

Readiness of Change

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

Before reviewing the phases of change, consider these ideas:

Individuals who are chronically disorganized can take a long time to experience big 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 backwards between phases. They can even straddle two phases simultaneously. Change is not a direct path from beginning to end. It is more like a journey through hills and valleys.

Phase 1 – Initial Rumbings

**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 having a negative impact on your daily life?
- If so, you're in the "rumbings 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 people 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 rumbings 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.
- 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 have contemplated, researched, and 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 relieved because someone is helping you and impatient because “the work” is more difficult than you anticipated.
- While you are committed to moving forward and feel positive, the process may be slow.
- You might remain in the “doing phase” for a very long time as you experience the ups and downs of progress.

Phase 5 - Life Jolts

Circumstances can occur that transform your outlook and commitment level.

- Major life events such as death of a loved one, divorce, illness, changes in medication, new job, 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.

People change only when they are ready. They cannot be forced or cajoled. When the pain of staying the same becomes greater 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.

NSGCD Fact Sheet – 010

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