



# THE EAP CONNECTION

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## Behavior Change Changing for the Better

*If you've ever made a New Year's resolution on January 1 and abandoned it on January 2, you understand how reluctant human beings are to change. Our habits are something we can count on and they give us a sense of certainty about life. Attempting to break a bad habit or acquire a new one, even if it's for the better, can make us feel uncomfortable and lead us back to the familiar. Let's see what we can do to help guarantee successful change.*



Your Employee Assistance Program can help. For more information or further assistance please call (800) 654-9778



### Take One Small Step

Thinking about the work involved in changing a habit can stop us before we start. Instead of picturing the project as overwhelming, remember that change happens with that first small step. It's with the accumulation of all those little steps that you'll reach your goal.

### The Key to Change

Habits take some time to acquire and it takes some time to revise, eliminate or add new habits. The key to behavior change is to define exactly the behavior you want to change, set realistic goals to change it, take small steps toward those goals and reward yourself for every movement toward change.

### Be Specific

The statement "I want to get some exercise" is a start toward defining the behavior change, but doesn't set forth exactly how you're going to accomplish it. On the other hand, "I will set aside 20 minutes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to take a walk" is a much more specific plan with a realistic goal. Later, if you want to increase the time you spend walking, you will have already taken the first small steps toward your goal by getting in the habit of taking a short walk three times a week. After one week of meeting your commitment, you might want to reward yourself with something you enjoy, such as buying a book or going to a movie.

### Record Your Progress

Another way to make habit change fun is to keep a diary and record your accomplishments, or post a chart on a wall where you can see what you've done. That kind of positive feedback does wonders for motivation. Most of all, show enthusiasm for what you're doing and keep a sense of humor. Before you know it, you will have gained a positive habit and skills to take on new ones.