



Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success

Kerry Patterson , Joseph Grenny , David Maxfield , Ron McMillan , Al Switzler

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A stunning new approach to how individuals can not only change their lives for the better in the workplace, but also their lives away from the office, including (but not limited to) finding ways to improve one's working relationship with others, one's overall health, outlook on life, and so on.

For example, why is it that 95% of all diet attempts fail? Why do New Year's Resolutions last no more than a few days? Why can't people with good intentions seem to make consistent and positive strides in the way they want to improve their careers, financial fitness, physical fitness, and so on?

Based upon the latest research in a number of psychological and medical fields, the authors of **CHANGE ANYTHING** will show that traditional will-power is not necessarily the answer to these strivings, that people are affected in their behaviors by far more subtle influences. **CHANGE ANYTHING** shows how individuals can come to understand these powerful and influential forces, and how to put these forces to work in a positive manner that brings real and meaningful results.

The authors present an array of everyday examples that will change and truly empower you to reexamine the way you go about your business and life.

Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success Details

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Cody says

Synopsis:

A stunning new approach to how individuals can not only change their lives for the better in the workplace, but also their lives away from the office, including (but not limited to) finding ways to improve one's working relationship with others, one's overall health, outlook on life, and so on.

For example, why is it that 95% of all diet attempts fail? Why do New Year's Resolutions last no more than a few days? Why can't people with good intentions seem to make consistent and positive strides in the way they want to improve their careers, financial fitness, physical fitness, and so on?

Based upon the latest research in a number of psychological and medical fields, the authors of CHANGE ANYTHING will show that traditional will-power is not necessarily the answer to these strivings, that people are affected in their behaviors by far more subtle influences. CHANGE ANYTHING shows how individuals can come to understand these powerful and influential forces, and how to put these forces to work in a positive manner that brings real and meaningful results.

The authors present an array of everyday examples that will change and truly empower you to reexamine the way you go about your business and life.

My Thoughts:

Whew! Well, I was going to say some things about the idea behind Change Anything, but I think that synopsis pretty much covered everything. My job here is done! **dusts of hands and walks away**

runs back JUST KIDDING!! While I don't have a lot to add, I will say that this book is chock-full of tons of useful information, statistics, and studies that back up these ideas. I was honestly not aware of all the sources of influences affecting my daily decisions down to the very last detail. I'm now motivated to develop my change plans, and get to altering the things in my life that have needed change for a while.

If there are areas in your life you want to change (and I'm pretty sure there are) then you NEED the information in this book. Great things take hard work. Why not have a little help?

Laurie says

If you're interested in personal change, I can't imagine you'd find any clearer, more action-oriented resource than this one. This book's unique take: not one, but six different categories of approach must be tailored to your own personal situation and temperament, then employed, monitored, and adjusted if you want the best chance at making any lasting change.

The authors draw on years of research in the field of personal change, in addition to their own current studies, to offer many ideas for how you can personally create your own actions in each category.

One especially helpful process suggestion (one that's more of an attitude rather than one of their approaches)

is this: Few people change any entrenched or persistent habit or pattern in one attempt, so consider yourself the subject of your own curiosity and make your responses the "data" for your own research. Take note of how you respond to each of your approaches, and keep adjusting after any backslide, not blaming yourself - or your lack of willpower - for lapses, but studying each one so you can adjust your strategies, knowing that you can indeed make any positive change you wish, if you persist.

FYI: I listened to the audiobook on CD, thanks to the generosity of Hachette Audio, and thought that the reader - co-author Joseph Grenny - conveyed the text engagingly and clearly.

Alissa says

I like books that give concrete action steps. This started out with some fascinating experiments and hooked me right away when they said it wasn't about willpower. I found myself nodding as they described the 6 drivers of change. I liked how at the end they provide case studies for hot topics in change (career, weight, addiction, debt).

My big complaint and the reason this got 3 vs. 4 stars is that the authors kept referring you to their website for forms, and more tips. While this kept the book short I didn't like it because you needed the promo code from the book and since my copy was a library book, I couldn't access that.

Andy says

The tone of this book is a Gee Whiz! corporate sales pitch for the authors' consulting company. I find this extraordinarily annoying. Also the "new science" isn't new at all; it's just the public health model of behavior change, where you take into account not just the specific behavior but also the whole person and their physical/social environment. The "research" by the "Change Anything labs" is stuff like marketing surveys; their website does not point to any published science backing up their claims that their specific methods help people.

