

Leyla Weighs In: Identifying your stage of change



How close are you to making a change in your lifestyle, behavior, or habits? How you eat, how you move, your outlook, has everything to do with your health status and any expected outcomes for success. Are you even considering a change at this point?

Maybe you're not even aware that certain changes can have a positive effect on your health, that how you're living and eating currently may be a risk for any future undesirable health outcomes. If this is the case, you're in the stage called *Precontemplation*. Typically, folks aren't aware that a behavior needs changing, so of course no change is thought about at this point.

Then there are the people who are aware that certain behaviors need changing, but they're not ready to take it on. They haven't completely worked it out in their minds, but they're not willing to set it aside either. This stage is called *Contemplation*. This resembles most of my patients when they first come into my office. They know they have behaviors that need to change and are seeking guidance and support. Indeed, *eating is a behavior*.

Preparation is the state where folks are gearing up to make changes. They're formulating a plan and psyching themselves up to take it on.

The most intensive stage is the next one which is *Action*. This is where people are actively and deliberately changing their attitudes, beliefs and associated behaviors. This stage means you're on the new diet and living the lifestyle and working towards embracing it.

The last stage is *Maintenance*. Your new healthy behaviors are imprinting and solidifying as you've developed the lifestyle to support those positive changes. You've implemented the support structures necessary to make these behavior changes permanent.

To your health!

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