

COLLABORATIVE LIFE COACHING

Volume 5, number 9

By Jeanne Erikson, PhD



Making a Bold Change without Chaos

Spring reminds us that change is coming. My coaching clients often say the easiest part of change is deciding to do it; the hardest part is managing the change so their life is not in chaos. Is there something you need to do to "clean up" your life as Spring arrives? Are you in a rut? Do you hate to go to work, or worse yet, hate to come home? Living with the "same ole same ole" is destined to make you miserable over time. Humans need to change to prevent drudgery and bitterness.

We can all handle making miniature adjustments to our schedules or exercising a few minutes more, etc. Small changes, however, tend to last for weeks only. "Homeostasis" takes over, restoring the balance in the same old ways; the marital emptiness comes back, the pounds come back on, or your sense of being trapped at work returns. Most worthwhile change is scary, because it is big.

It takes BOLD change to really revolutionize your life. These are examples: You decide to go back to college so you can change careers, or you decide to retire early to pursue a passion. You enter marriage counseling to either fix it, or end it. You decide to have a baby, or to have your tubes tied/have a vasectomy. You stop baby-sitting your grandchildren. You decide to learn about herbs and energy medicine to manage your chronic pain. To limit debt, you go from two cars to one, or downsize your home. You move to Phoenix to pursue a new love. So how do we make these kinds of bold changes without total chaos?

I would challenge you to take these five steps for bold change:

- 1) First, ***speak the truth out loud***. Be honest, even if you embarrass yourself. You will need to admit it if you are negative, if you hate your job, if your marriage is destructive, or if your children are out of control. Say out loud what will happen if you don't make a change, and the good things that will happen if you do. The truth sets us free, and begins the change.
- 2) Second, ***manage your mental life***. Visualize the bold change you want, complete with details and scenarios. What are you doing in this changed life? How are you doing it? Who is helping you? How are you handling the reactions of others around you? Visualize a life where you are happy and thriving, then think through the first steps toward that change. What will you have to give up to take the first steps?
- 3) Next, ***write down the details for your planned change***. Set a time frame, and lay out the first steps in detail. What will it cost? Develop a relatively detailed plan on paper, so you can refer to it again.

When this is done, develop a catchword or phrase that will remind you daily of your plan, and post it where you can see it. I have "breathe" on my computer monitor. It reminds me to take in the excitement of positive people around me, and to meet the rapid growth in my life with calm energy. Your phrase might be "I deserve love", "I will stay focused", "My job will be interesting", etc.

4) Fourth, ***find one person who will agree to mentor you.*** This needs to be someone you trust and who will keep your confidences. Tell this friend or coach your vision and your plan. If you are confused, they can even help you make a plan. The mentor will "hold your vision" to keep you on track when you begin to get off track. If you are a person who values routine, you will also need help floating over the emotional rapids when change is moving too quickly for your comfort. That is when many changes fail.

5) The final step in bold change is to ***be consistent.*** Rely on positive thoughts and behaviors that move you forward toward your vision. Use them over and over until they feel normal. Consistency stops chaos, and allows those around you to adjust. Consistency also prevents premature shifts that will sabotage your change. Making steady steps toward your vision will bring bold change over time.

In the next month, I encourage each of you to pick an area of your life that is dragging your down or holding you back, and begin a bold change. Begin to thrive!

Warmly,

Jeanne Erikson, PhD, ACC
Certified Life Coach