Boring Change: No Augers Required

Engage your whole mind to make change so easy it’s boring.

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Acknowledgements:
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How many things do you do that you wished you didn't do?

We all have our share of habits and patterns we’d like to change. I’m sure you’ve tried to stop old habits, like nail biting or unhealthy snacking, and start new habits like exercising and keeping the desk neat.

You’ve read books and articles, asked friends for advice, taken classes.

You know why you should stop the bad things, and you know why you should start the good things. But, it’s just not that easy!

So, you muster up all kinds of willpower and plans and reward systems. They may work for a short while, but when it stops working, a brutal cycle of self-berating disappointment starts, leaving you feeling even worse than when you started.

What if you just asked your unconscious mind for help?

I know, it sounds crazy, isn’t your unconscious mind part of this process? Well, it is, and that’s the problem. Your unconscious mind directs more of your behavior than your conscious mind does.

Yep, that’s right.

Let me say that once more, your unconscious mind directs more of your behavior than your conscious mind does.

Before we get any further, I want to stop for a moment and define exactly what I’m talking about when I use the words conscious mind and unconscious mind.
Your conscious mind is everything you are actively thinking about in this moment. And this moment. And this moment. Generally speaking, you can only hold about 5-9 pieces of information in your conscious mind in any given moment. Rumor has it, that's the reason phone numbers were originally seven digits.

Speaking of phone numbers, what's yours? Now that you're thinking about it, it's in your conscious mind. But where was it a minute ago? Before I brought up the whole phone thing? Yes, that's right, in your unconscious mind.

Your unconscious mind is everything you don't need to think about right now. It's all your memories and experiences. It's your beliefs and values. It's the part of your nervous system that takes care of physical processes, like heart rate and digestion, without you ever really thinking about it.

To really get an idea what I'm talking about, imagine an immense dark warehouse filled with thousands of filing cabinets, each cabinet filled with thousands of pages of information.

You shine a flashlight on one page of information, while everything else remains in the dark. The illuminated page is your conscious mind. Everything else is your unconscious mind. Now, here's the cool part.

What if you could have all that mind power, all of those pages of information, working for you to solve an issue that's been a problem for you? Do you think you might have a better shot at success than if you
rely only on the relatively minuscule capabilities of your conscious mind to *logically think* your way out of it? Absolutely.

And that’s the difference with *Boring Change*. It engages your whole mind to make shifts in your habits and patterns.

**When to use *Boring Change***

*Boring Change* doesn’t instantly transform all habits and patterns. It does help with situations where you feel like you’ve already *tried everything* or know what you want to be doing, but still aren’t doing it, or when you’ve notice a pattern or habit, and just aren’t sure what to do with it.

Try *Boring Change* when you want to:

- Quit "bad" habits
- Change behaviors that you don’t even know you’re doing until after the fact
- Experiment with any issue that you’d like to transform!

**Why can’t you just change your mind & change your behavior?**

It has nothing to do with you. You aren’t broken, or lacking in willpower. You’re just following old maps. Both consciously and unconsciously.

Your mind is a creature of habit. Estimates are that you have around 65,000 conscious thoughts per day, but up to 99 percent of them are the same thoughts over and over again. The same thoughts that you
had yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. You don’t even notice you’re thinking about the same things over and over again.

Your unconscious mind is repetitive too. Once you have established a habit or pattern (and sometimes it only takes once to establish it) your unconscious mind will follow that path, even if in some ways it seems self-sabotaging or destructive.

Whatever the habit or symptom is that you’d like to change, chances are it developed some time ago to solve a problem you had at that time, or you learned it through a particular experience.

It might not make sense to you now, but over time, your unconscious mind has created a route to get you what you needed in that moment and in later moments that seemed similar. By now though, the path is so convoluted it doesn’t make sense to your conscious mind why you’re even taking it.

*Boring Change* gives you an opportunity to create a new map with all the resources available to your unconscious mind—using your whole warehouse of information.

**But will *Boring Change* work, and will it stick?**

It’s like this. If your drive to work took about 30 stressful minutes of honking and traffic, and someone told you about a different way, a way that had little traffic, took 15 minutes and passed by a beautiful lake, how many more times would you take the original route?
Probably not many.

You might forget once or twice and get on the old route out of habit, laughing when you notice that you have, change your direction and go back to enjoying the new way.

Once you’ve done it the new way long enough, you’ll be amazed that you ever did things the old way.

Because this process works on an unconscious level, one of the keys to its success is noticing little urges or desires and acting on them. These little urges are the signals your unconscious gives you to create the solution.

These urges can be surprising and quite different than your normal habits. So it’s important that you're noticing them and acting on them.

If you aren’t used to paying attention to these quiet urges and desires, get the free recording on my website, Check in with Yourself. It will help you get used to noticing what you want and taking action to get it.

**How to create Boring Change.**

First, it's time for you to get reacquainted with your body.

