

THE 6 HUSBANDS EVERY WIFE SHOULD HAVE

HOW COUPLES WHO CHANGE TOGETHER STAY TOGETHER

BY DR. STEVEN CRAIG

Change Readiness Quiz

1. How good are your and your partner's coping skills?

You:

- a. Very good b. Above average c. Below average d. Poor

Your partner:

- a. Very good b. Above average c. Below average d. Poor

2. How flexible are you and your partner in new situations, especially when those situations are beyond your control or preference?

You:

- a. Very good b. Somewhat good c. Not good d. Terrible

Your partner:

- a. Very good b. Somewhat good c. Not good d. Terrible

3. How well does your relationship tolerate the stress that occurs as a result of these new situations?

- a. Wonderfully, with little conflict
b. Good, but some small conflicts occur
c. Difficult, with a lot of resistance and conflict
d. Poorly, with anger and avoidance

4. List examples of times when you or your partner *were not* flexible in a new situation and how that inflexibility affected your relationship, both emotionally and behaviorally:

5. List examples of times when you or your partner *were* flexible in a new situation and how that flexibility affected your relationship, both emotionally and behaviorally:

6. How likely are you and your partner to become more flexible in the future?

You:

- a. Very likely b. Somewhat likely c. Not very likely d. Not at all

Your partner:

- a. Very likely b. Somewhat likely c. Not very likely d. Not at all

7. How would your friends and family answer the same question about you and your partner?

You:

- a. Very likely b. Somewhat likely c. Not very likely d. Not at all

Your partner:

- a. Very likely b. Somewhat likely c. Not very likely d. Not at all

8. Overall, how do you rate the ability of you/your partner/your relationship to handle change maturely?

You:

- a. Very well b. Somewhat well c. Not very well d. Not at all

Your partner:

- a. Very well b. Somewhat well c. Not very well d. Not at all

Your relationship:

- a. Very well b. Somewhat well c. Not very well d. Not at all

9. As a general rule, do you and your partner tend to address problems or avoid them?

You:

- a. Address them immediately and maturely
- b. Put them off for a little while
- c. Avoid them as much as I can until they blow up
- d. Avoid them even when they start to cause conflicts

Your partner:

- a. Addresses them immediately and maturely
- b. Puts them off for a little while
- c. Avoids them as much as he/she can until they blow up
- d. Avoids them even when they start to cause conflicts

10. When problems do arise, what do you and your partner typically do to address them?

- a. We talk about them maturely and usually find a healthy resolution that works for both of us.
- b. We argue about them but do so maturely and respectfully and eventually find a solution.
- c. We avoid the problem and hope it goes away.
- d. We argue repeatedly without gaining resolution.

11. How do you and your partner talk about problems?

- a. We talk rationally and respectfully, acknowledging and appreciating each other's point of view.
- b. We acknowledge each other's point of view but still hold our own opinion as more right.
- c. We yell at each other, call each other names, and shut out, disparage, and dismiss the other's perspective.
- d. We don't talk about problems.

12. When an issue is finally resolved, what typically occurs?

- a. We reach a mutual and respectful accord, with each of us making some degree of sacrifice.
- b. We agree to disagree, but do so with respect and without resentment or attitude.
- c. One or the other eventually gives up in order to avoid further conflict.
- d. We never seem to resolve conflicts.

13. When a problem is eventually resolved, do you typically feel upbeat or beat up?

There is no scoring key for this quiz, as it's intended as a tool to elicit reflection and discussion, not a way to precisely measure the likelihood of success in your relationship. However, your results should be self-explanatory. People who have poor coping skills and are inflexible, resistant to change, and difficult to communicate with make poor long-term partners. Make sure you understand that before you go any farther in your relationship.

