

Make Your SHIFT:

The Five Most Powerful Moves You Can
Make to Get Where YOU Want to Go

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Introduction to the S.H.I.F.T. Model™

The first step in the S.H.I.F.T. Model™ is Specifying the Desired Outcome. It sounds simple enough. Unfortunately, a common mistake is to assume that it is as simple as it sounds.

Being able to specify what you want and, even more to the point, identifying something that you actually want to achieve, requires a very focused effort. To be able to specify desired outcomes, you need to “know thyself,” as the Delphic Oracle commanded. To know yourself, however, and your own mind, you have to take the time to really think through what you want in your life.

My approach to this first step in the change process picks up on this principle. It always starts with defining exactly what you want to achieve in your life—and very importantly, why you want to achieve it. Often I find a lack of response or clarity about what success really means. Defining the goal carefully and with exactitude is the first crucial step in any change effort.

The second step in the process is to Highlight and Categorize the

Obstacles to Change. This process of clearly and deliberately identifying obstacles is important to uncover what is or may be standing between where you are and where you want to be. Depending on your goals and where you're starting from, these obstacles could include things like family, relationships, money, work, and even more internal issues, such as your own confidence and ability to believe in yourself.

I often see my clients assuming that they will just forge ahead and tackle whatever gets in their way, but they try to move forward without any conception that there are inevitably things that are going to slow their progress, potentially forcing them to rethink their precise direction. Obstacles are inevitable if you do not think ahead, and they are often the same obstacles you have encountered repeatedly. This is one of the main reasons people do not achieve their goals. When they find the same obstacles rearing up again and again, their commitment to change starts to diminish.

Defining the obstacles beforehand, however, lets you capture and categorize what you must plan for ahead of time. It also lets you identify those things that are out of your control, so you do not waste your resources and time worrying about them. Recognizing them in advance allows you to plan a different means of achieving your goals. You might try to find a way to work around your obstacle with focus. Or, staying on the same path, you might adjust your goal and aim for something different. Whatever your response to obstacles, it is always most effective if identified and prepared for in advance. Reaction is hardly ever as effective as preparation when it comes to making a change.

What is most important in removing obstacles is not just listing them; you must categorize them to make them workable. You will find there are three types of obstacles—ones we can control, ones we cannot control but can influence, and ones that are out of our

control. For instance, if your goal is to get a better job, obstacles could include finding the time to get to interviews or improve your credentials by taking on courses. Family commitments or the demands of a personal relationship might also make it difficult to put in extra hours in the office or take the extra time away from home to pursue the opportunities you want.

As you list them, you would find that some fall into the category you may not be able to directly control. These could include such things as the pool of those competing for the same job spot. The ones you could control would be your poor interviewing skills, or lack of effort locating the right kinds of companies to interview with for positions.

As you identify obstacles, your focus will be on those that you can control and can influence. So while you can't control the rate of unemployment and the pool of candidates looking for jobs, you can control your interviewing skills. You could hire a coach, take a class, or read about successful approaches.

Obstacles may seem daunting, but with the S.H.I.F.T. Model™, we bring them to light. We catalogue them and then organize them so we can work them into our plan. Remember that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting different results!

Once you are successful in identifying and categorizing obstacles, the third step in the S.H.I.F.T. Model™ is all about understanding how you impact your quest for change. In the third step you will Identify the Human Factor and take into account all the human-related elements in your planning and goal-achievement process.

Among other things, this step looks at behavioral style, how we all tend to take a different approach to problem solving and communication, and how these different approaches can hamper our ability to connect and work together most effectively. The human factor

step requires introspection, but it also requires us to look outward to see who else in our universe will have an impact on our decisions. This step looks at the issues you might have within yourself and within your network of relationships. It looks at factors such as toxic friendships or poor self-esteem that might hold you back. Other things, like a supportive spouse or good self-confidence, might give an advantage in a particular area. Basically, it requires you to look at the stakeholders, anyone and everyone with an interest in your life, who therefore can influence—for better or for worse—any change process you are looking to pursue.

Once the first three steps are completed, the model moves to Finding Alternatives. The fourth step essentially acknowledges what Robert Burns said (and what John Steinbeck noticed), that the best-laid plans “of mice and men” do not often work out. You strive toward your desired outcome, but I also believe in always having a “Plan B”! It is generally part of making any effective shift—for both planning and execution—to have alternative routes in place.

Finding alternatives can be fun, though, and it often allows creativity to flow. To make the process practical and workable, take this step only after other steps have been completed. It is hard to know what options you have until you have clearly specified your goal, your obstacles, and the human factors you will encounter in your change process.

The last step in the S.H.I.F.T. Model™ is to Take Disciplined Action, and it is with this step that you get to create your specific plan in a methodical fashion, possibly also identifying and incorporating back-up plans as well.

This last step sets out to change the too-common dynamic of having an idea, talking about it, planning for it, and thinking about it for a long time, only to never actually do anything! There’s no substitute for working to turn this idea into an actual, valuable shift for

you.

Using this last step, you can set out knowing that you are aware of what you need to do. With this information you can also confidently construct a very clear plan to get you where you want to be. In a kind of business sense, this is where skills like project-management skills, time-management skills, and resource-management skills come into play. In other words, this is the point at which you need to start thinking about your shift as a strategic exercise.

As you work your way through this book, working on each of these steps, keep in mind that individuals and businesses have been using the S.H.I.F.T. Model™ in their work with me for years. They've used it without knowing what it was called, without necessarily knowing the names of each individual step. The point is to look beyond the nametags, beyond the basics of each step, and see what it is that the step sets out to achieve.

The S.H.I.F.T. Model™ is a process that works if you are prepared to recognize the fundamental principles within. Let's get started!