



The Resolution Solution

How to Change Your Thinking So Your Resolutions Stay on Track

Christine Miller talks to Tony Buzan

Interviewing Tony Buzan is always a great joy, and I anticipate our conversations with relish.....

and that's because there's inevitably something in our exchange that sparks a fresh train of thought and lends a new perspective for me. So he essentially acts as an agent of change in my life, and is one of my personal Change Masters. A Change Master, as you will discover in his new book "Embracing Change", published in January 2005 by BBC Worldwide Publishing, is someone who has

"originated great changes in the human condition by their originality of thought and creativity, as well as those who have mastered natural changes and

disasters in ways that have benefited great numbers of people. They are commonly known as great geniuses or leaders." (p. 140)

Tony's commitment to changing the world's attitude towards the brain, and memory in particular, has brought him global acknowledgment, and he continues to devote himself to awakening people everywhere to their vast, largely unexplored potential. This recent book arose from his publisher's request for Tony to write about "Change", specifically about "Managing Change", given that this is now such a significant phrase throughout the world community - in business, education, government and social fields - an accelerating pace of

change was leaving many people distraught and even destroyed.

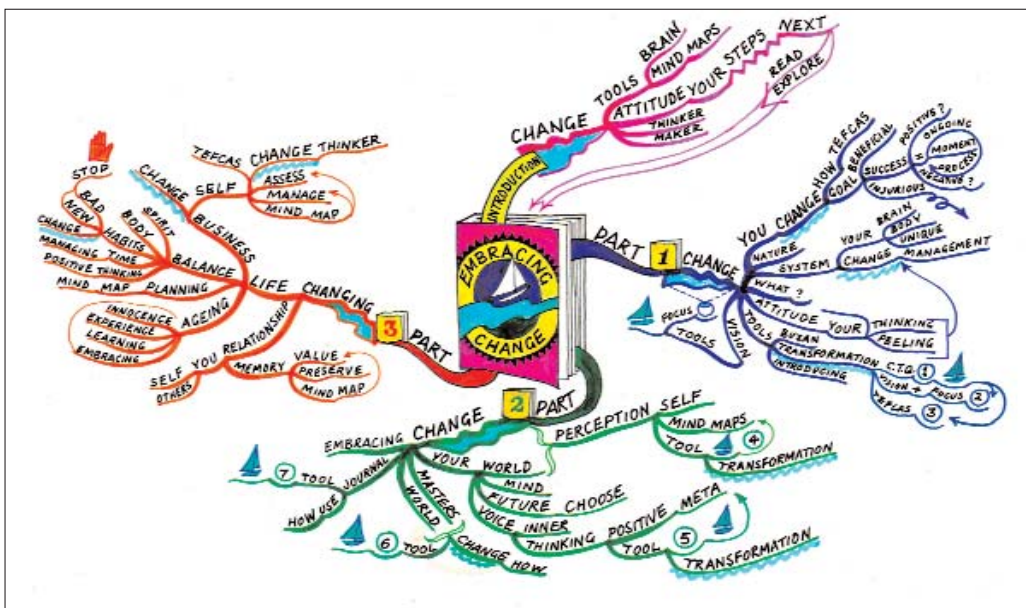
After some deliberation and deep thought, Tony's response was that he would indeed write a book - but that it should be called "Embracing Change" - because, as he says:

"Change is going to happen whether you wish it to or not, and therefore you need to embrace it - which is a much warmer, more comprehensive and more embracing term for dealing with change."

We are constantly changing beings, and this is the time of year when, just a few weeks ago, many of us made decisions to change. We merrily pledged on New Year's Eve or thereabouts, to start things, stop things, increase or decrease things - in the name of self-improvement, and we hopefully embraced change - we made NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS!! Tony has a definite view on making resolutions, and was particularly keen to address a trend he's noticed around this area of maintaining resolve - here's what he told ReSource.

Making Resolutions

"When this article is seen by ReSource readers, it will be at a time when their worlds are littered with dying or dead New Year's Resolutions. It is a serious time, because on one level it is the dashing of hope, in that tens of millions, even hundreds of millions of people start the year with bright eyes and the gleam of the future ahead, a



better future, a more positive future, and with the full intention to improve their bodies and to improve their minds. These are two of the most popular and most common resolutions.

