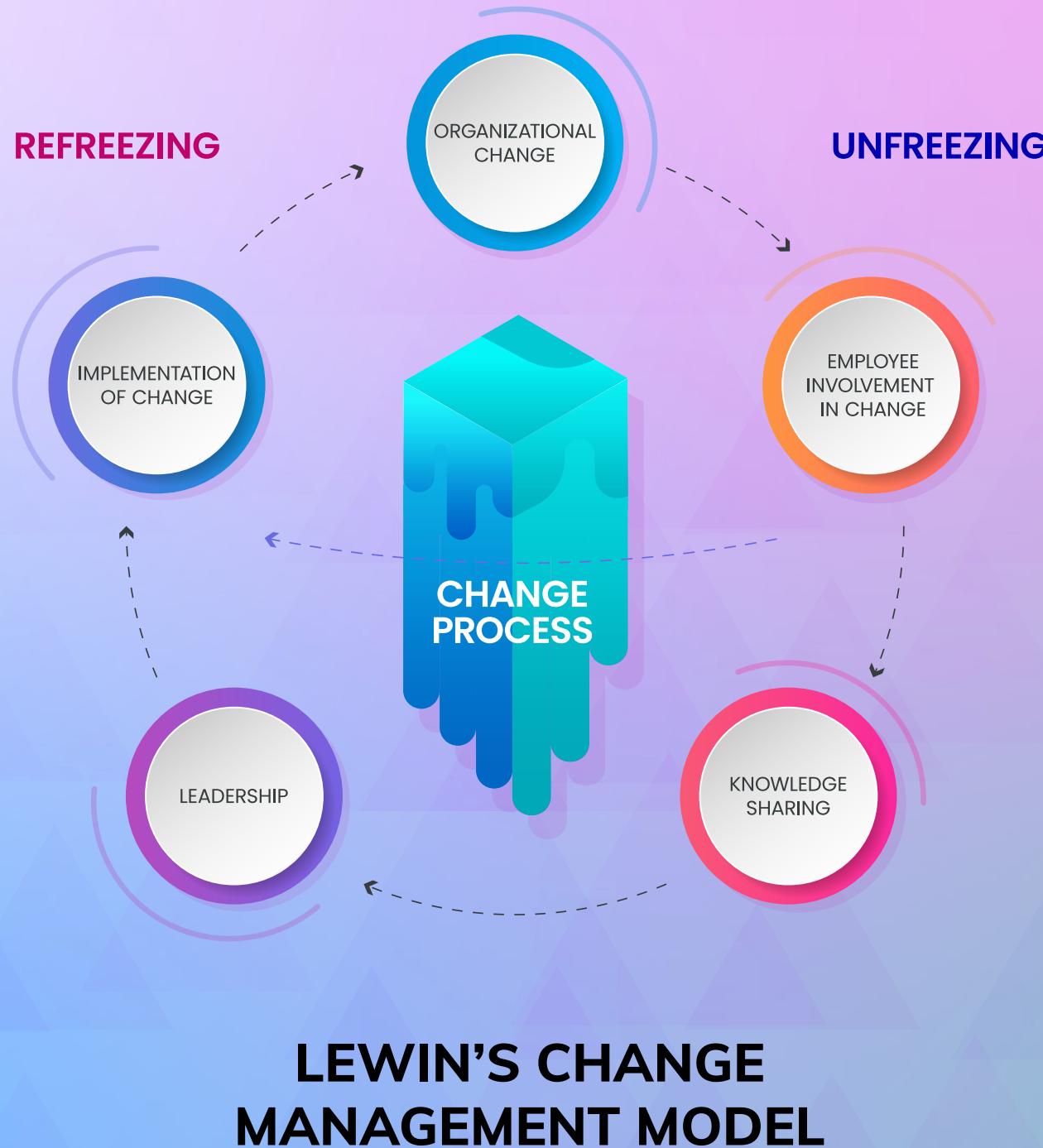


Why Your **CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY** NEEDS A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CHECKUP

Author: Scott Provence, VP of Integrated Learning Services



**“If you truly want to understand
something, try to change it.”**



"If you truly want to understand something," says social psychologist Kurt Lewin, "try to change it." Wise words. Lewin also gave us "unfreeze, change, refreeze," a model so elegant in its simplicity that it's practically a cliché. That's part of the problem. Like so many corporate change models (ADKAR and Kotter, most of which we know by acronyms and names), it's almost too tidy. Change in the real world? Messy. Chaotic. Full of plot twists your boardroom presentation never saw coming.

