



Personal Tips: Breaking Bad Habits

A lot of our behaviour is governed by habit. If you break the habit, then it's easier to change your behaviour. If you are happy and open-minded then you will be more flexible and able to cope with the rigours of life. If you make small changes every day then you can subtly change your behaviour and even fundamental characteristics.

Look at what you do every day and start to take steps to make yourself more flexible.

Change your habits:

- Watch more or less TV or listen to the radio; listen to different channels; watch something that you would never normally watch. Be objective and see what you can get out of the new situation.
- Write something for 10 minutes; a letter or a poem. Paint or draw something you see; take a different sort of photo, not the usual ones of the kids.
- Don't have your favourite drink at your usual time; try something new.
- Cook and eat different foods; buy different ingredients to try.
- Get up at a different time and take your time doing the things you normally rush. Or go for a walk or something different.
- Walk back a different way when you take the kids to school. Notice your new surroundings.
- Talk to people that you normally wouldn't speak to. Smile and be friendly with strangers.
- Do a good deed for someone; go out of your way to help someone. Let that car in at the junction!
- Shop at shops you normally wouldn't shop at. Be nice to shop assistants!
- Read a different newspaper, or choose a book you normally wouldn't. Go the library and look at some books that you normally wouldn't, art or architecture or gardens or music. Find out what really interests you if you had the time to explore.
- Listen to different music, not all your usual favourites.
- Change your hair; change your make-up.
- Change the furniture round.
- Clear out cupboards and wardrobes; take to the charity shop anything that you really are never going to wear or use again!

Don't try doing all of these at once!! But gradually build up small things and you'll start to feel more flexible and relaxed about life.



Then start to be a bit more structured in your changes:

1. Be more (or less) assertive. If you are usually the one that makes the decisions in any situation whether it's at home or wherever, then let someone else make the decisions for once. If you're normally unassertive; then be more confident and speak up for yourself in situations where you normally wouldn't.
2. Change how you behave in a group. Whether it's at home, at work or socialising, do you normally behave as part of the group or do you put yourself first? Do the opposite of what you would normally do.
3. Change your energy levels. If you normally rush through everything then slow down and be more relaxed. If you are normally pretty laid back, then get involved and passionate about something!
4. Optimise your flexibility. If you are usually very flexible then try being a bit less swayed by events around you and stick with what your doing; if you are normally much focussed and inflexible try looking at something from someone else's perspective.
5. Optimise your spontaneity. Do you do things on the spur of the moment or plan everything to the last detail? If you're very planned, try doing something frivolous and out-of-character; if you're very spontaneous try being more orderly and planned.
6. Fine-tune your temperament. If you are fairly extrovert, then try to listen more and speak less, don't be the centre of attention. If you are introverted, then try to be more open and chatty, learn how to tell one funny story or joke.
7. Try being more (or less) conventional. If you are conventional and like fitting in then try wearing something unconventional or change your hair. If you are unconventional, then try to conform and fit in better.