

# **25: The Stages of Change**

Words of Wisdom

Stages of Change

What Stage?

Tools for Promoting Change

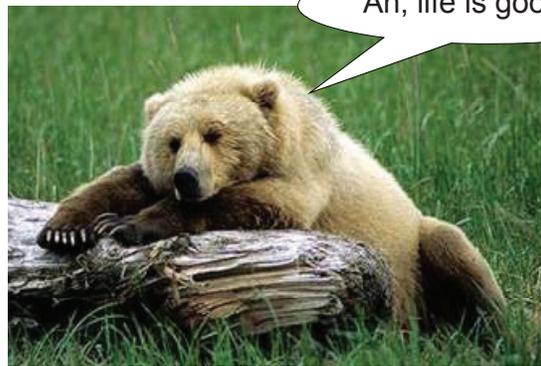
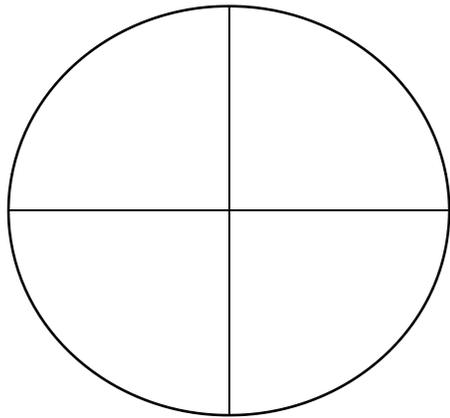
**We have to look at the way  
we were in the past, hang  
on to it with our hearts and  
at the same time change;  
accept we're always  
changing to survive.**

*Dorothy Haberman, Yurok, 1992*

# Stages of Change

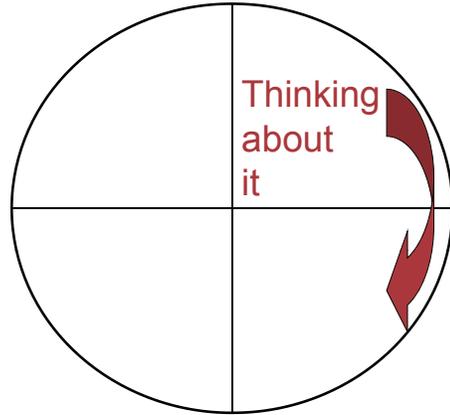


Not  
thinking  
about it



Ah, life is good . . .

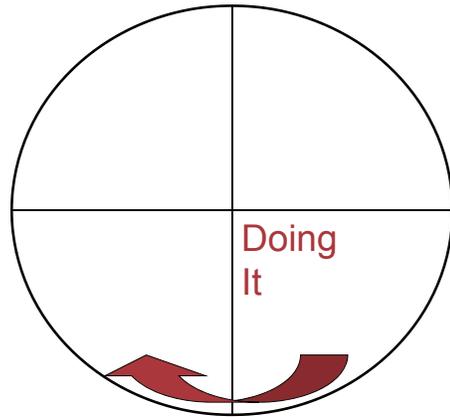
Not thinking about it:  
not considering that I might need to  
change what I'm doing



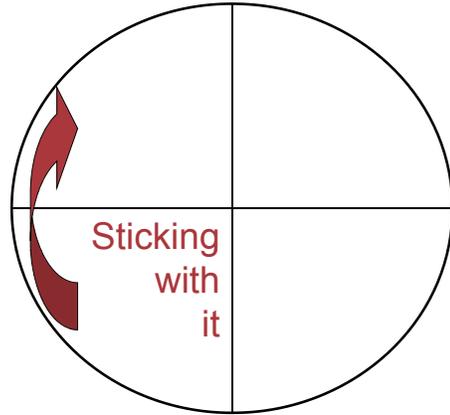
Should I change this?



