



On the road to ... making change

Once you understand the problem better, you can always do something to help yourself learn.

A pattern is an action or habit that helped you survive. It was necessary and served you well – in fact it was brilliant to develop it. But now it may not be serving you so well, and may get in the way of learning. So now it might be time to gently work at trying to change. But that takes time – don't give up or beat yourself up when it seems to get worse. Be curious about your patterns (asking why you do it instead of just saying it's bad to do it).

When doing difficult personal work, of course we should go easy on ourselves, and look at ourselves with a “soft” heart. This gentle tone is very important. But we are going to play with language a bit here, and use the opposite word. When struggling with old patterns, we're going to tell ourselves to harden!

H – The Hardest work of your life is what you're doing – this is the big stuff, the deepest stuff, and the toughest questions anyone ever asks themselves. You are brave to be doing it. Lots of people never do.

A – Get Assistance from friends, counselors, or teachers. Ask for help – from whom, and how, and when, you want – but remember you do not have to do all this alone. Spend time with the people who make you feel good.

R – Reduce harm. While trying to stop doing something that hurts us, instead of judging ourselves for doing it, we can look for ways to reduce the harm it does – do it a bit less, a bit differently, look for alternatives, think about whether it is easier to reduce or to stop entirely. Look for ways to practice some different choices. But value your unique way of surviving - and your way of dealing with this.

D – You Deserve a life you want - you are worthy of good things and love, and you deserve these changes.

E – Encourage yourself with positive words when you speak to yourself, instead of putting yourself down. Even if it feels a bit fake at first, tell yourself over and over the reasons you want to make changes, and all the things about you that make you strong, unique, and valuable... and able to do this.

N – New things are possible. For everyone, including you. Always. Big change does not come fast or easy, but better things are always possible.

Hard work, with assistance, can reduce the harm in our lives – we deserve to be encouraged to put some new things into our short lives – keep trying, and always ***harden!***