

✓ Dream,

✓ Dare,

— **Do!**

Everybody has dreams regarding work, relationships, health and personal development.

But what does it take to go from Dream to Dare and, eventually, Do?

What are the secrets of real and lasting change?

Beat the odds!

You know exactly how it feels: you are frustrated, angry and unhappy. It's time to make that change. It's time to improve your relationships, start your own business, get that promotion, lose that weight, get those abs tuned, stop smoking, see your friends more often, start saving for your kids education, start applying for a different job... etc,etc.

Good luck! You will need it, because the odds are against you.

Of all people who consciously start personal change, more than 80% will have returned to their old habits within two years. No wonder the world is filled with cynical people that are still in the same job they have hated for over 10 years, still smoke 2 packs of cigarettes everyday and still spend too little time with their kids.

It's time for change.

What to change?

The top three desired changes have been the same for years.

Number one by a long shot: we want to feel more comfortable in our own bodies. We want to live healthier lives, we want to eat healthier.

Number two: we want more time for our loved ones, better relationships.

And **number three**: we want to get ahead in our work. Work on our careers, get that promotion, start that business.

Many people hope their desires alone will lead to change, but unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. The things you do every day are critical.

Your daily behavior determines the results in your life.

Anyone who wants to be healthier needs to exercise at least half an hour a day.

Anyone who wants to be happier needs to make sure he spends a few minutes on the things he is grateful for everyday.

It's all so obvious but you have to DO IT.

5/95 Breakthrough!

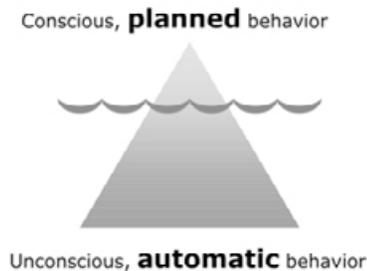
So why do so many of us fail at changing? Why is it so hard to maintain change? How can you successfully develop new and effective habits?

The answer to these questions is as simple as it is astounding: the concepts that most people believe about human behavior are not correct. Not even a little bit. Even worse: some of the concepts you read about in books about behavior are unfounded. Some of this literature is over twenty years behind what is known in behavioral sciences, neurology and psychology.

Let me give you an example: by far, most people believe that they do most things, at home and at work, because they "want to." They believe that their intentions lead to the behavior they display. They believe that conscious choices and free will are the most important motivators of human behavior.

Are they right? Unfortunately, no they're not.

How it Works



Prominent psychologists like John Bargh and Roy Baumeister agree that the majority of our behavior comes about unconsciously and automatically. An estimate of the proportions: 5 percent conscious, planned behavior opposite 95 percent unconscious, automatic behavior.

This does not only count for “simple” automatic behavior but also for complex, intelligent proceedings. We read automatically, we respond to e-mails and phone calls automatically, we think automatically and we even learn new automatisms automatically.

A quick question: have you ever driven to work on your day off? Believe it or not, tons of people do. Whenever I ask audiences this question, around 8% raise their hand. Another example you have surely experienced if you drive is suddenly “waking up” to see that you have arrived at your destination. You have no idea whether you stopped for red lights, gave right of way or overtook other cars. Everything happened automatically.

Many people hope their desires alone will lead to change, but unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

Business as usual

Only new, unexpected, special cases, for which our brain has not developed an automatic response, require our conscious attention. And that is a good thing because new, conscious, planned behavior requires a lot of energy. Much more energy than repeating unconscious, automatic patterns that have proven successful in the past.

In most cases, we respond to stimuli in our environment without realizing it. Messages on our computer, questions from the boss and glances from colleagues automatically stimulate all sorts of standard thinking, feeling, talking and doing patterns. Next, our brain automatically gauges whether or not the behavior is working. Behavior that produces a good feeling will automatically be repeated, as will behavior that remedies a bad feeling. And so we continue to expand, step-by-step, our repertoire of automated behavior.

The fact that we act automatically 95 percent of the time is handy when we're doing "business as usual," but when change is needed, our automatisms can be an enormous hindrance.

So if only 5 percent of our behavior comes about in a manner that is conscious and planned, we need clever tactics to change our behavior. That is what we are going to talk about: DREAM, DARE, DO.

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in our environment without realizing it.