Toning the Flabby Body

And they get off to a very good start - let's take the health one first - people slightly adjust their diet, they start some gentle exercising - and for four days, it's all going swimmingly, and then on the fifth day - there is that box of chocolates, there is that packet of crisps, there is that bottle of wine, whatever it may be - and they consume the lot, and having consumed it, they are then consumed with guilt. They then go through the normal negative coaching routine of "I've failed, I'm weak, I don't have any moral fibre, what's the point, I always fail when I try to improve myself", which is depressing and it is literally discouraging - it takes away their courage; it is dis-spiriting - it lowers their spirit; it is de-motivating - it de-motivates them. The word "motives, motivation" comes from the Latin word for life - and it takes away life - which is really bad for them.

Resolving Not to Resolve

So what many, and increasingly large numbers of people do, is to decide that they are going to make a resolution not to make any more New Year's Resolutions - because they know that if they do, then they will break them.

They are actually quite proud of this, because it solves the problem. They are successful - at not making resolutions; and I've heard of many many people say to their friends in conversation,

"Do you know something, this year I didn't make any New Year's Resolutions, because I knew that if I did - I'd break them!" and they feel all warm and happy about themselves, and their friends respond by saying, **"You know something, I decided exactly the same thing."**

And you have this growing club of people who are the non-New Year's Resolution makers.

It all sounds wonderful, it sounds like a resolution of the resolution problem, but suddenly it is really serious, and in the long term it is damaging; because if you say,

"I'm not going to make resolutions because I will break my resolutions", you are instigating a growing habit of force which says,

"I am the kind of person who will not make resolutions to improve myself because when I do, I will break them."

And every time you say it, talk about it, think about it, repeat it, **"I am the kind of person who will not make resolutions to improve myself because when I do, I will break them"** you are building up a habit pattern which increasingly changes you, and changes the probability negatively that you will ever develop yourself or investigate your own potential and fulfil it.

A Warm Embrace for Your Resolutions

So it is really serious, and I want to take a meta-positive approach to this - a more embracing approach, a more caring and loving approach, a more spiritual approach to oneself.

So when you are on that fifth day and you've had that cigarette which you said you wouldn't, you have drunk that wine that you said you wouldn't, you've eaten that giant meal, you've finished off that box of chocolates - then rather than beating yourself up and saying **"Oh I'll never change"** which is not true anyway, because the minute you say **"I'll never change"** you're changing for the worse - what you have to say is:

Let's look at this objectively, like a good friend, like a caring friend would in that situation. It's been four days of success, being really positive - one day of going away from the goal - that's 80% success - wonderful. And the next day, the sixth day, is a new day - a new day in which the four days' energy can be re-applied and you can go for another 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 days on the path you've decided to tread in that New Year's Resolution.

And if you mess it up again that's also fine - it's fine to mess it up as long as you hold the long term view of your development and improvement, and your commitment to your resolution, you'll then be instituting deep rooted and enduring habit patterns of positive change that will become more and more empowering every day of your life.

So the trend against New Year's Resolutions needs itself to be changed, for the re-energization of the population, so they are able to encourage themselves to make New Year's Resolutions - and indeed to make fresh resolutions throughout the year - you can have a bunch of New Year's resolutions, and you can also have, for example:

- New Birthday Resolutions
- New Holiday Resolutions
- New Anniversary Resolutions

In fact, you can dot the year with new resolutions which will support all the previous resolutions that you've made, and are repeatedly nurturing your ongoing development.

This is the toning up the body - we've dealt with the flabby body which is disappearing over the horizon and being replaced by the toned body. Now let's look at the flabby mind.

Toning the Flabby Mind

One of things I have done throughout my life is to work to change the world's attitude towards the brain and its abilities, especially towards memory, which is why I have started the National and World Memory Championships. At the beginning of this year one of my reso-

Child of Change

Child of the changeling
Stars

Born into
Change

Born of
Change

Born to
Change

You Can:
You Are:

Change

Yourself

Enforced Change

I asked Tony about the Asian tsunami and the enforced change this imposed on people, not only in the affected areas, but in the whole world.

