In this episode, we'll talk about how to change someone when it's time to change.

So it's time for some change. And not change of ourselves but somebody else, I mean, why would we need to change? We're so perfect! Absolutely perfect and that's why we're listening to this program so we can help other people in our lives become more perfect just like us. Ahh... I'm just kidding. But, you know, let's face it, the people who we love the most are the people who drive us crazy sometimes. And that's just a natural tug, the natural ebb and flow of important relationships. It's the people who you care about the most are the people who you sometimes struggle with those relationships and it's because you care about those relationships that we spend so much time trying to perfect them, trying to make those relationships better.

I congratulate you, actually for listening to this podcast because I do believe it is a way to improve yourself even though we are talking about how to get somebody else to change. I'm going to do a bit of a bait and switch in this program and teach you that the best way to get somebody to change really is to perhaps change your approach. At least your way of thinking about it.

So before we get started, I want you to think about somebody you have in mind. Someone who's really important to you because you love them, you care about them, you want to be around them and then of course, there's these people who you wish they would change, not because you love them, but because you kind of have to be around them all the time.

The principles I’m going to share in this brief podcast are really going to apply no matter who you’re dealing with, whether it’s your teenage daughter, the annoying guy who works in the cubicle next to you, your sister or your significant other. But before we go further, I want you to know this, it does take work. And in fact, the more valuable the relationship, the more important it is that you work for these things to happen, and that work needs to be placed on you. Quite frankly, that’s how you’re going to make real changes, just by tweaking the way you approach the people you care about.

So is it possible to actually change someone and if so, what’s the best way to get somebody to make changes, not just for you but for themselves. How do you get somebody else to act differently, behave and think differently, and to have different habits, different beliefs? And why is it that you want them to change?

I think you probably know it’s almost impossible to change someone who doesn’t want to change. And even if the result of their behavior and their attitude is something negative, like they’re losing friends and it’s impacting them in a negative way but there’s still something about their behavior and their attitude that serves them.

I don’t think anyone has the power to change another individual who doesn’t want change. But hold on, don’t lose hope. Obviously, I’m going to share with you some solutions. These are things I’ve put into practice in my own life and most importantly, I’m going to share with you tips and best practices that I’ve learned from the clients and people I’ve coached over the last 20 years.

I want you to know it is very possible. But what is possible is creating the environment. The right situation so that people who are important to you actually want to change. They want to do the work themselves.

First let’s make sure we are on the same page. And that’s if you’re trying to change someone because it benefits you and that’s your primary motivator, this just isn’t going to work. It really has to be because it’s to their benefit to want to make some improvements and that in the process, you’ll improve your own communication style and your own empathy and understanding. But you really have to come from a place of love and understanding and support and a good place where you want the best for somebody else.

I can’t imagine that there’s any type of change you would wish upon someone else that wouldn’t be helpful to them. That doesn’t make them better. Usually, we want somebody to change because we know what they’re doing is detrimental to their health or their wellbeing or they’re not reaching their own potential or they’re not letting the world see and feel and experience their greatness. And if that’s your primary motivator, then we are both on the same page.

So let’s move forward. Let’s talk about the principles of making this happen.

## The first principle is, you have to understand, it’s not personal.

This person’s negative behavior, the way they act, the way they interact with others, anything it is you want this person to change, it is not because of you. It’s also not because of you that they keep doing it even if you’ve asked them to change. And it won’t solely be because of you if they do in fact decide to change themselves, change their behavior, change their attitude. Do things differently. It is initially from something that perhaps happened to them as an early childhood experience or traumatic adult experience or just experiences in general that have contributed to this behavior, these habits, which in some way, shape or form have turned into something that serves them. Even though sometimes you’re like, “How could it possibly serve someone to have a bad attitude?” How could it possibly be of benefit to be an alcoholic or to be addicted to drugs, or to be combative with adults?

But there is something about, whatever it is that this person is doing or thinking or behaving or the habits that they engage with that serves them. So it’s not because of you that these things started and it’s not going to be because of you that they change. It’s going to need to come from within. But you can be as supportive as possible and because of who you are and because of the level of care that you have you will

also be an instrumental part of their change. But before you go further, you must understand where their behavior or their attitude stems from, because we know it’s not from you so where did it come from?