Your body has amazing ways of communicating with you. Sometimes it’s with physical sensations, such as a feeling of lightness or heaviness. Sometimes it's with pictures or images. Maybe it’s sounds or phrases.
that you hear. If you aren’t sure how your body does it, it’s okay. Lots of people aren’t really sure. All you have to do is begin to pay attention.

If you haven’t been paying attention, it can seem like your body isn’t communicating much with you. There’s a reason. Have you ever had a friend that asked for your advice, you gave her your heartfelt, compassionate suggestions and she completely ignored you?

For many people, that’s how they’ve been treating their body’s communications. It has provided lots of feedback and information and it’s been ignored.

By beginning to pay attention again, re-building trust with yourself, you can ease the pain of being ignored, learn to listen to your body again, and your body will communicate even more to you.

**Let’s do this thing.**

Here’s an overview of the process, to give you an idea of the fun ahead. Then I’ll break it down into the six steps and explain each one.

- First, you’ll discover your internal communication signals.
- Then you’ll figure out the unwanted behavior, and the positive intent or desire behind it.
- After that you let your unconscious mind loose on ways to satisfy the positive intent or desire without using the unwanted behavior.
- And finally you’ll make sure your unconscious mind is on board with supporting the new behaviors.
The next section includes the complete process, step-by-step, with details and explanations about what I mean and how to do it.

Remember the full *Boring Change* audio guides you through the process with explanations, much like this guidebook, while the and Quick Shift audio guides you through the process without any explanation and extra talking.

On the first reading, I recommend that you just read through this section first, without trying to make a *Boring Change*. After you've read it once, then let one of the audios guide you through the process.

When you are ready to create some *Boring Change*, print out a copy of the *Practice Notes* worksheet to record your experiences and observations.

**Let the Boring Change begin.**

**Step 1) Learn your internal signals of communication:**
Identify your body’s “yes” signal
Identify your body’s “no” signal

This step is all about discovering how your body uniquely communicates with you. If you’re feeling a little unsure at this point, know that feeling is totally normal. And also know that I’ll guide you through the process in this section and in the audio.
As I mentioned earlier, your body has amazing ways of communicating with you. Sometimes it’s with physical sensations, such as a feeling of lightness or heaviness in certain parts of your body. Or perhaps you see pictures or images. Maybe it’s sounds or phrases that you hear.

It doesn’t matter how your unconscious communicates with you, only that you are open to all possibilities, are willing to be surprised and then simply notice how it happens for you.

Start by sitting back, getting comfortable, eliminating distractions and begin to pay attention to your whole self. Take a few deep breaths. Begin to release any tension you may feel in your face, your neck and shoulders, your belly. Let anywhere you feel tightness, fully relax, now.

When you’re feeling fully relaxed, ask yourself for your “yes” signal, while thinking “yes” with your conscious mind. When you begin to notice something (remember, it can be an internal sensation, an image, word, sound or something else) it may be very subtle, you may be unsure if that’s really your yes signal. Ask for the sensations (or pictures, or sounds, or whatever) to intensify.

Write down on the worksheet what you’re experiencing as your yes signal. It may be hard to describe, simply do your best, even just a few words that can remind you the next time you try the process.

If it isn’t completely clear right now, it may become much more obvious once you've experienced your “no” signal.
Once you have an idea about your yes signal, go through the same process to identify your “no” signal.

Let yourself relax even more, and ask yourself for your “no” signal, while thinking “no” with your conscious mind. When you begin to notice something (remember, it can be an internal sensation, an image, word, sound or something else) it may be very subtle, you may be unsure if that’s really your “no” signal. Ask for the sensations (or pictures, or sounds, or whatever) to intensify.

When you feel confident about your “no” signal, write down a few notes on your worksheet.

For some people, the “yes” becomes much more obvious once they’ve experienced the “no”. Some people experience the “no” signal as being completely different than the “yes” signal, others feel like it’s related but opposite, still others experience it as a noticeably diminished “yes” signal.

Just to be really clear, ask yourself once more for a yes signal, really experience it, and then ask yourself for a no signal. Make notes on your worksheet to help you clarify your signals.

**Step 2) Identify the unwanted behavior**

With this step, you want to get really clear about the issue you want to explore. Narrow it down to the simplest phrase you can. You'll have much clearer results when you do this.
The idea here is to simply identify the behavior, not say what it is you want, or ask a question.

For example if your issue is overeating, identify one part of that, such as snacking between meals, and your issue is: Snacking between meals. It’s not “I want to stop snacking between meals”, or “Can I stop snacking between meals.”

Once you have your phrase that summarizes the issue, write it down on the worksheet.

**Step 3) Discover the positive intention of the behavior you want to change.**

This is where you start using your internal signals.

This is a really important step, and one of the most misunderstood. It might be hard for you to imagine that “bad habits” have a positive intent lurking under the surface, but every single one does, or at least it did when it was first created.

To discover the positive intent of your behavior, first ask yourself “Is the unconscious mind willing to communicate its intention?” Notice your signal. If it’s yes, ask your unconscious mind to “Please communicate the intention.” If you received a no signal when you asked, I’ll talk about that a bit more in a minute.