"I've been reflecting on the events of December 26th, and the way they have had such a dramatic effect on the levels of compassion and love that the world is displaying. There has been an unprecedented effect on people's willingness to help, relating to the plight of the people affected by the disaster. The disaster has created change at so many different levels, an apparent change in the universal mentality and I wondered what thoughts you might have about that."

"I have had many thoughts about that kind enforced and super-traumatic change - it puts everything into real perspective in terms of massive relief, which is a nice word to use in this context. What it has demonstrated is the choice that individual human beings have, and the choice that humanity has; the choices we have in the face of change are obviously legion. It is wonderfully encouraging, and supports everything that anyone who has ever had faith in the human race has said throughout history.

One of the choices would have been to just say "Oh, how terrible", and let them get on with it, which a very few people did say. The overwhelming response, however, was one of complete compassion, complete love and not only that, which is a necessary first step, but a response of involvement, and action and commitment to assist in the face of a massive tragedy. I have been extraordinarily encouraged by the outpouring of love, the phenomenal amount of funds that have been raised, the efforts that have been made to go and help, and of sacrifice.

There was a wonderful example of the Old Age Pensioner sending his 3 months pension cheque in an envelope, with a letter saying **"I will be able to survive for these three months but those poor people over there need this money much more than I do - please accept it with my love."**

And you suddenly realise that the human spirit is indomitable, it is courageous, is incredibly immediate in its responses. It is astonishingly powerful in the degree of creativity that it will apply in any situation where sudden, dramatic enforced change requires from you an action, an individual action.

Although it is a horrible thing to have happened, I think as all change masters and people involved in change say, that after the immediate horror of whatever change it is, there is a choice point.

There's a wonderful incident which has just been publicised in the United States about a woman who was a superb double bass player, who worked helping children to appreciate music through DVDs and musical stories which she and her husband composed. Her husband, at the young age of 46, contracted cancer and died. She started to build the business again, but then she got an infection in her right arm. She had an injection at the hospital, and the doctor gave her the wrong injection, in the wrong place - and she lost her arm. As she said, I was considering packing it all in, this is too much, why is this happening to me? And then she said, hold on a minute, what about those children, what about the memory of my husband, what about my LIFE - I've still got this wonderful body, this marvellous brain, this incredible knowledge, these wonderful friends, this incredible family - to lose one arm and have all the rest is actually not that bad - I will carry on. So she did.

With regard to the recent December 26th tragedy, the point that I'm making in this conversation is that you have to accept that its horrifying, that its painful, that you didn't want it - but the strong spirit of the human being will learn from that, respond to that, in the most wonderful ways, and in the long term it will be seen as a turning point. A turning point for a better life, and a turning point in the case of the tsunami, for a better world.

Everybody that I have spoken to has been deeply moved by it; everybody that I have spoken to, and this has been many thousands already, has done something about it or contributed in some way. And most significantly, everyone has thought spontaneously about how they feel that it has changed this world forever - and changed it for the positive. Everyone has been so encouraged after years of doom and disaster and destruction, terror and pollution and meteorites and the end of the world and so on and so forth. Suddenly, here is this extraordinary response of the entire planet to other fellow human beings who are in need.

I am extraordinarily encouraged, and I do believe it is a turning point for a better world.

lutions was to accelerate that area of my life's vision and to get the memory work on to the web - I've been working on this for three years, and we have just been able to do it. We have established a website for people who want to tone their memory, their imagination and their creative thinking abilities. That website is:

www.worldmemorychallenge.com

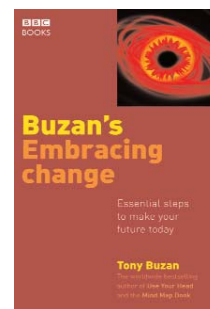
When you log onto the site you are introduced to the concept, and you can play a memory game. It is essentially a check-up for your memory and imagination. We are inviting everyone to take the memory challenge; your score comes back to you privately in an email, and you can check your score on the website against countries, profession, gender, age etc, and they change every day because of the growing number of people playing the games. You can play the games

as many times as you wish, and at the same time you are given hints and tips on how to improve your score and change the power of your memory, imagination and creative thinking whilst at the same time changing your rating on the global memory scale.

We're calling it our hotline for memory and imagination - the tone up your brain line!!

Visit now and check your memory power - it's great fun!!"

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