

## Making Changes at Work; How to Create Lasting Change & Achieve Greater Success At Work

By M.J. Ryan



*"This year, I'm going to get that raise."  
"I will get my desk organized once and for all."  
"I'll have better work/life balance."  
"I'll start that business I've always dreamed about."*

At some point we've all vowed to make some big change – similar to the resolutions above. But by the time the rosy blush of good intentions wears off, the resolution gets pushed aside. Not because we don't still long to have what we want, but because we just don't know how to change.

### Changing your behavior takes work.

Our brains have enormous "plasticity," meaning they can create new cells and pathways. But our brains create strong tendencies to do the same thing over and over.

Here's why:

The brain cells that fire together wire together. Meaning, they have a strong tendency to run the same program the next time. That's why lasting change takes lots of practice; you've got to create a pathway to the new options.

According to many brain scientists it can take six to nine months to change your behavior. Yet people continue to waste so much money on those seven-day miracle programs and then wonder why they have not experienced lasting change and greater success at work.

### Here's The Top 3 Reasons Why Many Business Entrepreneurs and Executives Fail To Change Their Behavior & Achieve Greater Business Success:

1. They've not yet realized that the change process is not about getting rid of bad habits. The pathway to your current behavior is there for life. Instead you want to focus on creating new, more positive habits that will positively affect your business. Even stopping doing something, like procrastinating, is really about creating a good new habit, starting sooner.
2. They fail to put external reminders in place, at least in the beginning. Unless you have a trigger from the outside like an email reminder or a buddy, it's very likely you'll keep defaulting to the old behavior because it's automatic. That's also why it's so important to be willing to start over no matter how often you blow it or get discouraged.
3. They're not concrete enough about what they want and are unrealistic about what they can reasonably ask themselves to change. Here's what an executive client of mine said he wanted

to change in three months: “to be more positive with co-workers, staff and colleagues, to be more creative and productive and to take better care of myself.” “How about create world peace while you’re at it?” I replied. “And what does `more’ mean anyway? As this client demonstrated, we expect too much of ourselves and we expect to change overnight. When that doesn’t happen, we resign ourselves to staying the same, convinced that we are hopeless, weak, or unmotivated. Which makes us even more stuck in a rut.

To truly change your behavior and achieve greater business success requires three things: desire, intent, and persistence. You have to identify what you desire enough to be willing to stick to. You have to make SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) like “leave the computer at the office and don’t look at the Blackberry after 9” rather than “having more balance”. You need determination and persistence to try again no matter how many times you blow it. Most importantly you need to avoid my top 10 common resolution pitfalls.

### **My Top 10 List of Resolution Pitfalls**

1. Being vague about what you want
2. Not making a serious commitment
3. Excuse-making—no time, wrong time, dog ate homework
4. Unwilling to go through the awkward phase
5. Not setting up a tracking and reminder system
6. Expecting perfection and falling into guilt, shame, and regret
7. Trying to change by yourself
8. Telling yourself self-limiting rut stories
9. Not having backup plans
10. Turning slip-ups to give-ups



Armed with a new attitude and behavior, you can create lasting change and achieve greater success at work. When you have this invaluable tool in your arsenal, you’ll be empowered to bring anything you want into reality. You’ll become the master of your fate rather than the victim of old choices.

#### ***About the author:***

**M.J. Ryan is an executive coach and the author of *THIS YEAR I WILL...How to Finally Change a Habit, Keep a Resolution or Make a Dream Come True*. To receive free resources including and learn more about M.J. Ryan go to <http://www.mj-ryan.com>**

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