Phase 1: dream

5 percent conscious behavior, 95 percent unconscious behavior. When you know this, how do you begin to change? What if you want to change something in your work? How do you find out what you really want? What if you want to change something in your private life? Where do you begin?

The easiest way is to examine your exceptionally good moments. The moments in the past months or maybe even years that you think: “Look, I was doing really well then, in my work, my private life or in other ways.”

What exactly were you doing in those moments? Try to describe that as precisely as you can.

See, most people want to change something because they are unhappy with their current situation. And that is fine because it gives a certain amount of motivation to get started. But shaping the change, the change itself, you have to do that based on the things you are good at. The secret of self-guidance, change and growth is recognizing your exceptionally good moments and structurally creating more of those experiences.

So when you had a really healthy day, what did you eat? If you had a really nice day in your relationship, what exactly were you doing at that moment? And if you scored at work, what did you do to lead up to that moment?

The great thing is this: if you want to change, you don’t have to become a different person. You just have to be more like yourself as you are in your best moments.

If you have found your exceptionally good moment, try and describe the behavior that goes with it as precisely as you can. Your brain can’t handle vague intentions. So describe your behavior as descriptively and precisely as possible. What behavior led to these positive moments? Make the description three things: Measurable, Active and Personal (M.A.P.).

S.M.A.R.T. is not smart enough

Many people are very satisfied if they are working with S.M.A.R.T. goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) but when it comes to personal development and change, S.M.A.R.T. is not smart enough! S.M.A.R.T. goals only describe what has to be realized at the end of the journey. The tangible behavior necessary to achieve these proposed results—what you need to do—remains a mystery.

It seems obvious. If you don't define behavior, you cannot manage it. But, most people are unable to translate seemingly simple concepts like losing weight, changing jobs, or spending more time with the family into concrete behavior. So... behavior is the weak link between plans and results. Only new and different behavior leads to new and different results. This applies not only on a personal level but also at your work or business.

Behavior isn't behavior until it's been M.A.P. formulated: Measurable, Active, Personal. Research by psychologist John Norcross has found that just translating goals into behavior increases the chance that these goals will be achieved by 1150 percent. So what are you waiting for?

If you want to change, you don't have to become a different person. You just have to be more like yourself as you are in your best moments.

Phase 2: dare



Hold on tight, because here comes the big disappointment. Over 80 percent of all people who set about to change fall back into their old behavior within a few months. The relapse is not because we don't want change. Remember that 95 percent of our behavior is automatic. Relapse happens because of stimuli in our environment, because of difficult situations we are exposed to.

So we want to get in shape... but hey, suddenly it's really busy at work. We want to stay calm and be a peaceful person... but some people just drive us crazy. Other times we are too busy focusing on other things that scream for our attention. But most of all, stress and exhaustion are factors which cause a relapse into old, ineffective habits. So be aware!

Most people are very capable of determining what hindrances and problems they may run into during a process of change. They can produce objections effortlessly. Only a small minority go to the effort themselves of taking that extra step: coming up with tricks to persevere when hindrances and problems occur. Everyone knows what it's like when a discussion ends to your disadvantage. On the way back you think: "I should have said that!" It might sound silly, but the secret is to think of these brilliant things on the way there instead of on the way back.

Shoot your bears

How do you keep from falling back on automatic behavior when triggered by these kinds of hindrances and stimuli?

Map out the difficult areas and make yourself a plan ahead of time so you know how to keep going! In this way, the chance you will reach the finish line increases with a factor of three or four (according to research by psychologist Peter Gollwitzer).

So what does look like in reality?

- Well, for example, you could work with “time outs.” That means that when you feel stress coming on you say to yourself “Whoa, take a minute, think again about just why you want to change.” You can use post-its or make notes in your daily planner, put a sticker on the fridge, or put a little card in your wallet that you can review.
- Something else that works well: tell yourself out loud what is going on. Analyze the situation out loud. You can say to yourself: “Hey, look at this, here is a difficult situation, these are the triggers that could cause me to fall back into old behavior, but we’re not doing that today.”
- Another strategy is using rewards. Attack the short-term frustration of a crisis moment with a reward that is at least twice to three times as large. This will motivate you to keep going.