If it’s not in response to something you’ve done or who you are, or in particular something they do to upset you. If it’s not just limited to you, where did it come from? In other words, if it’s not your fault, whose fault is it?

It feels, sometimes so personal when someone we love doesn’t see how important it is for them to make these changes, how it’s affecting our relationship.

This is a really important concept for you to just kind of wrap your head around before we go much further because it feels personal specially when it boils down to an ultimatum when couples are considering divorce and one of the partners can’t give up their addiction or the parent who has been repeatedly told by their child, “I want you to show up on time, dad. You promised you’d be here at four and we don’t see you until later in the evening.” And despite how many times the parent hears the child say, “I want you to do this and if you love me, you’ll do this.”

It’s not out of lack of love that that person doesn’t make the change. It has nothing to do with the person who’s asked for the change. And it doesn’t mean that they don’t love you enough. It means that the power of the behavior, what it does to serve them is so strong that they haven’t found a way to make that change. And this is a very important principle to start with because the less personal we can make this process, the more likely you are to be successful. It is not personal.

You’ve got to take that piece out of the equation and understand that it is truly and entirely about them and their experience. It has nothing to do with how much they love you, like you, want to annoy you or want to please you. It is 100% about them.

Because of that, the most important thing that you can do is understand where it stems from. You figure out why they behave this way and we are halfway there. In fact, you probably already know because if it’s someone that you care about, you know a lot about them. But you first have to start by doing some very open minded detective work. You have to listen. You have to think about it. Think about the little things they’ve shared with you about their past and the way they’ve reacted to certain situations and circumstances.

What do you know about this person? What do you know about their childhood, about their parents? Because often times – I’m not a therapist, I certainly don’t profess to be one but I’m a very big proponent of therapy because I’ve seen it help hundreds and hundreds of my top, most successful clients. I’ve seen it change their lives. I’ve seen them be able to not just do better in business but improve their relationships. And that’s way more important.

Nine times out of ten, those negative behaviors, those destructive thoughts that we carry, the way that we interact with other people that destroys relationships or were we undercut ourselves, 9/10 it stems from some early childhood experience. Those thoughts can be changed. But oftentimes, those early childhood experiences and sometimes, it is a traumatic event as an adult. But oftentimes, it’s those experiences that develop a way of behaving and thinking and interacting with other people that serves to either protect us or to keep us comfortable, if that makes sense.

So you’ve got to listen closely. Ask the right questions. Pay attention, because why they learned to behave this way, even if it’s a negative result for them, the reason why they’ve learned to behave this way will often surface. It’s right below the surface. They’ve probably done more than just hint about it. They’ve outright explained to you some early experience that led them to think the way they do, behave the way they do, create some of the habits that they have. And if you’re consumed with yourself in this process, you’ll never have an open heart and open ears to be able to hear the answer because the answer will tell you where this behavior, these actions and these habits stem from. Once we know that, it makes it easier to feel less personal about the way they behave and it’s also so much easier to understand how to help them make that change.

## The next most important principle for you to understand when trying to help somebody improve their lives is, that it’s not the change that scares them. It’s giving up control.

Its things being so different that they won’t have any ability to control their world and for so many people, it’s those behaviors, those addictions, those habits that make them feel secure.

I know that sounds crazy because you might be thinking about someone who – their habits are so destructive and so unsettling that you can’t imagine how they could feel secure. But there is some security if that’s all they’ve ever known.

So to change that would be to give up control. It’s that sense of control that’s really, really important. And the reason why this is so critical for you to understand is because the more you can help somebody feel in control of these changes and in control of the decision making process and in control of their destiny then the more likely that they’re going to feel comfortable with the change.

If you’re throwing ten things at someone at once, that just feels like their world has been turned upside down. So if you approach this from the standpoint of, “How can I help this person feel completely in control, as if it is 100% their idea where they’re able to make the important decisions to do the things that make them feel comfortable to understand that it’s not like a speeding train that they won’t be able to jump off, that there’s the ability – no matter what it is that we are talking about, for them to have control.

You’re going to have much more success in this process if you’re always considering that it’s not the change that they fear, it’s the lack of control.

You’re going to love this principle because it’s very easy to make a huge difference in your ability to succeed at this process. And it’s all about timing. Timing is everything when you want somebody to improve themselves. When you want somebody to take action that they fear, that means change. That means that lack of control. It is all about timing.