Dawn says

I am one of those people who hold books as sacred. I do not write in books, I do not bend pages. ...yet, I have completely marked up and mutilated this book! Change Anything has changed my life. It has simple, practical, easy to understand tools - backed by science, that help you create new habits and get rid of old ones. Right away I was able to break a habit I have had for 10 years or more and start to replace it with a much better one. Once I get this one into routine, I plan on going back and revisiting my notes and scribbles in the margin of the book and tackling another. So glad I found this when I did.

Ryan says

MY SUMMARY AND NOTES: The authors replicated Mischel's marshmallow study and taught some participants to use distraction and distance techniques and showed that self regulation scores changed

tremendously. They have footage of their experiments on changeanything.com/exclusive website.

***The authors argue that there are six sources of influence: 1. Personal motivation – interrupt your impulses by connecting actions to goals during crucial moments. 2. Personal ability – learn new skills to change persistent and resistant habits 3. Social motivation – if those around us model and encourage bad habits we are likely to maintain them; turn accomplices into friends 4. Social ability – deeply entrenched habits require real support from others (e.g., a coach). 5. Structural motivation – Make use of things; directly link short-term rewards and punishments to new habits 6. Structural ability – small changes in your environment can have a surprising effect on your choices; add a few visual cues that help you focus on your goals

***Social science of personal change: 1. Identify crucial moments – focus on the handful of moments when you're most at risk; where do you face the most temptation 2. Create vital behaviors – create rules to follow when temptation pays you a visit (e.g., implementation intentions and contingencies for when you fail). 3. Engage all six sources of influence 4. Turn bad days into good data – use failure as a learning experience – note what happens when you fail and adjust methods accordingly (START TAKING NOTES).

***The authors mention the benefit of a “motivational interview” asking a person the future he/she would like to live, how they were going to get there, and so forth. This requires the person to create the default (where you'll end up if you keep going this way) and desired futures.

***1. Personal/motivation: Visit your default future (how you will end up if you continue in this direction 1. Tell the whole vivid story - be descriptive about where you will end up so it sticks in your head 2. Use value words - connect your goal with a really important "why" for what standard you are adhering to 3. Make it a game - set up a time frame or small milestones or make it a competition 4. Create a personal motivation statement - during crucial moments reconnect with your motivation through your statement that incorporates all of the previous parts of your personal motivation

***2. Personal/ability: Do what you can't: 1. Start with a skill scan – figure out what skills you do have, and if you have the ones necessary to complete your plan 2. Employ deliberate practice – what are the component parts of the skill you are learning; break them down and practice each deliberately 3. Learn the will skill – determine your tempting scenarios and discover how to avoid them and practice withstanding them.

***Another famous obedience study: Orne & Evans (1965) JPSP – social control in the psychological experiment

***3.&4. Social motivation/ability: Summary of turning accomplices into friends: 1. Be aware of who is going to help encourage vs. discourage you towards your goals. 2. Redefine "normal" to fit with your new goals. 3. Hold a transformation conversation with close others about your new goals. 4. Add new friends, 5. and distance yourself from the unwilling.

***On loss aversion - study done by authors on iPhone - if you just bought one, it would take \$1218 more than purchase price to sell, but if they hadn't bought one yet, they would only pay \$97 more than purchase price in order to make sure they got one.

***When creating rewards for yourself when working towards a goal, make sure the rewards come during the pursuit (after achievement of small goals) rather than a reward for your final goal.

***5. Structural/motivation: invert the economy: 1. Use carrots and the threat of losing carrots, 2. use incentives in moderation and in combination (so you aren't doing it solely for the rewards), 3. and reward

small wins (i.e., don't just have a reward for at the end of the goal, they are much more effective is used throughout).

***6. Structural/ability: control your space: 1. Build fences - set rules to keep you acting in healthy ways. Don't use fences as sole source for change or you will relapse when they are gone. 2. Manage distance - remove bad things from your immediate environment and keep good things closer. Your physical space determines a lot of how you behave. 3. Change cues - reminders for things you want to be doing and remove reminders of bad behaviors. Especially important where you crucial moments take place. 4. Engage your autopilot so the positive path is the path of least resistance (ie, it would take more effort not to follow the path). 5. Use tools like electronic reminders, etc. to help you stick to your goals.

