

Ten Ways to Change Your Life TODAY!

When it comes to changing your life, it can seem like it will take years before you actually make substantial changes. You might feel like giving up before you even get started.

What you need is a way to kick start the changes that you want to make in your life – and here are ten ways to get started today.

#1 CHANGE YOUR ROUTINE

One of the simplest ways to start improving and changing your life is to change something that you've always done. And it doesn't have to even be related to the goal that you have in mind.

When you want to make changes in your life, you want to get the ball rolling somehow. To get that momentum going, try changing small things in your life today.

For example, have you ever driven to work and not remembered how you've gotten there? Not only is this a scary notion, but it also can be a great lesson in being aware of your surroundings and how they're getting in the way of your self-improvement.

Here are some simple ways to change up your routine today:

- Take a new route to work
- Eat a meal during a different time of day (i.e. eat breakfast at dinnertime)
- Change the order of your exercise routine
- Get up earlier or later than you normally do
- Do different chores around the house or ignore chores that you always do

The point of this exercise is to realize that while we might feel comfortable in our lives, it's that comfort and that 'settling' that might be getting in the way of the changes that we want to make.

Start the changes right now by changing other, not-as-important parts of your life. You may be surprised at how different the world looks and much more likely you are to believe that bigger changes are indeed possible.

#2 LOOK IN YOUR CLOSET

In Feng Shui decorating principles, when you use certain colors and positions of furniture in your house, you can affect greater changes in your life. Taking this idea a step further, when you want to change something about your life for the better, doesn't it make sense to start changing your surroundings?

A simple way to do this (without spending your money redecorating your house) is to simply change your appearance for a day.

You can do this by simply getting out of your clothing rut and trying something that is completely unlike you. For example, if you wear black all the time, try wearing a bright and boisterous color. If you're someone that likes to wear colorful outfits, try something more toned down.

The point is to approach your outfit as you would your life – by changing it.

Your outward appearance can make you feel more confident in yourself because you know that you look as good as you feel or at least, as you want to feel. And that confidence will show up in your actions as well as your interactions with others.

People can't help but respond to change. When others notice that you are holding your head differently, they will begin to respond in kind. This is why you will hear the term, 'power suit' quite often. By putting on a costume of sorts, you can create a new you – a more powerful you.

If you feel that you don't have anything in your closet to wear that will help you feel differently, it's time to start thinking about new ways of wearing certain pieces of clothing together. Maybe you can simply wear a crazy pair of socks under your classic business suit. Or perhaps you can choose larger earrings or a silly necktie.

Whatever makes you feel differently about yourself, try to incorporate that into the way that you're dressing yourself today.

Here are some other ideas:

- Wear a skirt instead of pants (ladies, of course)
- Try a different shirt with a suit – one that you've never paired together before
- Wear a scarf to accessorize
- Wear a different piece of jewelry

Go to the back of your closet to see what you can find – it just might change your life.

#3 DON'T LIE

What would your day be like if you didn't lie about anything? Think about it for a moment. We all seem to lie about something during our day, even if we don't realize it. When our food comes at a restaurant, we might say that there's nothing else that we want, even if the wrong order comes out. Or when we're heading to a movie, we might say to our friend or partner that we really don't care what show we're going to, even if there's one that we really want to see.

Why do we do this? Because we don't want to hurt someone's feelings.

However, in most cases of lying, what we're really doing is not being truthful with ourselves and our needs. By considering what someone else thinks, we can place the responsibility for our happiness on someone else's choice – and one that typically doesn't match our own preferences.

On the other hand, when we lie, we're also not taking responsibility for our own actions and their consequences. When we lie to our boss about a project or the bill collector, we're avoiding the issue at hand – and now allowing ourselves to learn from the mistake.

To change your life, you need to stop lying to yourself and everyone around you. This isn't to say that it won't be a tricky thing, but it will be something that will dramatically change the way that you approach your life.

Not lying for one day will make you slow down and really think about everything you're about to say and why you're saying it. In doing so, this will create an opportunity for you to learn more about the way you think and where you might need to make changes in that thinking.

For example, when you stop lying about whether or not you can talk to someone on the phone, you might find that people that you really don't care to talk to can be asked to call back at another time, leaving you time and energy to do the things that you really want to do.

And that creates the space for you to make the changes that you need to make.

Some call it 'authenticity' while others call it being an honest person; in any case, trying to be true to your self and to others is a simple way to instigate a new way of living.

#4 THINK LIKE AN OPTIMIST

Many experts will tell you that when you change the way you look at things, you will change your life – and it's true. If you're sitting around expecting the worst of things, you'll be certain to find the worst of things. You'll find all of your mistakes along the way to your goals. You'll notice all of the problems with your plan. And then you'll stop trying because you've noticed that everything is going wrong.

This is where a lot of people fumble on the way to their happiness and the changes that they want to make. By trying so hard to recognize the bad things in their life, they forget about those things that are working well.

