

# Decide to Change

Solutions for Work and Life, 15 May 2007

Continuing with the theme of change, this issue looks at how our perceptions of "pain" and "pleasure" can hold us back or enable us to make changes in our lives.

Repatriation may represent a welcome, or an unexpected, change in the lives of my families. Please [forward this message to a friend](#) if you know someone who is facing repatriation.

As always, I hope you will visit my [website](#), sign up for a complimentary coaching session, or add your comments to my blogs.

## Decide to Change

Is there one thing in your life would you change if you could? Your job, your relationships, your habits, your fitness? Stop reading, for just a moment, and jot down what you would change.

Have you written down a note or a phrase? If you have, great!

If you have not, what is holding you back?

Tony Robbins has built a successful self-help program on the following theory. "The secret of success is learning how to use pain and pleasure instead of having pain and pleasure use you. If you do that, you're in control of your life. If you don't, life controls you."

If you have written down something, there are two competing principles. You believe this change will bring you pleasure. Yet, something has, so far, held you back from making the change. Tony Robbins states, "Everything you and I do, we do either out of our need to avoid pain or our desire to gain pleasure."

If you have not written something down, potentially an even stronger fear in holding you back from acknowledging the possibility of the pleasure. Are you concerned about rejection, failure, loss of control?

It is only when you have decided that clearly identified the pain of not changing, identified the pleasure associated with the change, can you then move toward the creation of your success. The change then comes through linking pleasure with the new and pain with the old.

Let's take the example of Sue who really wants, and needs, to improve her fitness. Sue says to herself every evening, "Tomorrow, I'm going to get some exercise." And every evening, Sue says again to herself, "Tomorrow, I'm definitely going to get some exercise." Occasionally, she finds a day when she goes for a walk, signs up for the class, maybe even does some sit-ups. She pats herself on the back and then thinks about how the traffic was noisy and busy, her feet hurt, she's not in good shape, now she's all sweaty, and so on.

How likely is that Sue will exercise tomorrow? Sue is focused on the discomforts; on what she is "losing" by exercising. She is linking exercise with pain. The benefits, the pleasure, if any, is not acknowledged or little celebrated. "The truth is that we can learn to condition our minds, bodies, and emotions to link pain or pleasure to whatever we choose. By changing what we link pain and pleasure to, we will instantly change our behaviors." (Tony Robbins)

Exercise is linked for Sue with pain; never with pleasure. If Sue is able to create new linkages, she can quickly adopt new habits. For example, Sue might decide that every foot or leg pain was a sign of success. She might decide that every city block walked equaled a fraction of a centimeter off her waist. She might enlist a walking buddy to translate exercise into a time of laughing and talking. She might join an exercise class that included a social activity after each class. She might link the aches of exercise with another day of living for her children.

Recall from my earlier newsletters that our brains are extraordinarily plastic. We have the ability to create new habits of thought and action through choice, focus, repetition, reinforcement, and celebration. When you redefine pain and pleasure to suit your aims, you naturally institute new habits.

Go back to your note. What pain exists in your life and may even grow through staying with the status quo? What pleasure accrues to you through the change? What tools can you use to avoid the pain for continuing with the old habit? What plan can you put in place to reinforce the pleasure of the new habit? Sherry, what is the one action you can take today?

[-Leave a comment on how this community can support you in your change -](#)

## Planning for Repatriation

Leaving home? Surely this is a mistake; repatriation is about going home, or even coming home. Planning for your repatriation, reflecting on your experiences and clarifying your expectations will help you reduce reverse culture shock. If you are repatriating some time in the near future, I encourage you to clickthrough to my article and take action on one or more of the recommended exercises.

[- Leaving Home: Planning for Repatriation -](#)

If you have friends who are recently repatriated or shortly repatriating, please click on the "forward to a friend" button below. Consider buying one of more of the recommended [repatriation resources](#) that will help you shape your expectations and experiences in "leaving home" AND "going home".

## Google Yourself

In addition to monitoring the page rank of my website, I Google myself occasionally to see what might turn up. With the last name of "Read", I find a lot of Sherry's who have read something or other. That aside, I am finding my articles in interesting places. My article "Write Your Own Performance Review" shows up under assignments in the [Professional Communication Strategies](#) class at Armstrong Atlantic State University, [SuperPerformance.com](#), and in [Insider Reports](#). A bit of fun to see my writing spreading out through the internet. If you missed any articles or wish to review them, most can be found in my [Coach Blog](#) or in the [article listings of my website](#).

Have some fun, see what you turn up by Googling "Sherry Read".

## Travel Updates

You may know that I love to travel. If school and work schedules allow, we're usually off to some new destinations. [Expatriate Travel Blog](#) has lots of photos from trips to Yunnan Province in the southeast of China. Mid-



June, I shift my residence to the US (Wilmington, Delaware) for a couple of months. With most of my coaching conducted via phone, work continues and I hope to connect face to face with you if you are based in the mid-Atlantic region.

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Wishing you success in making the change you seek.

Until next time,

Sherry Read

*I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better.*

Georg C. Lichtenberg: 1742–99, German physicist and satirist