

How Shift Happens in Our Lives

There are a lot of us who would like to change something, but find it difficult to make that change. I'm here to share with you the fact that making a shift like this is absolutely possible, and share how that shift might happen.

So let's start with this: **making a shift in our lives is absolutely possible**. Not only have I made dozens of changes in my life, I've seen hundreds, even thousands of people change in my Sea Change Program and now my Fearless Training Program. It's not always easy, it's often very messy, but it's absolutely possible.

Let's look at how shift happens most often.

The Phases of How Shift Happens in Our Lives

Here's how the change often happens, in my experience:

1. **You struggle with the change.** This phase might take years — there's something in your life that's making you unhappy, unhealthy, or struggle with work or relationships. You want to change it, but either it's too difficult or you aren't very motivated to do it. You struggle, you give up, you feel bad about it. Repeat for months or years. This might be thought of as **Phase -1**.
2. **You are finally ready to change.** Something clicks for you — it's almost like a switch being flipped. You decide it's finally time to change. For some people, it's hitting rock bottom — things get so bad that you are finally faced with the fact that you need to change, and you want to change. Other times, it's getting inspired by something you read or watch, or hearing about someone else's change. Sometimes it's just having the courage to really sit and reflect on the change that you want and why it's so important to you, and then resolving to get serious about it. **We'll call this Phase 0**.
3. **You start the shift, probably with some enthusiasm.** You might go all in and be incredibly enthusiastic about the change, and get new books and equipment, watch videos, read about it online, download an app or two. The first few days, you might be super motivated and diligent. For some people, this initial surge can fade quickly (in 1-4 days) or last a little longer (5-9 days). It's a bit rarer for it to last 2 weeks but it can definitely happen. Let's call this **Phase 1**.
4. **You find it harder or different than you thought, and struggle a little.** Often people find change to be more difficult than they thought, or not meeting the expectations they had. This can bring struggle or even quitting. If you struggle but don't quit, you can make it into the next phase. The problem is that we have a fantasy of how it will happen, and it rarely goes that well. We think we'll be in shape to run a 5K after a week of running. We are surprised that working out at the gym is so tough. We are not

masters of the French language in 14 days. And so on. It can be discouraging. Sometimes people just lose focus because of too much going on — this is a sign that they aren't as motivated as they need to be, if busyness can sidetrack them easily. Let's call this **Phase 2**.

5. **You stick with it and find some positive change.** If you do stick with it through that initial struggle, and keep at it ... you'll find change starting to happen. That will feel good and be encouraging. Most people don't stick with it long enough for change to happen, even though it can start to happen after a week or two. If you get to this stage, rejoice! You are probably in the top 10% of people who want to make changes. This phase can last for a pretty variable amount of time — a week, a month, maybe two months. This is **Phase 3**.
6. **You get sidetracked but then come back again (or not).** At some point, probably in 2-3 weeks after getting to Phase 3 above (maybe longer), you will get sidetracked. It's inevitable. No one is completely focused on one thing forever. You travel, you get sick, you have visitors, you get busy at work, you have to move, there's a crisis in your family, your child or pet gets sick. This is **Phase 4**, and it's not necessarily the end of this change — though for many people, it is the end. They get sidetracked and go all the way back to Phase -1 above, when they're struggling for a long time. But it doesn't have to be the end — it's just a brief break of a few days or even a few weeks. You get sidetracked, probably discouraged, and you probably don't want to think about this change because it makes you feel bad to think about it ... but then you decide to face it and start again! You pick the next smallest step and start. Maybe you find ways to motivate yourself that are similar to Phase 0 above. You get started again.
7. **It becomes a part of your life.** This **Phase 5** is similar to Phase 3, in that you're chugging along nicely and making the change happen ... but in this phase, it gets easier and easier and becomes a part of your lifestyle. Or maybe not, and it's actually just a repeat of Phase 3 and then you go through Phase 4 and then repeat a few times. But if you reach Phase 5, it can seem really easy and seem like you'll never have to worry about this again. This is when it's a good idea to start a new change.
8. **Things start to slip back until you refocus yourself.** But at some point, many people slip back into their old habits, despite the change becoming easy. The old habits haven't always completely died. By the way, this isn't a universal phase — I've never slipped back into smoking, for example. But for me, exercise, diet, and other similar habits have all slipped back from time to time. It might feel discouraging to have to start again. And some people never start again because they're discouraged. The successful ones just start again and get focused and motivated again. The good news: it's much easier the 2nd and 3rd time around! It's not as much of an uphill struggle.

So as you can see, it's a messy path. There are starts and stops. There's motivation and then getting discouraged. There's interruptions and restarting. There's long-term change

and slipping back again (sometimes). Shift happens, but not at the pace we like and not how we'd like it to.

This is the process of human beings shifting habitual patterns.

By the way, to have complete transformation of your life, you'll need to create several (or many) of these shifts.

Key Skills in Creating Shift

Armed with that information, what do we need to create this kind of shift?

Here are the skills that will make shifts much more likely to happen:

1. **Recognizing what you need to change and then flipping the switch.** We can fool ourselves about needing to change, for years. Instead, it's a powerful skill to take a look at your life and see that you need to make a change. Often it shows up in others — they are constantly reacting negatively to our behavior, but perhaps we rationalize why they're wrong. Often we know we need to change but don't want to face it. The skill, then, is to get very honest with yourself and recognize that a change is needed, and then *finding a way to flip the switch so that you're committed and taking action*.
2. **Starting and setting yourself up well.** When you are ready to take action, get good at actually getting started. It doesn't matter how you start — don't get caught up in indecision and research. Instead, take action. But make one of your early actions be setting yourself up for future difficulties: set up accountability, tracking, motivation, so that when you falter, you're more likely to stay in it or come back to it.
3. **Encouraging yourself when you're discouraged.** You will get discouraged or lose motivation at some point. Get good at encouraging yourself instead of discouraging yourself. This takes practice, but can be as simple as repeating, "You can do this!"
4. **See your rationalizations and get back on track instead.** Similarly, there will be times when you're rationalizing not doing it. You got off track, or there are things getting in the way. Get good at noticing your rationalizations and getting back on track. This is pretty much the same as the first skill at the top of this list, but applying it during the process instead of before the process starts.
5. **Starting again with a small step.** Similarly to the above, really — just get started. Find the next small step and take action. Encourage yourself, over and over.

These skills obviously overlap, and you can practice them over and over again as you make a change. In this way, every time you get sidetracked, demotivated, or struggle, it's a great opportunity to practice the change.

Ready to make a change? Join my **Sea Change Program** (free for 7 days, \$15/month after) and commit to making a shift in your life.