For just one day, try to see your life through the eyes of an optimist – a complete optimist. This might seem silly at first, but what you're doing is bringing another perspective, an objective perspective into your view of the world.

Optimists look at the world as though it only has good things to offer and in that thinking, they see the opportunities for learning and growth, rather than the obstacles in their way. Instead of getting upset about the car that cut them off in traffic, they hope that there wasn't an emergency that caused the driver to need to go so fast.

Optimism takes practice. What you might want to do is start thinking about your life as though it were the life of a good friend that you have. When you sense that something is wrong in your day, try to change your thinking to being more positive. For example, when your friend loses his or her job, you don't tell her that it was because they were the worst employee (though you might tell yourself this), you tell them that it wasn't their fault and that there must have been another reason.

When you start treating yourself and your life the way that you would treat a good friend, you start to see possibility in life, rather than problems.

An optimist is simply someone that strives to look for the good in everything. Just for today, you can try to do the same. Is it a realistic way to be every day? Who knows? But what you are doing is allowing your life to be as wonderful as you want it to be, and maybe as wonderful as it already is. You just weren't looking for it.

#5 DON'T HAVE ANY EXPECTATIONS

How many times have you been disappointed? Probably hundreds of times, right? However, if you think back to your times of pain and loss, many of these instances were the direct result of having some goal in mind that wasn't reached or some expectation that wasn't met.

What if you gave up your expectations for a day? For one day, what if you said that you don't really care about what happens?

When you start to attach how you feel to something that's out of your control, you are setting yourself up for feeling badly. There's nothing wrong with having goals and wanting certain things, but when you start relying on the outcome to derive any happiness from it, you can actually be stifling change and growth in your life.

In truth, expectations are just wishes and hopes. There's nothing wrong with them, but many of these same thoughts are based on a number of factors that you can not control – even if you try to.

For example, you can't control how someone reacts to something that you do or say. People are autonomous and will respond in any way that they see fit. When we start to attach our personal feelings on how someone else reacts, we are setting ourselves up for feeling bad about our lives and our selves.

The point of eliminating expectations is to start focusing on what's happening right now – what you can control and what you can't. If you're in a bad situation at work and your boss is yelling at you, you can't control that. However, you can control how good of a job you do – though your boss might still yell at you anyways.

Just for today, try to remember that all that you have in your life is what is right in front of you. Step back and recognize that true change can only come when you stop making it the end all, be all of your existence. If you're trying to lose weight, for example, all you can do right now is eat better right now. You can't expect that the meal that you eat today will affect your weight loss in the future.

Nor can you expect that the one chocolate bar that you have today will ruin your chances of weight loss.

Try to understand that expectations to which you attach your self-worth and self-esteem are generally not worth meeting. It's not about not setting goals for yourself, it's about not making the bar so terribly high.

#6 MAKE A MISTAKE

Too often, you can start to believe that making changes in your life means that you have to be perfect. However, logically, you know that no one is perfect, even if they seem to be. Perfection has become a burden that we have placed on ourselves – even though it's not realistic.

We all make mistakes along the way to our dreams, so why not give ourselves permission to get things wrong once in a while?

Just for a day, try to remind yourself that it's okay to make mistakes. In fact, try to make one mistake during the day and see what happens. Does the world come tumbling down? Do people hate you for not being perfect? Probably not.

Giving yourself a break is a great way to start changing your life. You're acknowledging that things aren't always going to head in the exact right direction, but that you will make it there – even if there are some shortcuts along the way.

When you start to relieve yourself of being perfect, you can begin to take chances and take steps toward the changes that you want to make because you're not held back by the fear that you might be wrong. Being wrong is okay. You actually need the lesson of getting something wrong once in a while – that's how you'll learn what's right for you.

Think of how much lighter you will feel once you realize that people really aren't watching your every move, or waiting for you to fail – you're the only one that's doing that to your self. Instead, allow yourself to falter, to tumble, and even to fall once in a while.

The real lesson in this tip to change your life is that you have to also learn how to not berate yourself each time you do make a mistake. Instead, try to look at your issues as learning experiences. When you make a mistake, think about what happened and how you might be able to avoid that problem in the future. It's not about creating perfection, but it is about learning how to do better for your self.

You're going to make mistakes as you begin to change your life or parts of your life, but when you start to recognize that it's not a bad thing, you can start moving past problems more quickly and keep on, keeping on.

#7 TALK TO A STRANGER

Although the world is more connected than ever was before - with the inventions of the Internet and cellular phones - it seems that we've become more disconnected. We seem to forget that we aren't the only ones that walk down our streets or have problems. And this might be hindering your ability to change your life.

The truth of the matter is that we aren't alone, though we want to believe that we are. And once we realize that we do have others around us that understand our dissatisfaction with our lives, we can start to make the necessary changes in our own.

Reaching out to people is problematic, however, because it's just not necessary anymore. We can e-mail people or call them on the phone, but it's the real life connections that will truly remind us of the place of others in our lives.