Let's be honest:

When have any of our change initiatives matched those perfect PowerPoint plans? We spend months getting alignment from various decision-makers and juggling buzzwords, but do we actually see positive linear results when it's time to put our plans into action? Or are all the corporate change models simply different deck-chair arrangements on the Titanic?

An evidence-based model for successfully navigating change actually exists. It's been hiding in plain sight for decades. It's not business-savvy. It's not plastered on conference room walls. That might be because it comes to us from the world of addiction treatment.

Before my career in Learning and Development, I helped lead a company that created treatment curricula for millions each year in substance use, criminal justice, and mental health. These were populations facing the kind of changes that make or break lives. These individuals and the staff supporting them were not interested in catchy acronyms or business-speak. They needed research and results. So, what did these millions of treatment professionals rely on? It was called The Transtheoretical Model.

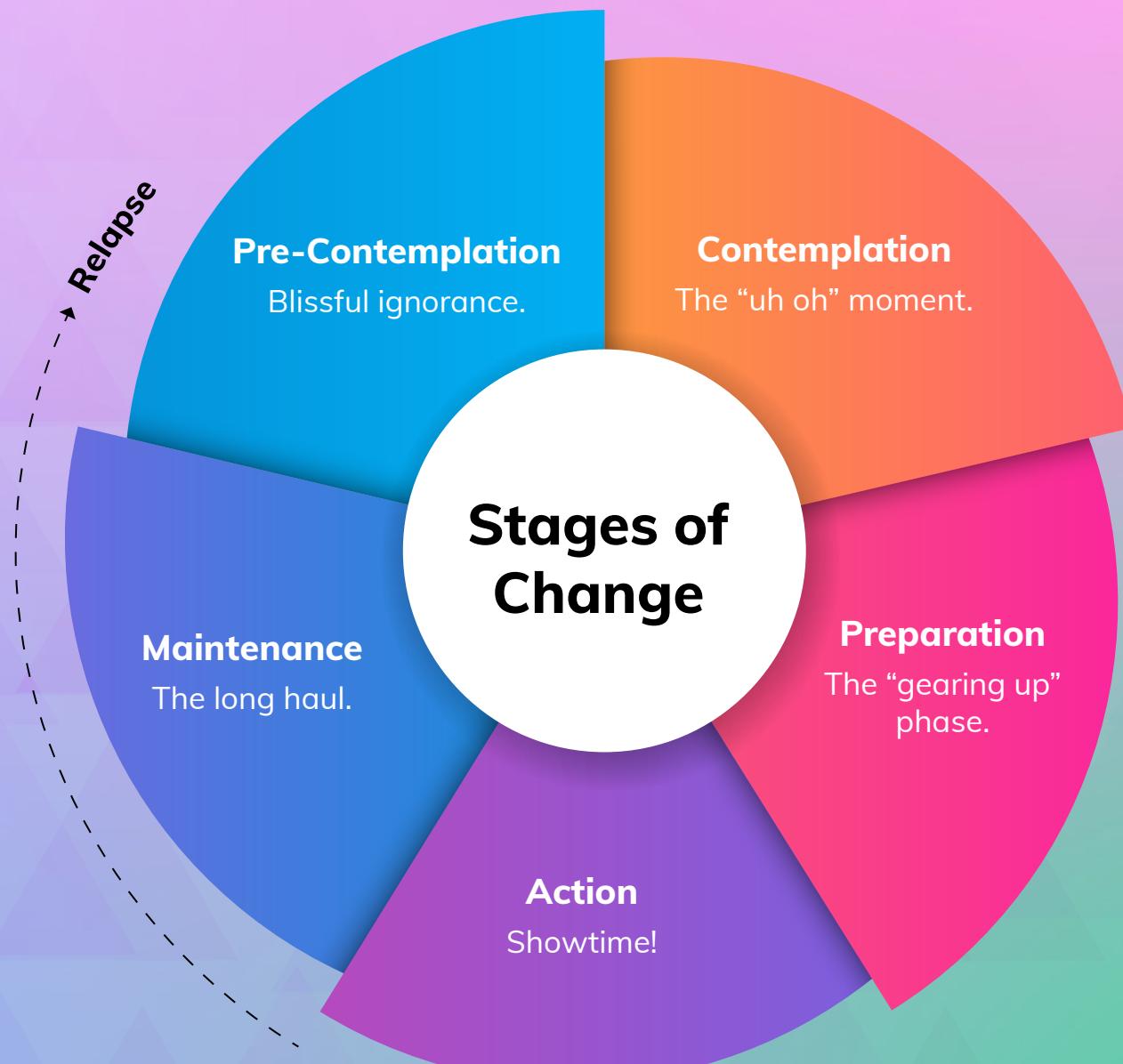
As you can probably guess by its name, this **Transtheoretical Model** (TTM) draws from various well-researched psychological theories. Its developers—one of whom served as my company's senior advisor—created a comprehensive framework for understanding and influencing behavior change. One of the most impactful concepts from the TTM is that it's not just about what stage someone is in. It's about how to help them move to the next or what to do when they take an unexpected step back. The research behind the TTM developed what's known as the Processes of Change, the well-studied actions that actually spark movement within each stage.

