

Readiness For Change

Are you organizationally challenged and ready for a change? Identifying where you are on the path of change will give you insight throughout the process.

Before reviewing the phases of change, consider these ideas:

Especially for individuals affected by chronic disorganization, it can take a long time to experience significant changes. On the path of change, some phases involve more thinking than actually doing, yet all parts are integral to the change process.

Fluidity exists within the phases of change. Individuals can shift forward and backward between stages. You can even straddle two phases simultaneously. Change is not a direct path from beginning to end, but more like a journey through the hills and valleys.

PHASE 1: INITIAL RUMBLINGS

Before change can occur, you will sense that something is bothering you.

- Has a book, article, TV show, or talk with a friend raised some questions? Are you thinking that your disorganization is negatively affecting your daily life?
- If so, you're in the "rumblings phase" of change and getting emotionally prepared. You aren't ready to do anything, but you've identified your discomfort and have a heightened level of awareness.
- Some will remain in this part of the cycle indefinitely. Others will be restless enough to shift into the next phase.

PHASE 2: IDENTIFYING POSSIBILITIES

Before moving any further, you begin to ponder how to make change happen.

- You have identified your rumblings and are

considering the "possibility phase" of change.

- You are becoming dissatisfied with how things are and desiring something different.
- You may feel anxious and paralyzed to make changes by yourself and consider enlisting outside help.
- In this phase, you might start thinking about hiring an organizer. The key here is "thinking about." You still aren't fully committed to changing. You might be apprehensive about verbalizing your thoughts aloud and asking for help.

PHASE 3: REACHING OUT

The feelings of pain and being overwhelmed have increased to the point where you cautiously take the next step.

- You move beyond the possibility phase into the "reaching out phase." Instead of just thinking about change, you pick-up the phone or send an email to a professional organizer, therapist, family member, or friend.

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- You acknowledge that you cannot make your desired changes alone.
- After interviewing several organizers, you are hopeful that change is possible with the right kind of support.
- You might remain in this stage for a while until your commitment level increases, and you shift into the “doing phase.”

PHASE 4: BEYOND TALKING

You’ve contemplated, you’ve researched, and you’ve become ready for action.

- In this phase, you devote the physical, emotional, and financial resources necessary to make changes.
- You’ve hired an organizer and are starting to work on your organizing challenges.
- You may feel both relieved because someone is helping you and impatient because “the work” is more challenging than you anticipated.
- While you are committed to moving forward and are feeling positive, the process may be slow.

People only change when they are ready and cannot be forced or cajoled. When the pain to stay the same becomes more significant than the fear of the unknown, change occurs. As Anais Nin said, “There came a time when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” Change is possible with desire, determination, commitment, and a compassionate support system.

- You might remain in the “doing phase” for a long time as you experience the ups and downs of progress.

PHASE 5: LIFE JOLTS

Circumstances can occur, which transform your outlook and commitment level.

- Major life events such as the death of a loved one, divorce, illness, changes in medication, new job, a world crisis, or children leaving the nest can affect the organizing process positively or negatively. When the reaction is positive, these types of events can jolt your perspective and patterns, shifting you into the “high gear phase.”
- You become clearer than ever about what you want. You no longer struggle with what to keep or release. The answers to your questions become crystal clear.
- At this stage, progress is fast. You are energized. Your organizing goals are within reach.