career will be improved dramatically by changing, and you will set a good example for the people around you.

Constantly being aware of what will happen if you change and what will happen if you do not change can benefit you tremendously. In fact, the more that you pursue change, the better off you will ultimately be in your life when change is necessary.

**In Order to Change, You Need to Understand the "Blocks" That Are Keeping You from Changing.** One of the most persistent problems that people have with change is that they self-impose blocks, which prevent them from changing. These

obstacles are incredibly serious and harmful to people--and we all have them. They involve beliefs about the "correct" way of doing things, the "polite" way to do things, and so forth. The more blocks that we have, the more problems we are likely to encounter in our careers and lives.

Nowhere are blocks more prevalent than when someone is looking for a job. In my experience, I have seen these blocks prevent people from getting jobs and put them in the dumbest situations imaginable. I know of attorneys who used to make \$150,000 a year but who have stupid blocks regarding how to search for jobs, and they are now are doing things like working in concession stands. I read stories every single day about people who state that they "cannot find jobs," and they are doing nothing about this. There are many ways to get jobs:

- One way is to look at advertisements in the local newspaper.
- Another way is to look at a free job board.
- Another way is to use a recruiter.
- Another is to look at a subscription-based job board that consolidates jobs from different job boards, recruiter websites ,and employer websites, like [EmploymentCrossing.com](https://www.employmentcrossing.com).
- Another way is to look at a subscription-based job board that consolidates jobs from employer websites, like [Hound.com](https://www.hound.com).
- Another way is to proactively use a service like [EmploymentAuthority.com](https://www.employmentauthority.com) to do a targeted mass mailing to every single employer who might hire you in your geographic area (or in other geographic areas).
- Another way is to cold call employers.
- Another way is to stop by the offices of every employer in your geographic area and ask for an interview.
- Another way is to stop by the offices of every major employer in your geographic area and offer to work for free, in order to show what good work you do.

If you look at this list, however, you will see that each method of getting a job is progressively more difficult for most people to do. For example, many people refuse to pay money to look for a job and therefore would not use a service like EmploymentCrossing or Hound. Other people are loath to mass mail their résumé and do not think this is "dignified" or something that they should do. Still others would refuse to ever cold call an employer, because they might believe that this makes them seem desperate. Further, almost everyone would refuse to stop by the offices of a major employer and ask for an interview, because they have all sorts of beliefs about how desperate this would make them look, how unprofessional it would seem, and more.

The thing is, though, that as you go down this list of methods of looking for a job, each one becomes more and more effective. It is more effective to use a service that consolidates job listings, and charges to look at them, than it is to not use such a service. It more effective to mail out your résumé to employers, regardless of whether they are hiring, than it is to simply sit around and hope that something turns up. There are some differentiations in the effectiveness of each of these job search methods, depending on your qualifications; however, for the most part, the methods of looking for jobs that work best are those that most people block themselves from doing. Overcoming your psychological blocks is one of the greatest challenges you will face in your road to success.

Many people who are professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, and others, have a real aversion to selling things. Instead, they believe that they should be respected for their knowledge and that people should just automatically *seek them out* for their services. Most of these professionals have what I would call a block that keeps them from selling things. This block ultimately does them a lot of harm. Many of the most successful lawyers, plastic surgeons, and others are people who have the ability to promote what they do, even if they are not necessarily the most skilled. These very successful people are the ones who have figured out how to overcome this particular block, which pertains to *selling*.

A block could involve something that has happened to you in the past that is still affecting you now. You may have been fiercely rejected by a certain type of person or company in the past, and, as a consequence, you now avoid these people or businesses. You may have failed when you tried something in the past, and now you avoid it at all costs. You need to understand that these blocks are something that hold you back and can make your life much more difficult and unfulfilled than it needs to be. These blocks will prevent you from taking action when you should.

**In Order to Change You Need to Overcome Resistance.** The final obstacle to changing is resistance. Resistance is something that prevents most people from ever changing. The moment most people come up against resistance, they give up, step back, and do not try as hard. Or, sometimes they feel resistance where there really is no resistance.

Regardless of what you need to change, you are going to come up against resistance in changing. The only way you are going to be able to change is if you learn how to overcome this resistance. Most people never are able to overcome resistance and, consequently, they never change. If you are trying to lose weight, for example, you need to overcome an internal resistance to dieting and exercising. Similarly, if you are trying to become better at anything, you are going to most often face resistance in doing whatever it is you are trying to become better at.

The reason that most people do not end up reaching their full potential and changing is that they are not focused enough to overcome the resistance that they encounter. For you to truly make progress and take action, you need to develop focus. Focus overcomes resistance. Successful salespeople, for example, know that to sell most people it does not require only one appointment and one call. It may require eight or more calls to the sales prospect. However, the salesperson's focus ultimately overcomes the resistance that the prospect has.

Most people give up. They do not persist. You need strategies and beliefs that will allow you to persist and persevere, so that you can change. The best strategy I know of is being focused, and this focus will help you overcome the resistance you face whenever you make an effort to begin changing.

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*Nothing that is worthwhile is easy. You must learn to change now if you are going to fully realize the 95% of your higher capability, which, as of now has lain untapped.*