And this is exactly what most corporate change models are missing.

Think about the professionals who deal with life-altering change: therapists, addiction counselors, and healthcare providers. Their daily interventions should be guided not by descriptive stages but by concrete actions. They need to know what to do to help someone move from contemplation into action and why a different action is required to move from action into maintenance. The TTM provides these processes, and this ebook is your introduction.

The goal of this resource is not to replace your current framework but to supercharge it. It's about adding the missing ingredient—the how—to your change management recipe. Let's get cooking.

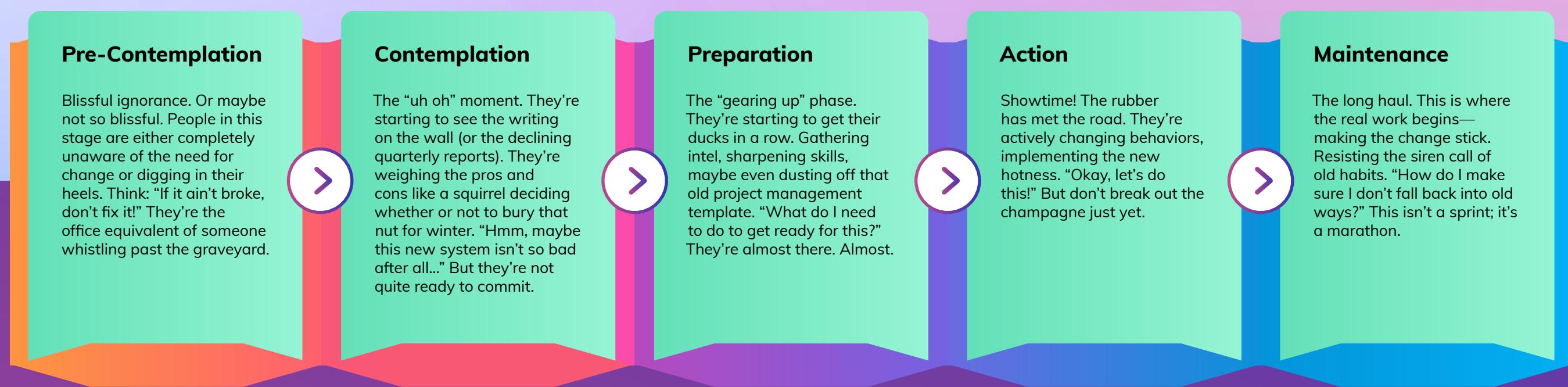
Transtheoretical Model



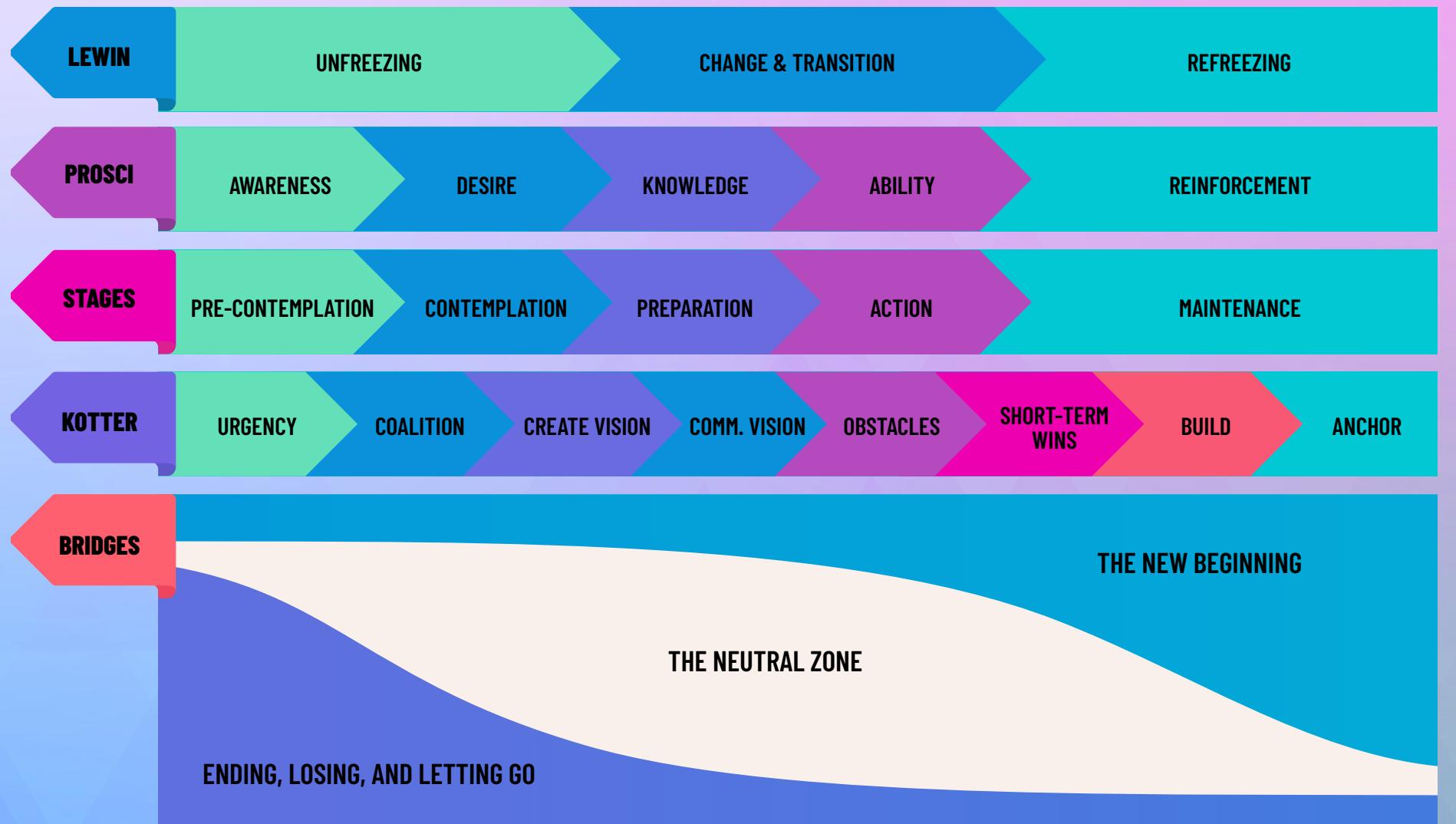
Source: Prochaska, J. O., Norcross, J. C., & DiClemente, C. C. (1994)

The Stages of Change

So, we've established that change is messy. Like, **really** messy. Like many of our corporate models, the Transtheoretical Model initially sorts through the mess by organizing things by stages. The TTM's Stages of Change are:



At this point, the TTM might just feel like another take on classic input/output (I/O) change management. Take, for example, the popular ADKAR model (awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, reinforcement). ADKAR is widely used in the corporate world, and just like the TTM, it sorts people and projects by stages. You can even see some general parallels between the two: someone that the TTM would label as Pre-contemplative might have a lack of Awareness, according to ADKAR. Someone working through change Maintenance could be said to be in the Reinforcement stage.