When you initially ask your unconscious mind to communicate the intention, notice the very first thing that pops up for you and jot it down on the worksheet. Even if it’s not totally clear what it means or how it
relates, this will be a valuable clue in understanding the positive intent of your behavior.

You may have to ask yourself the question a few times, digging down into the answers until you get to something that feels right.

Often, but not always, the positive intention is related to the basic needs of life, things like safety and security, well-being and belonging. The kinds of things that show up in the lower half of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Also, depending on when the behavior started, they may be things that make more sense from the perspective of a child, rather than an adult.

When you feel that you have identified the positive intention of the behavior, write it down on the worksheet. You may have just one or two words, such as “safety” or “comfort”. Or you may have a longer phrase or sentence, such as “wanting to feel like I’m providing enough for myself.”

**Now, back to a “no” response.**

Occasionally with this step, no matter how kindly you ask, you may get a “no” in response to the question “Is the unconscious mind willing to communicate the positive intention of this?” There are two common reasons this happens.

It may be because it is an empty habit, there’s no emotional juice behind it. Which is great! It makes it that much easier for you to make the change you want to make.
Or, it could be that your unconscious isn’t willing to bring the answer into consciousness. My mentor tells a story about using this process, and he got a “no” from his unconscious mind on this step. And the reason his unconscious mind didn’t want to make it conscious was because he would mess it up. Although his unconscious mind used more colorful language.

Your unconscious mind might not have that concern, but maybe there’s some strong emotions or unpleasant experiences tied to it that are more comfortable left unconscious. It’s not important that you know why to move forward. Trust your response.

Regardless of why your unconscious answered no, it can still be possible to use the process. After getting a no in response to this question, ask your unconscious mind, “Is it willing to make the change outside of conscious awareness?” If the answer is yes, then go on to Step 4.

If the answer is no, then you’ll want to sit with the issue a little longer. Perhaps sitting quietly, just noticing what comes up for you, may give you the answers or enough awareness to proceed. You may want to do a little free writing or journaling around the subject. Or simply, let it go, just for now, and come back to it after some time has passed.

The important thing is to listen to your unconscious and honor what it’s telling you. Remember you don’t want to be that annoying friend that asks for advice and never takes it!
Step 4) Ask your unconscious mind to come up with new ways to satisfy the positive intention without the unwanted behavior.

Now the fun begins! With this step, you ask your unconscious mind to search through all your memories, experiences, and knowledge to generate ways to satisfy the intention, without the unwanted behavior.

Just let your mind wander at this point. You may want to close your eyes if you haven’t already. Just breathe and sit quietly. There’s no reason to try and understand or nail down any specifics. Remember, this is about letting all of your unconscious mind go to work, so you can stop trying!

It is not important to understand any of the solutions, or how the change will be made.

You may have flashes of insight about how this might be done, but often that’s just your unconscious mind letting you know about a few, while leaving the most powerful ones unconscious.

At some point, it may be a few seconds or a few minutes you’ll feel complete with this step. Then it’s time to move on.

Step 5) Ask if the unconscious mind is willing to take responsibility for implementing these alternatives.

When you ask this question, you’ll most likely get a yes response. If for some reason you get a no, sit with it for a minute and ask again. Your unconscious mind may simply need more time.
Step 6) Check if the unconscious mind needs to make any other adjustments to ensure the success of this change and that you’re totally integrated.

If you get a yes response to this question, ask your unconscious mind to go ahead and make those adjustments. Then, ask again. When the answer is no, you’ve completed the process.

Now, take a few minutes to jot down some notes about the experience on your worksheet. How are you feeling? What are you noticing?

Remember your manners

Now it’s time to thank your unconscious mind for working with you. Your conscious mind too! Sometimes the hardest part is letting go of our conscious thought process and needing to know. Have gratitude for yourself for trying this process. And be open to the changes that you're initiating.

Follow your experience

Once you’ve completed the process, the changes are just beginning. Remember, this is Boring Change so it’s easy to not be fully aware of the changes you are making. Make sure and check in with yourself at a few intervals after you go through the process to see how things are shifting for you.
Make notes on your worksheet about what you notice about 24 hrs after you initiate *Boring Change* and again a week later. Keeping track of your experiences will remind you of the power of your unconscious mind.

**Want to have even more fun with this?**

Start to notice your body's “yes” and “no” signals during your day-to-day activities. When you're faced with a decision to make, take a moment to quiet your mind and ask yourself a yes or no question related to the choice.

This is not the time to ask yourself about options like “this” or “that” or short answer questions. Rather, ask yourself a clear and simple yes or no question relating to one aspect of the choice. Remember, the question must be able to be answered with a yes or no.

You can even go beyond this. With *Boring Change*, you’ve focused only on two internal signals, “yes” and “no”. However, your unconscious mind communicates with you in many different ways, about a variety of things. As you get more familiar with this process, start to notice all the different communications available to your from your unconscious mind.

Enjoy getting to know how your mind and body communicates with you, be kind to yourself as you experiment with this, and most of all, have fun!