

Do You Really Want to Change...?

...Or Just Wish You Wanted to Change?

The prologue to the award-winning musical, *Into the Woods*, starts off with the key characters reciting things they wish for, like this stanza by Jack's mother:

I wish my son were not a fool. I wish my house was not a mess.
I wish the cow was full of milk. I wish the house was full of gold-
I wish a lot of things...

Wishing is one thing; wanting it enough to take action is something different. Pursuing what we really want is hard because it requires us to *change*.



As a teenager, I tried to patch the rusted out floorboard of my old van with fiberglass. If you've ever worked with fiberglass or epoxy cement, you know there are two components, a *resin* and a *catalyst*. Mix them in the right proportions or the product never hardens and becomes strong. I discovered that the hard way as I stared at the gooey mess on my floorboard hours after it should have been set. Like an epoxy, successful change takes two ingredients properly mixed: **Motivation & Means**.

Motivation (The Catalyst)

An epoxy catalyst triggers the resin to change from goo to solid. The resin already contains the properties to be strong and adhesive, but it needs the catalyst to trigger the chemical change before it will work.

So it is with our personal changes. We might have a plan, the knowledge, and other resources to implement the change, but nothing will happen until our motivation to change exceeds our motivation not to change.

The L.A. Times recently reported on a study of obesity in South Los Angeles. Seven years ago a study indicated that South L.A. had a higher obesity rate than the rest of L.A. County. So the City Council passed a law banning new fast food restaurants within a 32 square mile area. Six years later, a follow-up study reported the results: in the rest of L.A. County obesity increased from 57% to 58%. In South L.A. with its fast food ban, obesity increased from 63% to 75%! While there are certainly multiple factors in play, a significant one may be that they attempted to implement a *means* to solve the problem without addressing the *motivations* of overweight people.

We're not all motivated the same way, and our own motivations can change. But if I'm honest, sometimes I don't really want to change – I just know I should want to change. The motivation not to change outweighs the motivation to change. We need to either find our motivation within or get help from outside.

Means (The Resin)

Once I've found enough motivation, I need the *means* to make the change a reality. What specific actions will I take? What resources and support do I need? I suggest starting with a small step to get the flywheel spinning in the right direction. If I wait for a fully developed plan before doing anything, I may never start. Don't know what to do? Make step one to ask for help.

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