Source: <https://confidentchangemanagement.com/pick-any-change-model-lewin-adkar-stages-of-change-bridges-kotter-and-more/>

And the parallels don't stop with these two. Check out other popular change management models, and notice how each relies on stages to document the overall movement from blissful ignorance to the long tail of maintenance.

But here's where the TTM starts to stand out. For starters, displaying the TTM stages in a straight line is inaccurate. A better representation would be a spiral staircase, perhaps, or even better, a game of Chutes and Ladders, where you can suddenly find yourself zipping ahead or plummeting back down at a moment's notice. And for those who have ever played Chutes and Ladders with young children, you know that uncertainty, chaos, and temper tantrums of resistance are part of the game. While most corporate models try to minimize that resistance, the TTM is built to accommodate it.

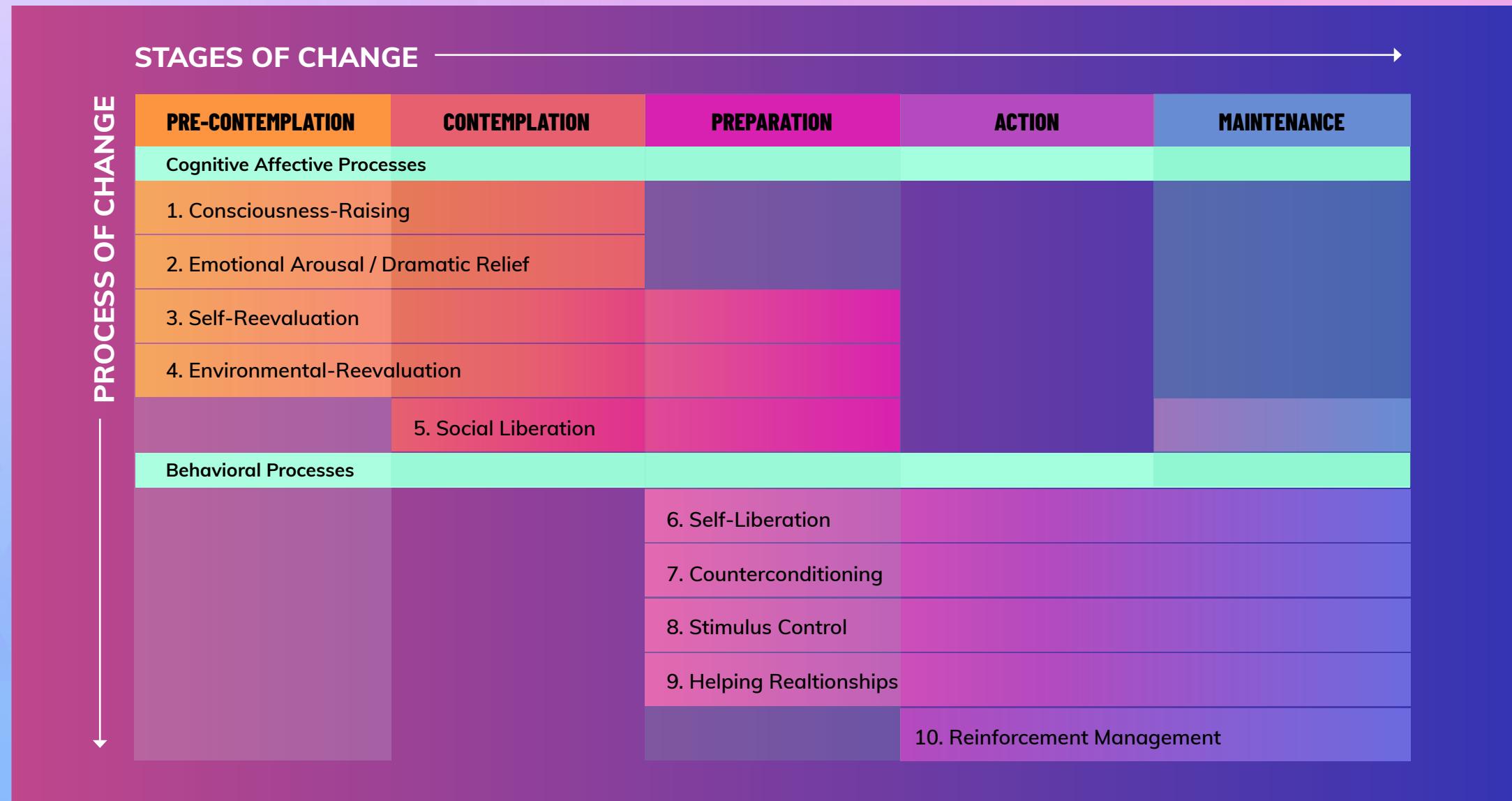
Here's the real differentiator: While corporate change-management models often stop after describing the stages of change, the TTM takes one more crucial step. It provides the **how**—the actual **processes**—for navigating between stages.