Thinking about it:  
considering a change

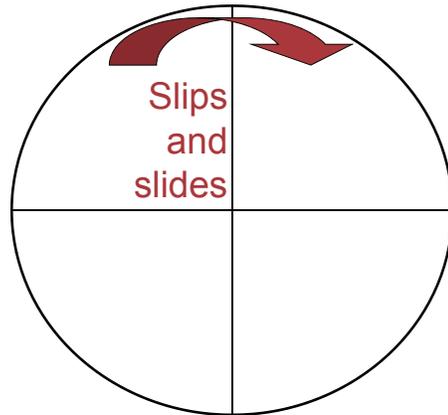


Doing it:  
actively taking steps to change

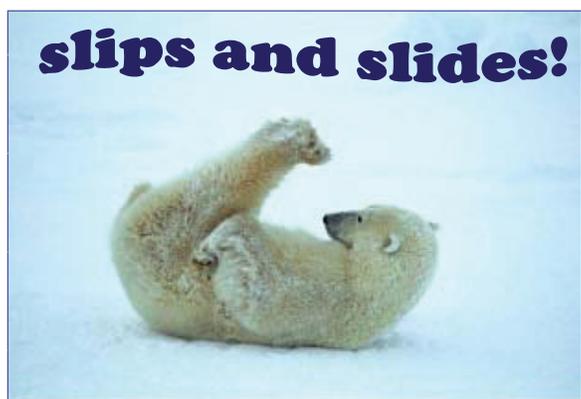


This is working! I'm sticking with it!

Sticking with it:  
maintaining new behavior at least 6 months

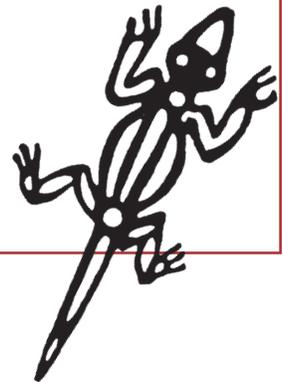
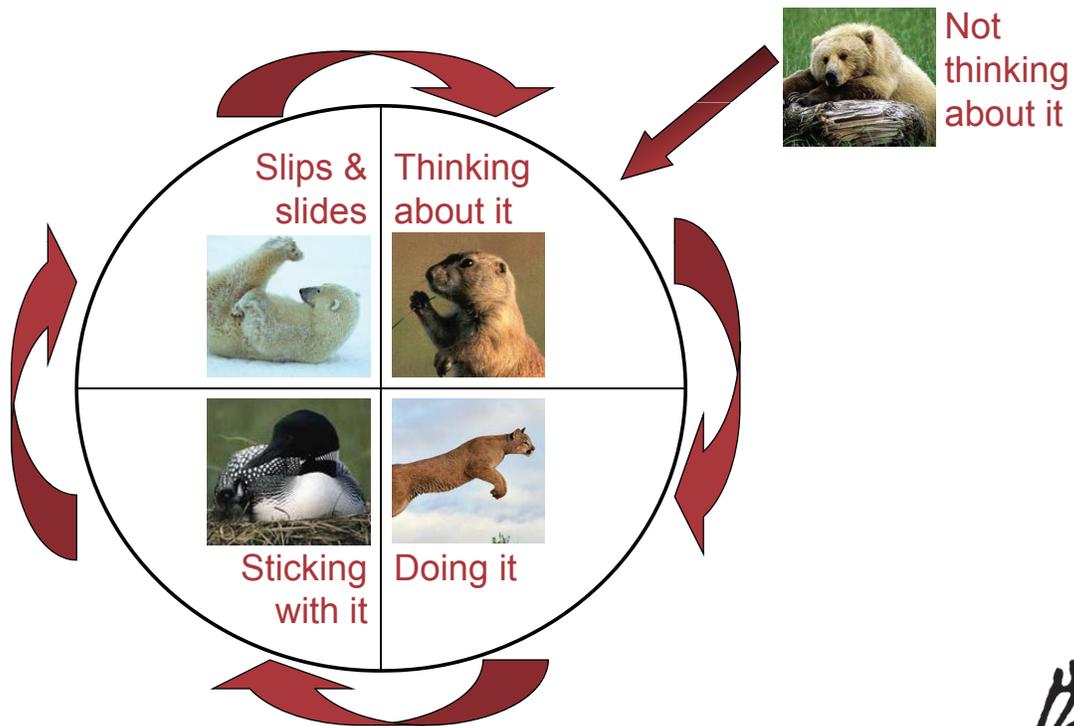


**Look out for . . .**



**Falling back into your old behavior**

# STAGES OF CHANGE



# What Stage...?

Identify each person's stage.

1. Last year June quit smoking and now she is on the track team. She usually comes in first in the 400 meters. Her times have gotten worse since she started hanging out with Corey and smoking cigarettes again. She even lost a race last week.

