

INTENTIONS • AFFIRMATIONS • MANIFESTATIONS •

Five Levels of Deep Change

If you've ever tried to make a change but have reverted to old behaviors, it's because you probably haven't made a deep enough change. This article will help you understand those five levels.

We develop patterns, which we call "Habits."

They're like being bundled up in warm blankets with soft pillows on a cold morning; comforting, supportive, relaxing. Who would want to willingly change that? Continuing the metaphor, it can feel like moving to a sleeping bed on a hard floor; no air mattress, and the heater isn't working.

Since we are in a period of paradigm-shifting, life-altering, stress-inducing, overwhelming change, it's helpful to understand why it's so difficult to get new habits to stick.

Firstly, remind thyself that all change is spawned of fear, force, or pain.

No one wakes up thinking, "I love my life! Let me see how I can change it." We change because we see no alternative and because the "old system" wasn't cutting it anymore. Maybe times are different. Maybe we're different. But something must adjust, and sadly it's us. Being inspired to change by "negative" feelings also automatically puts us at a disadvantage as we're not thinking clearly to begin with.

To that end, know that there are actually five levels we must tweak, each deeper than the one prior if we're going to make our sleep-



The five levels of change are Environment, Behavior, Capabilities, Beliefs, and the ultimate: Identity.

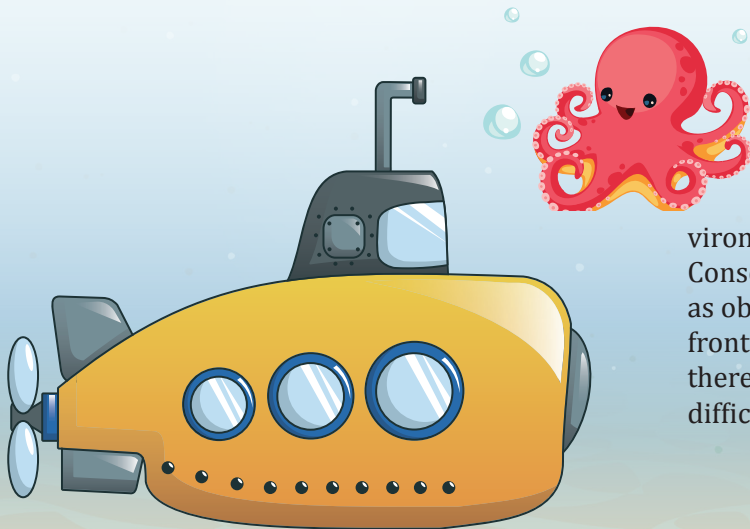
ing bag become a cushy, fluffy bed.

The simplest, easiest adjustment is Environment; defined as that which "I see."

Let's say you've decided to be socially responsible and be concerned with the greater good by wearing a facemask. However, each time you leave the house, you forget your mask. An example of Environment change could be relocating your mask to a hook by the front door. Now, it will prompt you to wear it. Simple. Easy. But it might not stay with you if you don't change the next level: Behaviors, that which "I do." If I don't modify those, my Environment reverts to unsupported.

Level Two: Behavior

Continuing with our illustration, upon returning home, you remove your mask and put it in the washing machine. That makes sense, but that behavior means that when you leave, Environment is no longer provoking you to wear a mask. Consequently, a Behavior change must take place, such as obtaining a few masks and placing them all at the front door, plus remembering to hang cleaned masks there when you finish the laundry. This alleviates the difficulty of "forgetting" to wear one.



Capabilities: Level Three

“But, I can’t keep remembering to put masks all around my house,” you might reply. Welcome to level three: Capabilities, that which you “can” or “cannot” do. Your perceived – and that’s the operative word – Capabilities determine which Behaviors will stick or fade. If your internal dialog is, “I don’t have time to do this,” or “I have too much else to do,” you’ll give up new Behaviors, putting you back to square one.

Beliefs, Level Four, influence Capabilities

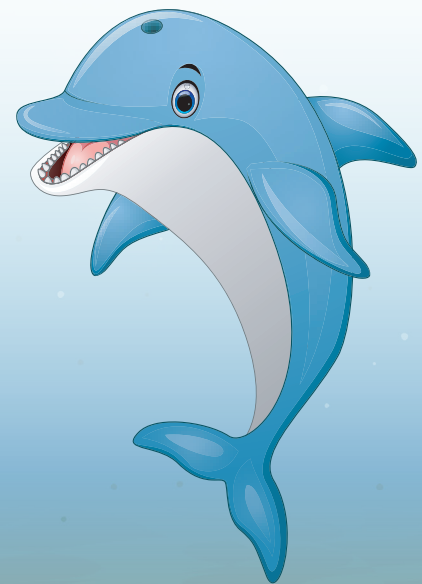
Capabilities are born of Beliefs, level four. Beliefs, despite appearing as facts to us, are really not. They are feelings. They are not true for all but are to us. Continuing in our mask saga, if my Belief is that “masks are unnecessary and a pain in the behind” (um, poor choice of body parts for masks but you get my drift...), then you will consider it unimportant and pointless to amend your Capabilities to reinforce that you can indeed managing a couple masks. Resultingly, new Behaviors fade, Environment becomes unsupportive, old habits returns. If my Belief changes to “I feel it’s important to wear a mask, no matter how awkward,” Capabilities shift, producing a positive domino effect.

The Universal Truth: Identity, Level Five

With only a few hundred words, I can’t really delve deep into the concept of Beliefs, as there are so many extenuating conditions that affect them. However, the Universal Truth they have in common is that they are the outgrowth of the deepest level, Identity, those words following “I am...”

We possess multiple Identities in which we adorn ourselves, depending on conditions. For example, my Identity of “Romantic” is certainly welcome and appropriate when it’s my wife, yet would be out of line with my co-worker. Identities, like outfits, adjust to the settings in which we find ourselves. Rounding out the now over worn mask tale, if my Identity is “I am too busy to deal with this,” my Belief might be “this is ridiculous;” yet again collapse the dominos. Should I alter my Identity to “I am socially responsible and concerned about spreading the virus,” then Beliefs correct to “I feel it’s important to figure out a way to do this.” My Capabilities will now line up that empowerment. Behaviors adapt. Environment adjusts. New habit locks in.

Whether talking about pandemics, weight loss, productivity, or personal relationships, the pattern remains the same.



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