John says

As the subtitle suggests, *Change Anything* is about applying what we know from science to changing things we're unhappy with in life. The case studies pointed to emphasize certain areas of life that people commonly want to change--getting ahead at work, diet/fitness/weight loss, substance abuse, personal and professional relationships--but the real idea is to get to the underlying forces that help us to change, well, *anything*. Although willpower and building it are a part of the book, willpower is far from the central concern. In fact, they talk about "the willpower trap," believing that our failures to change come primarily from weakness of will. In fact, what's central to all of the successful change talked about in the book is making decisions to alter one's environment to achieve the desired outcomes. It is the people, places, and things that surround us that have the greatest impact on our behaviors and habits--and our ability to change them.

Not only does Patterson bring together a number of things that we've learned from science (and I should add that most of this isn't really new--you may very well, as I did, find quite a few of the studies and insights familiar. But Patterson does do a good job of bringing them all together and offering examples of how people have applied these principles to making changes in their own lives.

Science finds its way in not only through the research, but also in the overall approach--Patterson stresses that while we use these insights to craft a change plan, that we may very well encounter failure initially. Much like a scientist forming a hypothesis, we make our best effort to match the insights of the book to our own lives and needs, but failure just means we need to go back to the drawing board and that we've learned about something that didn't work.

For better and or worse, the book is an entryway to a website, so that besides offering you what information it does, you also have the opportunity to tap into a community of people and some on-line tools to help in your own changes. Of course, the site is only free for the first month, so it may be worth weighing the costs and benefits of taking advantage of that particular service.

Regardless, *Change Anything* has a lot of good material in it and should be a go-to for anyone looking to make change or to help facilitate change in others.

Greg says

I appreciated the counsel in *Change Anything* and have already used it to good effect in my weight loss

efforts. The book is an extension of concepts and ideas first encountered in their book *Crucial Confrontations*, building on and applying the six source framework of motivation and ability. It also incorporates ideas found in *Influencer*, such as the roles of critical moments and vital behaviors, the need for positive deviance research, and so forth. However, where *Influencer* deals with large scale organizational or institutional change, *Change Anything* applies their model to personal change.

The first part of the book explains the model in detail, so there is no need to have read the other two books first. Numerous brief examples are used, making the reading less dense and more helpful.

The second part of the book is devoted to an in-depth examination of how the model would apply to five common change needs: weight loss, financial security, addiction, relationships, and careers.

The authors recommend starting with a single tool, and sometimes that is enough, especially if carefully chosen by considering critical moments and vital behaviors. For example, in my own weight loss efforts, I began with their recommendation for tracking my eating habits daily. That alone has proven helpful and has directly correlated with my losing almost ten pounds over the last couple of months.

There is nothing new here, really, but it is packaged in a useful and easy to apply way, if only the desire to change is present. Indeed, much of what they discuss is oriented to gaining and strengthening that desire to change. I would add my own recommendation: read it with a spouse or partner and commit each other to change, then support each other in that effort.

Pete says

Have you always wanted to know how to change your cat into a leopard? What about changing your tyre? What about changing a washer? Well, 'Change Anything' (2012) by Kerry Patterson dismally fails to answer these questions. However, for changing things about yourself the book is pretty solid.

The book describes six things that should be used to change divided into motivation and ability that comes from personal things, social angles and structural changes. Personal motivation is about using your desires, personal ability is about learning skills. Social motivation is using friends to help, social ability is similar. Structural motivation is about short term incentives and structural ability is about environmental changes to promote change.

After describing these ideas the book has case studies about career advancement, Weight loss, financial health, addiction and relationships. Finally there is a conclusion.

It's a good book that makes the point that there are ways that work to change thing and there is a skill in making changes itself. It's definitely worth a read for anyone attempting a change in their lives, provided it doesn't involve leopards.

Aymen Alramadhan says

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Ahmad Alkoush says

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Kapil says

I listened to this book a while ago and it may be worth a quick skim over.

What I've found with a lot of these self-help around change (like Charles Duhigg's book on Habits) is that the good ones have a lot of good examples, entertaining stories, and a very readable structure.

And there's certainly a lot of value to them. They're good at enumerating all of the factors involved in habit change.

Having made some big changes in my own life, I find that what's been really helpful for me is to journal about the thing I want to change. While journaling, I ask myself hard questions about where I'm stuck and most times, I can answer my own questions. The hard part was trying to figure out where I was getting stuck and what questions I need to ask. And a few times, I really get stuck and I need to go to others for help - but when I do go for help, I am able to ask the right questions.