There are a number of ways to reestablish this connection with the world:

- Talk to the cashier at the coffee shop
- Call a friend
- Meet up with your partner outside of the house
- Go for a walk outside

These simple ideas can help create the realization that you're not alone in your want to change the way that you live. In fact, establishing a connection with someone with similar goals can help you more easily achieve your own.

If this isn't possible though, at least be sure to reach out and talk to someone once during your day. Make eye contact with them and genuinely care about them – if only for thirty seconds. The point is to reach out beyond your self in order to find that other perspective.

For example, the cashier at your local grocery store that isn't being friendly might be having a horrible time in their lives. And while you used to interpret this rudeness as a slight to you, perhaps taking the time to ask about their day will be the impetus that they need to change their situation.

And in doing so, you can help to recognize where you are in the world, how you can continue to make changes to affect your self as well as others.

#8 QUIT YOUR JOB

You don't actually need to quit your job in order to change your life, but if you're not happy about the job that you have, what are you still doing there? The object of this tip is to help you recognize things that you are settling for instead of making room for the things that you'll really enjoy having in your life.

Maybe it's not that you need to quit your job, but it's that you need to quit your attachment to it. Many of us believe that when we do a good job at work, we're good people who are successful and deserve to be happy. But when our jobs don't satisfy us, we believe that we don't deserve to be happy.

It is in this cycle, or others like it, that we begin to feel like less of a person that can make changes in our life. So, to stop this cycle, we need to recognize that we are not what we do or what we accomplish.

In effect, you will want to quit the power that your job has over you.

But how to do this? To quit the power that your job has over you, you will want to consider the following pieces of advice:

- Try not to judge yourself by what you can accomplish
- Create a to do list, but make priorities
- Set the bar lower
- Recognize that what you need from the job and what your boss needs from the job are completely different
- Try to establish a consistent work schedule
- Leave work at work
- Realize that work is just work

While that sounds like a lot of platitudes, one of the biggest lessons in the bunch is the idea that work is just work. It can help for you to realize that while something at work might seem like a major concern right now, chances are likely that in six months from now, it won't seem like such a big deal.

Just for today, try to think about your job as though it was the last day that you were working. How does that feel?

You don't have to quit your job to quit the hold that it exerts upon you; but if you find that you can't seem to do this on your own, maybe it is time to at least look at the classified ads for a better place for you.

#9 FIND AN OLD HOBBY

Remember when you were a kid and you wanted to be a basketball player? You went to the garage and started to bounce a basketball up and down. You didn't think about how good you really were at it; you just wanted to do it because it made you happy.

When you want to make bigger changes in your life, you will want to find a way to distract yourself from thinking negative thoughts. And this is why often times, experts will recommend that you pick up a hobby to fill your mind when you're feeling a little less than motivated to change.

There are plenty of things that you can do:

- Knitting
- Sports
- Scrap booking
- Weights
- Crafts
- Etc.

These can all help you create a different focus for your mind when you're considering change or in the midst of making major changes in your life. Some experts have also noted that when you are trying to break a habit, you will need to fill that time with something else, or else that habit can easily return.

For example, smokers that are trying to quit often gain weight because they replace their cigarettes with food. But smokers that turn to exercise or other hobbies often do not gain weight as they are replacing the 'bad' habit with a good one.

What you may want to do just for today is replace the thing that you want to change with something else. If you're looking to change your diet to vegetarian, try not eating meat for a day. If you're thinking about going back to school, try reading a book that might be associated with your course of study.

When you start to change the way that you are living your current life, you will start to see new ideas and ways that you can change your life – and it won't seem as scary.

#10 THANK SOMEONE THAT YOU LOVE

When we're changing ourselves, we forget how often others have stood by us when we weren't in the best of places in our lives. Instead of taking this support system for granted, today is a great time to thank the people that you love.

While it sounds a little corny, just going around to people and thanking them for their support and their understanding can start to solidify the changes that you want to make. You are, in a sense, creating a new life by apologizing for the old life and moving forward.

But when you start to thank others for supporting you, you are also gathering their support for the change that lay ahead. You are readying yourself as well as them for a new and improved you – one that realizes that mistakes were made in the past, but wants to move forward.

Support is something that we all need, even if we are focused on making changes on our own. The truth is that we aren't always going to be as strong as we need to be. There will be days when we will need someone to help us change our perspective or approach things differently.

When you're trying to change the way that you live or the things that you do, you need all the support that you can get. Starting off by simply thanking people for what they've already done for you is something that doesn't take any time, and makes everyone feel good about the future.

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The idea of change is one that we are frightened of. It signifies moving away from what has 'worked' for us in the past and moving towards something unfamiliar. However, when you stop to just make smaller changes in your daily life, you can start the process more easily.

Change doesn't have to be startling and unnerving; it can be as simple as doing something different than you would have before: reading a new book or driving a new route to work. However, in these smaller changes, you can find the strength for the bigger changes.

If you can start with the little parts of yourself that you thought didn't matter, just imagine what you can do with the rest of your dreams and goals.