Quiz 1: Your Mental Readiness for Change

| | | | | |
|--|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. How often have you used a statement similar to the following in an argument with your spouse: "I am who I am, and people don't change"? | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often |
| 2. Before listening to this book, how important did you think changing yourself was to the success of a marriage? | Very important | Important, but not that big a deal | Never thought of it before | I thought it was detrimental |
| 3. How often do you and your spouse have arguments regarding your need to change a particular behavior? | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often |
| 4. When your spouse asks you to change a behavior, how often do you argue or disagree with him or her? | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Almost always |
| 5. When you are pressured to change, how often do you continue your attempts to change when the pressure goes away? | Always | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |

Scoring:

Give yourself 1 point for every answer in the first column, 2 points for every answer in the second column, 3 for the third, and 4 for the fourth. A score between 5 and 10 means that you are amenable to change and that you encourage change in yourself and your relationship. Typically, people who score in this range are ready to enter the next stage successfully. A score between 10 and 14 suggests that you resist change at some times but not at others. People who score in this range are likely to need some further encouragement and/or explanation before entering the next stage. A score of 15 or above usually indicates that you are resistant to change and that you have very little intention of changing. People who score in this range are not ready to change and are highly likely to fail if change is thrust upon them. These people usually need more education, more encouragement, or more insight into the impact of their behaviors.

Quiz 2: Deciding to Change

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. How well does this describe you: “I want to change, but I struggle with accomplishing it”? | Not at all | Somewhat | Close, but not exactly | Right |
| 2. How long have you been contemplating making a specific change in your behavior? | Just started | A few months | A year or longer | Years |
| 3. How often have you made plans to change a specific behavior but were unable to carry through with them? | Never | Once or twice | Several times | Almost every time |
| 4. When you attempt to change, what stops you from accomplishing your goals? | Finding the right moment | Need more information, preparation, or training | Unsure of myself or fear of failing | Just unable to do it |
| 5. When you decide to change, do you focus more on the problem or the solution? | Solution focused | Mostly the solution | Mostly the problem | Problem focused |

Scoring:

Give yourself 1 point for every answer in the first column, 2 points for every answer in the second column, 3 for the third, and 4 for the fourth. A score between 5 and 10 means that you identify the problem well, focus on workable solutions, and typically act assertively to make the change occur. People who score in this range are usually ready to enter the next stage successfully. A score between 10 and 15 suggests that you likely want to make changes but that you do more thinking about it than acting upon it. People who score in this range need to focus more on creating specific, workable plans for making change. A score above 15 usually indicates that you are likely a chronic contemplator, more interested in ruminating than in actually doing. People who score in this range are more interested in the idea of change than in actually making changes happen. Even though they may speak of making changes, they are still far from accomplishing them and are not likely to accomplish any serious changes until they devote more time to action and less to intention.

Quiz 3: Preparing to Change

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Is your plan to change specific and detailed? | Yes | Very close to that | Plan on having one | Not needed |
| 2. Does your plan involve small changes leading to bigger ones, or do you plan for change to happen immediately and completely? | Small to big | Several stages | Quick, but not immediate | Immediate and complete |
| 3. Do you have a specific, detailed plan for when you are going to change? | Yes | I am making one | It's vague, but that's okay | Not needed |
| 4. Have you made your specific plans public? | Yes, to all the appropriate people | Yes, but only to a few of the appropriate people | Yes, but with vague details | No |
| 5. Have you analyzed potential roadblocks and prepared for how to overcome them? | Yes, absolutely. Ready for anything | A few | Will cross that bridge if we get to it | I won't have any problems |

Scoring:

Give yourself 1 point for every answer in the first column, 2 points for every answer in the second column, 3 for the third, and 4 for the fourth. A score between 5 and 10 means that you have a strong intention to change and that you have developed a well-thought-out plan. People who score in this range usually perform well in the subsequent stages. A score between 10 and 15 suggests that your plans are somewhat vague and your commitment is not as firm as it could be. People who score in this range usually only experience mild to moderate changes in their behaviors. A score above 15 usually indicates that you have not prepared well for the changes you are planning to make and that you still are experiencing some ambivalence. People who score in this range are less likely to reach their goals than others and need to think their plans through more thoroughly if they intend to succeed.

