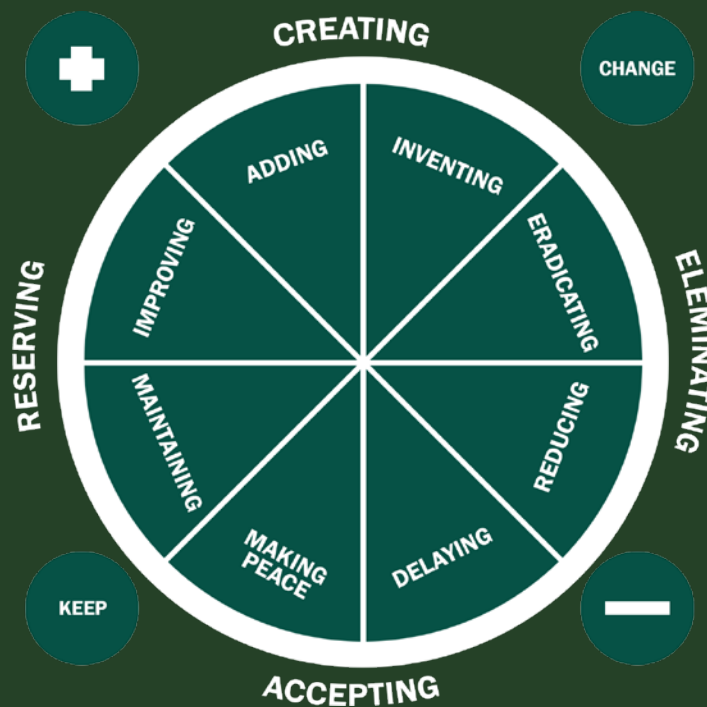


Wheel of Change

There may be no harder task for adults than changing our behavior. We are geniuses at coming up with reasons to avoid change. We make excuses. We rationalize. We harbor beliefs that trigger all manner of denial and resistance. As a result, we continually fail at becoming the person we want to be.

To understand the problem, we not only have to admit there's a problem; we also have to appreciate all the options. And with behavioral change, we have options. This is where the Wheel of Change is a beneficial exercise to use to help you clearly visualize your options and what steps to take next.

Becoming the person we choose to become



Marshall Goldsmith
Stakeholder Centered Coaching

Guaranteed & Measurable
Leadership Growth

Remember what is your current goal for coaching. In the next page, you will be asked to complete the following questions, based on your goal:

1. What do I need to CREATE?
2. What do I need to PRESERVE?
3. What do I need to ELIMINATE?
4. What do I need to ACCEPT?



Wheel of Change

1. What do I need to CREATE?

EXAMPLE: Given that you want to get better at _____, what are some beneficial things you're not currently doing that you want to be intentional about creating (adding or inventing)?

2. What do I need to PRESERVE?

EXAMPLE: Given that you want to get better at _____, what are some things you're currently doing that are serving you well that you want to be intentional about keeping (maintaining or improving)?

3. What do I need to ELIMINATE?

EXAMPLE: Given that you want to get better at _____ what are some things you're currently doing that are not serving you well that you want to be intentional about eliminating (reducing or eradicating)?

4. What do I need to ACCEPT?

EXAMPLE: Given that you want to get better at _____, what are some things you're currently doing that are not serving you well but that you need to be intentional about accepting (making peace with or delaying)?



Wheel of Change

This tool illustrates the interchange of two dimensions needed to sort out before we can become the person we want to be: The Positive to Negative axis tracks the elements that either help us or hold us back. The Change to Keep axis tracks the elements that we determine to change or keep in the future. Thus, in pursuing any behavioral change we have four options: change or keep the positive elements, change or keep the negative.

1. **Creating** (*changing the positive elements*)

- Creating is the glamorous poster child of behavioral change. When we imagine ourselves behaving better, we think of it as an exciting process of self-invention. We're creating a "new me." It's appealing and seductive. We can be anyone we choose to be. The challenge is to do it by choice, not as a bystander. Are we creating ourselves, or wasting the opportunity and being created by external forces instead?
- As the chart indicates, creating spans a continuum from adding to inventing. Adding one new behavior is usually sufficient for already successful people. Successful leaders don't behave inappropriately across the board (if they did, they'd be unemployed). But they often behave inappropriately in one or two areas, which colors people's perceptions of everything else they do.
- LEADERSHIP EXAMPLES: Empowering others in decision making, taking risks on promoting people, referring to others' points of view (instead of voicing your own opinion), asking questions (instead of telling people what to do)

2. **Preserving** (*keeping the positive elements*)

- Preserving sounds passive and mundane, but it's a real choice. It requires soul-searching to figure out what serves us well, and discipline to refrain from abandoning it for something new and shiny and not necessarily better.
- We don't practice preserving enough. So we rarely ask ourselves, "What in my life is worth keeping?" The answer can save us a lot of time and energy. After all, preserving a valuable behavior means one less behavior we have to change.
- LEADERSHIP EXAMPLE: Being reflective and quiet in meetings, not working on the weekends, standing up for what you believe in.



Wheel of Change

3. Eliminating (*changing the negative elements*)

- Eliminating is our most liberating therapeutic action—but we make it reluctantly. Like cleaning out an attic or garage, we never know if we'll regret jettisoning a part of us. Maybe we'll need it in the future. Maybe it's the secret of our success. Maybe we like it too much.
- We've all eliminated things that hurt us, especially when the benefits of doing so are immediate and certain. We will shed an unreliable friend who causes us grief, stop drinking caffeine because it makes us jittery, quit a stultifying job that ruins our day, or stop a habit that might be killing us. When the consequence is extreme distress, we binge on elimination.
- The real test is sacrificing something we enjoy doing—say, micromanaging—that's not ostensibly harming our career, that we believe may even be working for us (if not others). In these cases, we may ask ourselves, "What should I eliminate?" And come up with nothing.
- LEADERSHIP EXAMPLES: Stop attending ineffective meetings, stop trying to change people who do not want to change, stop trying to 'win' all the time.

4. Accepting (*keeping the negative elements*)

- Accepting is the rare bird in this aviary of change. Businesspeople, reluctant to admit any defeat, can't help equating "acceptance" with "acquiescence". In business we have an abundance of metrics—market share, quality scores, customer feedback—to help us achieve acceptance of a dire situation or the need for change. But our natural impulse is to think wishfully (that is, favor the optimal, discount the negative) rather than realistically. Accepting is most valuable when we are powerless to make a difference. Yet our ineffectuality is precisely the condition we are most loath to accept. It triggers our finest moments of counterproductive behavior. If we reflect on it, I'd wager our episodes of non-acceptance trigger more bad behavior than the fallout from our creating, preserving, and eliminating combined.
- LEADERSHIP EXAMPLES: the business is a 24/7 affair so I need to be flexible about working hours. As a leader I need to take painful and unpopular decisions that are difficult for me to do. My job puts me in the public eye a lot and I don't enjoy that attention.