

Coaching for the Recovered Life

Resource #1: How ready are you for change?

Today we're talking about readiness for change, an important element in determining the likelihood of success in making a change. We may think we're ready, but sometimes our actions suggest something different. Conversely, we may think we're not really interested in making a change, but on some level we're more ready than we think. How do we make sense of this? A simple tool called the Readiness Ruler can help us to get a better sense of what's really going on when we approach change with mixed feelings.

I discovered the Readiness Ruler when I was studying Motivational Interviewing, an approach developed by two psychologists, William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick, as a way to help people resolve the ambivalence that often surrounds the decision to make a change. Ambivalence shows up in the form of that familiar "On the one hand ... but on the other hand" conversation we have with ourselves when we're torn between taking the leap and maintaining the status quo.

Before we get started with today's exercise, I want to emphasize that ambivalence can be a significant obstacle to change. The forces that keep us stuck in "should I or shouldn't I?" mode tend to run pretty deep and one exercise isn't going to lift us out of ambivalence once and for all. So manage your expectations, give it a try, and stay connected for more resources on this and other important topics.

You're going to use the Readiness Ruler to assess your **readiness to make a change** and then explore the factors that are **impeding your ability to commit** and the factors that are **supporting your ability to commit**.

Equipped with this information, you'll be able to see your situation and the factors that surround it with clarifying honesty (one of the practices that I've found to be integral to living the Recovered Life). Clarity leads to action. Action leads to change. Sustained action leads to long-term change.

So let's give it a try.

Start by writing a statement that specifies the action you're considering.

Here are some examples:

I'm considering *quitting* my job and *going* back to school.

I'm considering *giving up* alcohol.

I'm considering *moving* to a different city.

I'm considering *getting* a dog.

I'm considering *hiring* a coach.

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I've put the action words in italics because it's essential that this exercise revolve around a possible action. I say this because sometimes people try to make decisions *before* they get to the stage of really knowing what specific action the decision requires.

For example, a coaching client might say, "I really want this situation to change but I don't know what change would look like."

This client isn't ready to do the exercise you're about to do because there's work to be done *before* they get to the stage of considering their readiness for action.

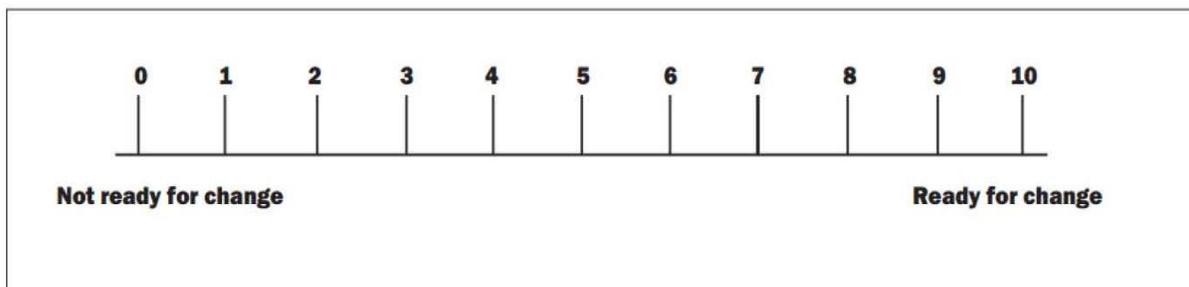
If you're in a similar situation, you might want to set this exercise aside until you can clearly articulate the action you're considering. If you need help with this, contact me.

Back to the exercise ...

Now that you've written your statement, use this "ruler" to locate your level of readiness to take action/make the change.

0 means not ready at all, 10 means "let's do this!"

Circle your number.



Now I want you to consider these questions:

1) Why didn't I give myself a *lower* number?

This question is meant to help you think about your reasons for making this change. Even if your number is low, as long as it isn't 0, change is being considered.

- What are your reasons for considering a change?
- How important are these reasons to you? (You can use the Readiness Ruler to help you assign a level of importance to each reason you identify)

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Once you're able to make a clear link between the change you're considering and its importance to you, you may be able to move the number up. Or you may decide the change, in its current form, isn't as important to you as you may have thought.

2) What would need to happen in order to move the number *up* the scale?

This question is meant to help you identify what, exactly, is standing between you and number 10 (complete readiness).

- May-be you need more information about the decision you're considering
- May-be you need to feel more confident about your ability to succeed
- May-be it's a matter of timing
- May-be you're waiting for someone else to get on-board with your decision
- And so on

Understanding the reasons behind your ambivalence can help you take the necessary steps to move toward the change you're considering, or it can help to clarify that this decision, as you've considered it, isn't right for you.

Here are a few more things to think about when faced with making a change:

- It's important you feel **confident** about your ability to succeed. If this is lacking, consider breaking the change down into more manageable pieces, taking the time to get better prepared, or recruiting more support. Use the Readiness Ruler to gauge your confidence level and identify things you can do to give your confidence a boost.
- It's important that the change you make is **realistic**. Even if you feel ready to commit to action, if your goal doesn't reflect current reality you probably won't succeed. Again, you can use the Readiness Ruler to measure the change you're considering against the cold hard facts of your life: money, time, ability, relationships, health, obligations, support, etc. Also, you might want to pay attention to the timing of this decision, as sometimes the best solution is to wait.
- Don't be afraid to start small. If "taking a leap" sounds daunting, start by taking baby steps. Ask yourself, "What's one thing I could do **today** to set this change in motion?" and do it.
- Be willing to **re-imagine the change**. If the change as you currently view it isn't possible, but your reasons for making it are important to you, consider other ways of proceeding. If you need help with this, please feel free to reach out to me.

I'd love to hear about your experience using the Readiness Ruler. Please share on Facebook or email me at coach@recovered-life.com

If this exercise has made you aware of things you may want additional support with, I invite you to ask me about coaching.