This phenomenon has a lot to do with the 5/95 breakthrough. If we don't spot the bears in the road ahead of time the 95 percent works against us. Unexpected hindrances lead to increased stress and to a higher chance of falling back on old, ineffective patterns of behavior. But if we are able to inventory possible disasters, and establish and practice counter strikes, the 95 percent can work to our advantage. We "condition" ourselves, as it were, to be successful. A bear in the road is no longer a disaster; it becomes a trigger to automatically produce the solutions we came up with ahead of time.

So, don't wait until disaster strikes. Prepare yourself for difficult moments well in advance.

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Phase 3: do!

Alright, we are doing well. Formulated dreams, chosen behavior. Prepared for difficult moments. We're getting off to a great start, but now it gets rough. With all change, you deal with a kind of "dip" when you get started. You're already investing with your behavior. You're already working hard, but you don't see results.

The hard truth is that you don't see results from most changes for weeks, months or, sometimes, even years.

A while back, I spoke to some people who had sailed around the world for a few years in their sailboat. Amazing, of course, but that was the end result. Before that, they spent three years pinching pennies to make the trip possible. It was that daily behavior that finally led to the result.

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Encourage your new behavior

The big question is: how do you keep yourself going? How do you make sure you keep up the desired behavior even when you aren't seeing immediate results?

The answer is surprisingly simple. There are four things you can do.

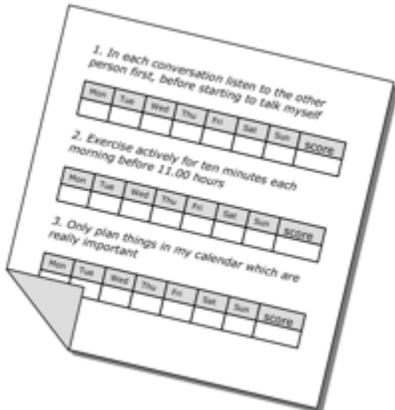
The **first thing** that helps is measuring your behavior. Don't try to measure the result, but simply measure your behavior. Make note of what you do. In this way you pay attention to your behavior and increase that behavior. You can do this by keeping a simple list.

The **second thing** you can do is to not think in terms of succeeding or failing, but in terms of learning. If you really think your goals are important, you can't fail because you are learning as you go along.

The **third thing** you can do is talk to someone everyday about your resolutions, your change. Find a coach in your own surroundings.

The **fourth thing** that helps is good old-fashioned reward. Reward yourself with little presents when you've taken another step towards change.

These are things you have to do continually. Until the results that come of your new behavior become the true reward for your efforts to change.



Get Going

Finally, let me give you a quick summary.

We need to learn more about our own behavior, and understand that just wanting something is not going to do it for you.

We need to take into account the 5/95 rule and make maximum usage of the way our brain functions.

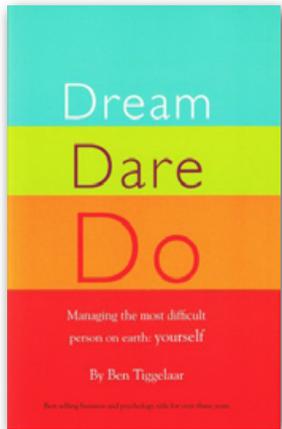
We need to formulate our intended behavior based on our own best moments, using the strong unconscious (95 percent) patterns in our lives as fuel for change.

We need to prepare for the difficult moments we will come across along the way, and make them a trigger for a well planned and thought through response.

And we need to reward, stimulate and pay attention to our new behavior until the moment we see results.

The great news is that once you've made a change in life, you often get the hang of it.

One successful change gives self-confidence and provides the motivation to continue to set new goals. **Your next change might be the beginning of a whole series of new changes.** 📌



BUY THE BOOK

Get more details or buy a copy of Ben Tiggelaar's [*Dream Dare Do*](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ben Tiggelaar is an independent researcher, writer and trainer. His passion: helping people to turn their dreams into action. His approach is based on practical research, entertainment and a professional history in behavioral science. Since 2000, Tiggelaar's three books have all reached the number one position in the Dutch management books top 10. Tiggelaar's latest book, also entitled *Dream Dare Do*, helps you to manage the most difficult person on earth: yourself. It is an excellent starting point for realizing your dreams. Learn more at www.bentiggelaar.com.

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