Quiz 4: Taking Action

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. In the past, how often have you carried through with plans to change and maintained those changes over time? | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Rarely |
| 2. When you typically make changes, how obvious are those changes to others? Do others usually recognize the changes you make? | Very obvious | I receive some comments from others | I have to tell them I made changes | People rarely notice, even when I tell them |
| 3. How much do you equate taking action with making real change? | Not at all | Just a start | Almost the same | Action is change |
| 4. When you make changes, do your plans typically involve just behavior changes, or are psychological and attitudinal adjustments also included? | All are seriously considered and all are included | Somewhat included | Just behavioral | Behavioral is all I need |
| 5. How long do you typically continue with your new behaviors despite the energy it requires and the commitment that is involved? | Once I put my mind to something, I never go back | I'm very good at keeping it going, but I'm not perfect | I fail often, but I keep trying | I eventually revert to my old behaviors completely |

Scoring:

Give yourself 1 point for every answer in the first column, 2 points for every answer in the second column, 3 for the third, and 4 for the fourth. A score between 5 and 10 means that you are most likely a successful changer and that there is a high probability that the actions you are taking will continue over time. People who score in this range are usually effective changers, and they typically have a strong history of making other changes in their lives. A score between 10 and 14 means that, while you are making good strides, you likely need to make a stronger commitment to this particular change both psychologically and behaviorally. People who score in this range can get over the hump and eventually succeed, but they usually need more external support to help them along (these include things such as personal trainers for those who are trying to lose weight, sticky note reminders on the mirror for those who are changing daily habits, daily e-mails from friends and family to help them stay on course for those who need regular reinforcement, and so on). A score of 15 or above means that, although you are engaging in some new behaviors, your likelihood of continued success is low. People who score in this range are usually more invested in the appearance of change than they are in real change. In other words, they're not emotionally and psychologically invested in their changes enough to maintain the new behavior over time.

Quiz 5: Maintaining Change

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|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. How often do you relapse or miss an opportunity to change? | Never | Rarely | Often | Very often |
| 2. How often do you need reminders to keep yourself on track? | Don't need any | Need very occasional reminders | Daily | Throughout the day |
| 3. How strongly do your old behaviors tug at you psychologically? | Never | Now and then | Often | Constantly |
| 4. How much lack of success does it take to cause you to stop engaging in the new behavior? | I made my mind up; nothing can change that | It takes several failures to affect me | Failures throw me off track often | Once I fail, it's hard for me to continue |
| 5. How long have you consistently been able to engage in your desired changes? | More than six months | Several months | A few weeks | Just started |

Scoring:

Give yourself 1 point for every answer in the first column, 2 points for every answer in the second column, 3 for the third, and 4 for the fourth. A score between 5 and 10 means that you will probably have little difficulty maintaining this change. People who score in this range are usually able to maintain their changes with few to no relapses. A score between 10 and 14 means that you will likely struggle with maintaining your changes, but that with good support and a willingness to keep trying, you may become successful over time. People who score in this range have moderate success in maintaining their changes. A score of 15 or above means that your chances for successfully maintaining these changes are low. People who score in this range are often struggling on a regular basis with relapses and with the psychological and physical drain of making these changes. People who score in this range should reevaluate the plan, their dedication, and their motivation and seek a more solid basis for making their changes.

Worksheets

The following pages contain a worksheet designed to help you identify the changes you want to make and create a detailed, written plan for accomplishing them. The worksheet is based upon the change model from *Changing for Good* by James Prochaska, John Norcross, and Carlo DiClemente that I mentioned earlier, and it provides users with guided prompts to assist them in working their way through this model regarding any change they choose to make. You can also download a copy of the worksheet from my website, drstevencraig.com.

I suggest that spouses fill out these sheets together. Remember that this is not just a solo exercise; it is designed to create conversation between spouses. So take your time, talk things out, and customize this process for the two of you.

Preparing Yourself for Change

Completed Sample Worksheet

Identify the behavior you want to change and explain specifically what that behavior looks like, when it typically occurs, and what situations bring it about:

When we are out with other couples, I criticize my spouse repeatedly. I get impatient when she gets details wrong, so I jump in and correct her, even when it embarrasses her or derails the conversation.

Section 1—Thinking About Change

1. Discuss what impact the behavior you want to change has on your marriage, your spouse, yourself, your family, your career, etc., and how your change will affect them:

When I do this, my wife gets angry, feels embarrassed, and we get in a big fight later. She also stops having a good time and sometimes things become very tense between us for the rest of the night. My change will allow us to have a better time out together and keep her from feeling embarrassed.