And really making the journey pleasant is pretty important too. One of the people that I respect recently said this:

> I recently heard someone say that if you can't find joy in something, it won't stick.

Joy doesn't really mean a burst of excitement or pleasure like after seeing and eating a delicious dessert. Joy can really be: "do you feel good about it before, during, and after?" Like meditation for me isn't always joyful during, but it's something I feel really good about afterwards.

Anyway, this is a longwinded way of saying there maybe be a couple good points in here, but doing the hard work and self-examination is way more important than reading more books about it. (Though these books can open you up to ideas you can't come up with on your own.)

David says

This is a book with useful information about changing, and affirms that willpower alone doesn't lead to change; Otherwise it wouldn't be so difficult. Two of the best pieces of advice involve distancing one's self from the factors that lead to negative accountability and "inverting your economy", where you provide incentives both for successes and in consequence of failures.

This book, especially in the audio format, reads like an extensive infomercial for VitalSmarts, the company that owns the website related to this book where you can pay for coaching. In spite of the good info (even if they shamefully used "eating chocolate" as an example of a bad habit), it is difficult to separate the book from the authors' (all 5 of them) agenda.

Tresuiri says

For the audio book, I didn't care for the author's casual tone. It was probably to connect to the average joe who is theoretically picking up this self help book, but it rubbed me the wrong way. This book is somewhat simplistic; it can be summed up in one phrase: apply the scientific method to your problems. They do share a couple of insights, i.e. our culture leads us to believe change is only a function of will power. And, like the movie "It's a Wonderful Life", we are all connected to the people around us and the things that surround us - these all affect our decisions, and therefore our ability to make decisions on our habits [for good or bad]. So, I'll say if you've read this review, don't bother picking up the book unless you want specific examples fleshed out for you in detail. There are better self-help books worth your time. To be fair, I had no preconceptions for this book - I picked up this book off the shelf because it just arrived and I was curious.

Emily says

Patterson, et al., identify Six Sources of Influence that work together to motivate our behaviors and, therefore, need to be adjusted when we want to make a change. They arrange their Six Sources in a matrix with three categories (Personal, Social, and Structural) with two facets each (Motivation and Ability). Using all six of the sources, rather than just one or two, greatly improves your chance of success. And the authors go in to great detail on specific tactics for each. For example, under Source 1: Personal Motivation, they recommend five tactics to increase your personal desire to change and keep it strong:

- * Visit your default future. Figure out what your future will look like if you don't change.
- * Tell the whole vivid story. Describe that future as vividly as possible to make it seem more "real."
- * Use value words. Articulate the "why" for your change in positive terms.
- * Make it a game. Set a time frame and smaller goals to help you reach the big one.
- * Create a personal motivation statement. This will help you stay on track when you hit those crucial moments when you are more likely to fail.

And that's just one of the Six Sources.

One thought I found particularly insightful was regarding willpower. "Will is a skill, not a character trait. Willpower can be learned and strengthened like anything else, and...it is best learned through deliberate practice." This makes sense. If we view willpower as a static character trait, we're more likely to think that because we've failed once, there's no use in trying again; we just can't do it, it's hopeless. If instead, we view will as a skill that can be improved, there's always hope for that improvement and the encouragement to keep trying. Also, a good reminder for any goals we set, "Reward your actions, not your results. Results are often out of your control...so link your incentives to something you can control." We can't set goals for what others are going to do because we have no control over that. Our goals must be based on actions we can control or it will be too easy to lose heart.

Read more at my blog: [Build Enough Bookshelves](#)

Pulkit says

This is a great book, really, but requires you to be serious beforehand. It begins with breaking down the myth that willpower and determination are the sole criteria for one's success and behavior. There are invisible (unless you try to see) forces influencing every action you take and thereby designing your future without you knowing. It sounds creepy, almost as if some devil, say Satan, is planning your future and you have non control over it. But that's the core point of this book - you CAN take over that power and it teaches how to in simplistic yet effective (I've tried) ways.

Personally, this book was ordered by me to establish a working time-table to study and learn new things everyday, without being distracted by the evil forces of the Internet and actually do something worthwhile which will benefit me in the future. In short, I wanted to diminish my Internet-addiction. I've tried to read so many Time-Management books but nothing really works. It's too difficult to order yourself around like a robot - it's way too simple to do the similar with other which is therefore unfair unless you can deconstruct your own autonomy by means of dichotomy of yourself into your physical body and your better-knowing consciousness and allow the latter to order the former around like every human desires to order around others.