It’s our natural instinct to want to correct someone or even to attack somebody when you’re angry, when you’re upset about that thing happening again. Let’s say it’s your partner always making you late for something or the person who you work with who has just missed another deadline and they don’t need to. It’s overwhelming that we want to attack it at that moment when we’re upset, when we’re angry. And that’s when you want to go head to head. That’s when you want to go toe to toe and just get it off your chest. But it is the absolute least effective time for you to create change, period. End of subject. Got it? Because it won’t work. It just doesn’t work.

Nobody is open to change when they feel attacked (hashtag #duh). I mean, think about when you felt attacked by someone even if you knew you’ve done something wrong. Your defense mechanisms don’t even allow you to hear the other person’s side of the story. Let alone want to make any change.

We are willing to change and we’re open to it only when we feel loved and supported and calm and accepted. And if you don’t feel any of those things which most people don’t when they’re in an argument or they feel defensive, then there is absolutely zero chance that someone’s going to make a change. So you’ve got to remember that no matter how angry or frustrated and desperate to get this person to change, the absolute worst time you can bring it up is right after it happens. Whatever it is especially at that moment when you are the most angry.

Now, it may seem odd. It may seem unlikely that what you’re supposed to do is bring this up when things are going well. But the truth of the matter is, that is the best time. It’s all about how you approach it. It’s about not making it such a big deal.

You’ve got to low key this stuff. We’re really good at reading between the lines. Rarely do you have to just come out and tell somebody exactly what it is you want. They already know. It’s about positioning and timing.

So when things are going well, when this individual feels really happy and you can feel that they are in the right mindset to accept a positive compliment, praise, that’s the best time to very discreetly slip in something that you would like for them to change. But here’s the key, you can’t phrase it as something that you want them to do differently. It has to be about you. Here’s what I mean by making it about you.

So say for example, your spouse is always late and it drives you crazy. The conversation might feel like you want to say something like this, “You know, it’s rude that you make us late for everything. It drives me crazy and I hate it. You just need to get ready earlier. You need to be more organized.”

Now, if your spouse were to say that to you, you obviously would feel defensive. Perhaps stating it like this.

“You know honey, it makes me feel really uncomfortable when we’re late. And you know that feeling you get when you feel you’re letting people down or you’ve disappointed them? That’s how I feel when we’re late. And I hate that feeling. It makes my stomach drop and very uncomfortable. I know you’re trying and I don’t know if I ever told you how much it means to me when we are on time.

I know it doesn’t have that same reaction. It doesn’t give you that same feeling, so I just want to let you know how much I really appreciate it because it feels like you care about my feelings when you make an effort to be on time.”

Okay, here’s another example:

“You know, honey, you need to clean your room. It’s disgusting. You’re embarrassing me because your room is just a pigsty and it just seems like you don’t have respect for anything so you need to clean your room.”

Versus saying to your teenager when they’re happy, when they’re ecstatic because you’ve just told them that you’re going to drive them and their friends to the mall.

“Honey, you know, when your room is messy, what it does is it makes me feel like you don’t appreciate what we do for you. And when you keep it clean, like you did today and you made your bed, I just have to tell you, it makes me feel like you really love us and you respect us because I know it’s not a big deal to you that your bed’s made. But what it says is that you respect what we do for you and I just want you to know how much I appreciate it.”

Now if you have a teenager that’s probably rolling their eyes, but it’s about the timing. It’s about saying it. Now when you’re upset but saying it when the person who needs to receive the message is feeling really good. That’s number one. That’s the timing.

Number two is making it about you versus about them. So in both of those examples that I’ve provided for you, rather than saying you are always late. You turned it around and put in on yourself and explain how it makes you feel.

Avoid making someone feel defensive when you’re trying to create change. When you are trying to help somebody improve their life and just become a better person by creating better habits, hopefully in return make your life a little easier too. Always remember that the timing and the way that you phrase things should make people loved and supported and it should feel more that it’s about you as opposed to putting them on the defensive.

## The last principle I want to share with you actually starts with a quote from Gandhi, “You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

In other words, if we dialed that back and looked at ourselves, when we want other people to step up, we first have to step up ourselves and nowhere is this easier for you to do than in your personal relationships. It doesn’t happen as easily with people who we have to be around because of work or other obligations. But when it comes to the people who we care about and we love, our dearest friends, our family, the people who we live with, the best way to change is by stepping up and changing ourselves first.