2. Explain why you want to make this change:

I want to stop embarrassing my wife and I want to be a better husband. I also need to stop doing this because it makes me look bad and it affects some of my other relationships.

3. Describe the change you plan to make (be specific):

I will stop criticizing her and I will let her speak without interruption.

4. Whose idea is it to make this change and why?

She has told me many times that I need to change this behavior, but I have finally decided to really do something about it.

5. Explain why it is your responsibility to make these changes:

I am responsible for what I choose to say—no one else. I can no longer blame her for my choices.

Section 2—Getting Ready to Change

1. Describe when and where this change will occur (be specific):

I will do this in all of our social interactions and when we are alone discussing things together.

2. Describe what the change will look like (be specific):

She will be able to continue talking without feeling like I am going to interrupt, criticize, or embarrass her.

3. What is your spouse expected to do to aid in this process (be specific)?

She needs to have some patience, as I may struggle. Also, she should let me know when I am doing it by tapping me twice on the shoulder or saying our agreed-upon code phrase “Isn’t that what you learned from your uncle Bob?”

4. How will change be measured (by intent, outcome, reaction of others, lack of reaction by others)?

My wife will feel less tense, our conversations will flow better, we will fight less about my interrupting.

5. Explain how you plan to discuss failed attempts and how you expect to reduce these failures:

I will ask for feedback from my wife and we will discuss why I forgot to do it or didn’t recognize I was doing it.

Section 3—Taking Action

1. Explain the specific date and time when this change will begin (estimate if a specific date and time cannot be determined):

Now, when we are done finishing this sheet, and during our night out this weekend with friends.

2. Who are you going to make aware of this change, and what are you going to tell them?

My spouse and our best friends (Scott and Juliet), whom we spend most of our time with.

3. Explain how this action will translate into change over time:

The more I do this correctly, the less I will feel compelled to do it, and we will have a better time when we’re together.

4. Explain the mental, emotional, and attitudinal adjustments you will also be making when executing this change:

I will have to realize that getting the facts and details right is not as important as her feelings. I have to remember that shaming her is not loving, kind, or productive. I have to start putting her feelings above mine.

Section 4—Keeping the Change Going

1. How long will this change have to occur on a consistent basis until you and your spouse can label it a successful change?

Give me six months and let’s talk about my progress along the way.

2. What reminders will you need to keep you from relapsing?

I will need to anticipate events where this can happen and prepare myself, and I will need her to give me signals when I am interrupting and/or correcting, to forgive me when I mess up, and to even pull me aside if I am missing the cues.

3. Explain how you will keep from letting failures stop your progress:

I will not give up. If I am failing, I will try harder, and if I continue to fail I will explore why I can't seem to correct this, even if it means I get some therapy.

Section 5—Grading Yourself

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 indicates a poor performance and 10 indicates an excellent performance, measure your success below (circle one):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Preparing Yourself for Change

Worksheet

Identify the behavior you want to change and explain specifically what that behavior looks like, when it typically occurs, and what situations bring it about:

Section 1—Thinking About Change

1. Discuss what impact the behavior you want to change has on your marriage, your spouse, yourself, your family, your career, etc., and how your change will affect them:

2. Explain why you want to make this change:

3. Describe the change you plan to make (be specific):

4. Whose idea is it to make this change and why?

5. Explain why it is your responsibility to make these changes:

Section 2—Getting Ready to Change

1. Describe when and where this change will occur (be specific):

2. Describe what the change will look like (be specific):

3. What is your spouse expected to do to aid in this process (be specific)?

4. How will this change be measured (by intent, outcome, reaction of others, lack of reaction by others)?

5. Explain how you plan to discuss failed attempts and how you expect to reduce these failures:

Section 3—Taking Action

1. Explain the specific date and time when this change will begin (estimate if a specific date and time cannot be determined):

2. Who are you going to make aware of this change, and what are you going to tell them?

3. Explain how this action will translate into change over time:

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On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 indicates a poor performance and 10 indicates an excellent performance, measure your success below (circle one):

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