In which stage is June?

2. Jessica and Zeke have been together almost two years. Last year they started having sex. Jessica decided to go to the health center and get the Depo shot so they could worry less about getting pregnant. Jessica has remembered to go get the shot every 3 months for the past year.

In which stage is Jessica?

3. Alicia has been having sex with Alex for a long time. Sometimes they use condoms and sometimes they don't. She wants to start using them, but is not sure how to bring up the conversation with Alex.

In which stage is Alicia?

4. Jason had sex for the first time with Chris last week. He didn't have a condom then, but he decided that next time they do it, he is going to wear a condom. He talked about it with Chris last night and tonight they are going to use a condom.

In which stage is Jason?

5. Malcolm goes out and has a few beers every Friday after the football game. Lately, some of his friends don't want a ride home with Malcolm because they think he's had too many drinks to drive safely. Malcolm doesn't think there is any problem.

In which stage is Malcolm?

# Tools for Promoting Change<sup>1</sup>

If you are talking with someone in the Not Thinking About It or the Thinking About It stage, use these tools:

**Identifying the pros & cons:** Help your peer look at the pros and cons (the good things and the bad) of a situation but encourage them to tip the scales so the pros outweigh the cons.

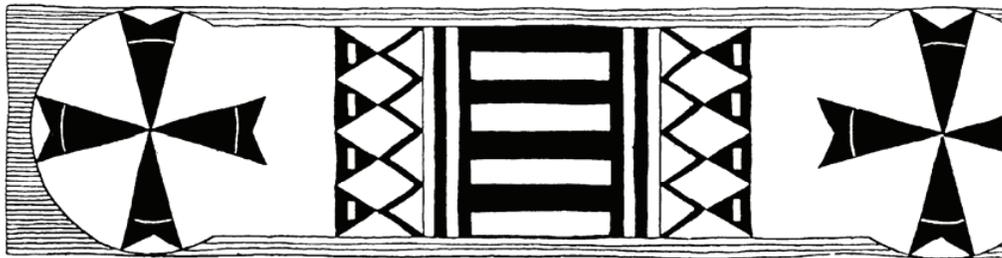
**Getting information:** Providing your peer with information, new facts, and suggestions to support the change they are thinking about.

**Involving emotions:** Encourage your peer to express their negative feelings about one's problems (such as worry or fear).

**Thinking about how someone's actions affect others:** Help your peer think about how their problem affects the physical environment.

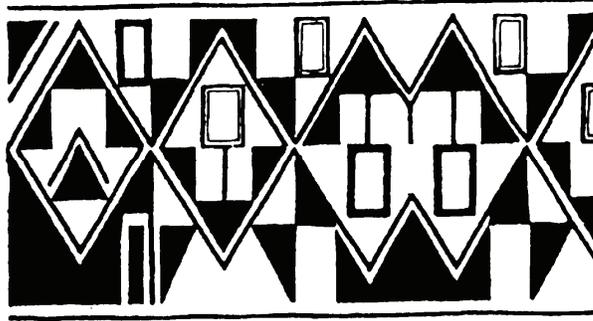
**Visualizing how you want to be:** Encourage your peer to think about the behavioral change they are thinking about as a part of their identity.

**Making a commitment:** Support your peer to commit to the belief that change is possible and to take responsibility for changing.



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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.etr.org/recapp/theories/StagesofChange/Processes.htm>



If you are working with someone in the Doing It, Sticking With It, or Slips & Slides stage, use these tools:

**Using substitutes:** Help your peer identify substitutes that are healthier alternatives for their problem behaviors.

**Getting support from others:** Encourage your peer to seek out and rely on a strong support system of family and friends.

**Using reminders:** Help your peer develop strategies to remind them to stick to their new behavior.

**Avoiding temptations:** Help your peer develop strategies to avoid triggers and cues (events that make your peer want to fall back on their old behaviors).

**Building self-confidence:** Support your peer to develop self-confidence to stick to their behavior change.

**Rewarding yourself:** Encourage your peer to provide themselves with rewards for positive behavior change (and decrease rewards for unhealthy behavior).

**Helping others:** Encourage your peer to reach out to and help others who may be struggling with behavior change.

**Advocating safer norms:** Support your peer to develop societal support for healthier behaviors.