Withholding excessive details, here is the outline of six influences that shape human destiny:

- > Personal motivation
- > Personal ability
- > Social motivation
- > Social ability
- > Structural motivation
- > Structural ability

So to say, our behavior is dependent on our own selves, the people around us and even the *things* around us. The book has a chapter devoted to each of these (except three and four, which are combined) with experiments and real-life example supporting each, like evidence ought to support each scientific theory. At the end of the book are four chapters to solve specific problems, namely, Weight Loss, Financial Fitness, Addition and Relationships.

I didn't read any of those because I didn't need to and they are optional anyway. To sum up in a single sentence, it's a book worth reading whether or not you think you need to.

Psychology has been neglected for centuries, but with advanced research, I think psychology will make a great breakthrough in science with all its fascinating revelations about human behavior and working of unarguably the most important organ on Earth, without the usage of which even this website wouldn't exist.

Jay says

Change Anything provided methods to accomplish personal change. While similar to many other self-help books out there, the pointers felt more rigorously defined and backed-up. Part of that feeling, I think, is that it seemed like the authors mined studies on addiction to come up with their personal change strategies. I dislike repeating things in a book, and this one repeated, of all things, a web site and password multiple times. It also repeated the name of the author's consulting company too often, as well as calls to engage the company and sign up for their book website, so as you read through you discover that this book was really an overt sales tool for change consulting. This kind of thing sets my radar off, wondering if it is complete or actionable without help. Overall, though, I thought the book provided valuable takeaways for enabling change in life. I have mixed feelings on the audio version. There are quite a few strategies to enable change, enough to make this a book of lists that you may want to refer to. Lists, especially long lists or numerous lists, don't translate well to audio, and this book was on the edge of containing too many lists for my likes. The audio version I listened to also had an author interview at the end, which added to the back story on the book.

Erica says

As far as books I've had to read for work, this one wasn't bad. I've read worse (namely From Good to Great) but I've also read better (Hello, Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard)

This one aims at helping you overcome habits you want to break, to change attitudes that keep bringing you down, and to make better decisions when planning your life. Well, in general, at least.

I liked the anecdotes more than the advice, but that's usually the case. I am better at gaining information from stories than from instructions.

It didn't help me change what I'd set out to change. Instead, I found my own way through my issue and it didn't require actual change, just more awareness on my part, or, as I like to call it, manipulation of others.

I gave this book to my sister after I finished because she wants to quit smoking. Well, she says she wants to quit smoking, at least. I'm hoping this will help.

Taka says

Read it with the Influencer--

In this book, the authors of *The Influencer* apply the model of changing human behavior to changing YOUR own behavior, from kicking a bad habit like smoking to losing weight.

Their argument is basically this: if you know the six sources of influence and align them to your advantage, you can pretty much change anything about yourself.

And their model is an incredibly powerful tool—you're basically missing out if you don't know them.

In short, the six sources are:

- 1) Personal motivation (or the so-called the will)
- 2) Personal ability (skills)
- 3) Social motivation (people's praises and attention)
- 4) Social ability (teamwork, social network)
- 5) Structural motivation (what the environment makes you want to do)
- 6) Structural ability (what the environment enables you to do)

Granted, you'll need the **RIGHT** knowledge to accomplish what you want (the books' outdated and unscientific calories-in, calories-out model of weight control should be ignored), but **AS LONG AS** you have the right knowledge, this model will enable you to do change your behavior according to the knowledge and achieve whatever you want.

The only complain I have about this book is that the explanation of the model in the first part felt hasty and oversimplified. For more detailed account, you should check out their *The Influencer*, and just to reinforce it, the Heath brothers' *The Switch*, which gives another perspective on the model of changing human behavior.

Overall, a good read.

Deb says

A very good read that teaches the steps and systems to put in place for lasting change in any area. The first half of the book sets up the systems--giving the research behind why the steps they work and the second half takes common areas people want to change--lose weight, stop an addiction, improve a stalled career, get out of debt, improve a relationship and shows how the steps were applied. I found it very useful for my health coaching and myself. I'll be reviewing it in more detail on my blog soon.

Update:

Here is a link to my detailed review (and my recipe for carrot hummus too!) ;-)
<http://kahakaikitchen.blogspot.com/20...>