My husband Bret and I have been married for 19 years and I can tell you that there have been many years, especially when we were first married that we weren’t good at this. My husband, because of his own experiences as a kid, really childhood experiences, never felt comfortable telling me when he was upset with something that I had done or really letting me know that there are things he wanted me to change or improve.

Meanwhile, I was always asking him, what can I do to be a better wife? What can I do to make you happier? What can I do better? And basically I was asking those questions because I wanted his list so that I could quickly get to my list of the things I wanted him to do better. But he never had a list.

He said, “No, you’re great. What are you talking about? I’m happy. Everything’s good.”

And that is because, he just didn’t feel comfortable sharing his feelings with me if there was something that was bothering him. And it took us many years of marriage and even marriage counselling to get to a point where he felt comfortable telling me things that bothered him. And I wanted to fix those things because I want to make him happy.

One of those examples was exactly what I used earlier in this lesson was, talking to me about being late. You know, my family it’s not an excuse but we grew up being late to everything. My dad and mom, both, we just showed up when the turkey was being set on the table and it was put to us like it’s such a positive thing that we walked in the movies long after trailers had started.

It was just like the way to be was to be late because you could walk in and the food is ready and you didn’t really have to engage in small talk and isn’t it just a great thing?

Meanwhile, my husband grew up in a household where if you weren’t 15 minutes early to something, you are late. And so, it triggered in him all of these negative responses if we are late for something. But it wasn’t until, (I’m not kidding) like 15 years of marriage that he finally said to me how it made him feel.

I knew he didn’t like being late but I didn’t know how it made him feel. And once he shared with me how it made him feel, I just immediately knew it was too important for me not to fix that, because it’s an easy fix. I can be late for me but I won’t be late for something that’s important to my husband because I know how that makes him feel.

I’ve had to learn those same things with him. If there’s something I wanted him to improve upon, I literally will remember it. And if I feel like I might forget it later, I’ll put in a note of my phone and then when we’re really feeling connected and we’re happy, and it’s a good up feeling between the two us and we’re spending the time together, typically what I’ll do is talk about change that I want to make. And I’ll phrase it in a way so that he knows, I want to do this because I think it’s going to help our marriage or I think it’s going to help me be a better parent or a better – fill in the blank.

And that usually me talking about the change that I want to make in myself brings up the same influence in him. You see, we inspire people to make a change when make a change. And I know that’s what Gandhi meant with his statement. You must be the change you want to see in the world.

So if you want to see someone change, start by changing yourself. Inspire someone to change by talking about how you want to improve and the things that you want to do and talk about it when the timing is right, when someone feels good about themselves, when they feel happy and loved and supported.

And finally, remember that you can change the way people treat you by changing the way you treat yourself. If you’ve always allowed someone to treat you a certain way and now you want them to change, you have to change what you are willing to accept.

No one can hurt you without you giving them permission to hurt you. No one can treat you poorly or take advantage of you without your permission. That’s sometimes hard to hear. Sometimes the truth is hard to hear. But sometimes it’s exactly what we need to hear.

I want to thank you for tuning in to this broadcast. I want to thank you for caring enough about somebody who you want the best for them. And you probably figured out that this really isn’t an overnight kind of fix. There are no secret weapons or masterful ways to change somebody in 24 hours or less.

The most important take away I think from today’s message is that, it’s really more about an evolution than it is change. And it really is more about ourselves than it is the other person. Change when we want the best for someone else takes patience, not preaching. It takes care and it takes love and it takes an understanding and it takes self-reflection. Understanding how we can be better and by changing ourselves, inspire change in someone else.

Listen, I really appreciate the time that we spend together, beyond measure. It is such a labor of love. I can’t even tell you how much I love just chatting with you. So, I want to let you know how much I value that you’ve subscribed to my podcast. I want you to know how much I appreciate every single time you leave me a rating in iTunes. I love it. I would say it’s like my tip jar. But I really, really get excited. It means the world to me.

I love this medium because it’s intimate. I feel when I’m listening to a podcast like I really know this person and we’re having a conversation and I just want you to know how much I love and I appreciate you and thank you so much for your feedback and for sharing this messages with the people who you know will benefit from them. I’m just getting all mushy here. But lifers, until we talk again, I just want you to know, I love you and you ROCK!