

March 2013 – Why Change is Sometimes Hard

Last month's issue was all about 'doing a Nike'. So, tell me honestly, how often did you JUST DO IT? I half suspect that for the most part, the spirit may have been willing but the flesh was weak. Reading last month's article and saying 'sounds like a plan' may not have been quite enough to ignite you into action and execution. If it was, good on you!

We often hear 'change is hard, people resist change etc' but is this really true? Change is part and parcel of life and is here to stay (if you pardon the pun). Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, once said "*No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.*" If he were on Facebook, I'd like him! The truth is that we do embrace change on a regular basis but yes, there are times when it seems hard and what's hard for some may be easy for others.

Exactly why is this? Well, there are a number of factors at play but one thing's for sure...for change to occur we have to start *behaving* differently. In order to start behaving differently, we have to start *thinking* differently and to start thinking differently, we have to consider the brains behind the mind or rather, the minds behind the brain!

Enter LEFT BRAIN (logical, conscious, reflective) vs. RIGHT BRAIN (emotional, instinctive, subconscious) stage left!

Chip and Dan Heath in their great book SWITCH have taken Jonathon Haidt's (The Happiness Hypothesis) analogy of a Rider and an Elephant to represent these 2 independent systems and created a simple 3-step framework for effective change.

Picture a slim Rider astride a whopping great Elephant urging it forwards along a Path. The Rider (left brain) says GO...it's 5.30AM...time to jog around the park! The Elephant (right brain) says NO...you've got to be kidding me...it's so warm and cosy in bed! Will there be movement? Highly unlikely, as they're out of synch and not on the same page. Solution?

Enter SWITCH'S 3-step framework stage right!

In a nutshell, here's what's required to effect change:

1. DIRECT THE RIDER
2. MOTIVATE THE ELEPHANT
3. SHAPE THE PATH

Next month, we'll have a look at all three so that you can start to see change through new lenses and begin applying the process to your own life. Just know that if you've failed in your change efforts to date not to beat yourself up because there *is* light at the end of the tunnel...or should I say path. The Elephant may indeed be a force to be reckoned with at times but remember, a mouse can move an elephant.

Once you get your head around the nature of The Rider, The Elephant and The Path, you'll understand why the circumspect Bilbo Baggins threw caution to the wind and headed off with the Dwarves on their perilous adventure in The Hobbit, why the Peel Regional Council has a highly effective recycling campaign and why The Cookie Dough cafe in East Fremantle will have you coming back for more.

Till next month, look at the 3 steps, live in the question and wonder what it's going to take to make that change. You never know...your subconscious mind might come up trumps and give you some clues!