It's not enough to know someone needs to change or to describe where they currently are in the journey. You need to know how to help them take the next step **relative to where they are**. To do this, TTM developers Prochaska and DiClemente came up with 10 unique processes of change, which we will explore next.

The Processes of Change

So, we've got our defined stages of change, but what do we need to do to move between them? Enter the Processes of Change, 10 interventions that have shown great efficacy when matched with the right stage of change. This conscious matching between stages and processes is crucial. Trying to use a Maintenance intervention on someone still in Pre-contemplation is like a gardener building a whole trellis before even planting their seeds.

The Processes of Change fall into two main categories: those that shift mindsets (cognitive and affective) and those that drive action (behavioral).



Source: Adapted from Velasquez MM, Maurer G, Crouch C, DiClemente CC. Group Treatment for Substance Abuse: A Stages-of-Change Therapy Manual. New York, Guilford Press, 2001.

Cognitive and Affective Processes

(Pre-contemplation & Contemplation Stages)

These are the “aha!” and “hmm...” moments that get people to think differently about the change.

Consciousness-Raising	Shining a floodlight on the problem. “Hey, did you know our current system is costing us X amount of time/money/sanity?” Think: hard data, compelling stories, and maybe a touch of guilt.
Emotional Arousal / Dramatic Relief	Speaking of guilt, this process is all about feelings. “Imagine how much smoother things would be with the new system. Less stress, more productivity, and maybe even a little more time for cat videos.” Think: case studies that pull at the heartstrings, or maybe even a well-placed meme.
Self-Reevaluation	This process connects the change to personal values. “This new system isn’t just about efficiency; it’s about empowering you to do your best work and contribute to the company’s success.” When constructing actions in this process, ask yourself: how does this benefit them?
Environmental Reevaluation	This is all about showing the bigger picture. It can include showing people how past behaviors negatively affected others and how the new, positive behaviors from the change will ripple outwards.
Social Liberation	Never underestimate the importance of a strong support network. Show how the desired behavior change is supported by a wider social group. “We’re providing extensive training, ongoing support, and even a dedicated help desk for the new system. We’re in this together!”

Behavioral Processes

(Preparation, Action, and Maintenance Stages)

These are the “doing” steps. They’re about turning good intentions into actual behavior.

Self-Liberation	In this process, the individual goes from considering change to making a commitment. It's often one of the first outwardly observable behaviors (note how many processes may have been happening under the surface before this external behavior). Public declarations and personal pledges often occur here.
Counterconditioning	This process is all about replacing old habits with new ones. It helps individuals gradually change habits by encouraging new coping mechanisms, responses, and practice, practice, practice.
Stimulus Control	Another key process for those actively working to change is to remove reminders about the old and add more nudges toward the new. In other words, think about how to set up your environment for success (but remember, this doesn't happen until people are already in the Action stage!).
Helping Relationships	This process focuses on the power of support. While direct help is useful in the later stages, helpers who provide the right role (e.g., early consciousness-raisers) can be impactful throughout each stage of change. Ideal helpers for those in the Action stage are mentors, buddy systems, and communities of practice.
Reinforcement Management	Finally, make sure you have processes in place for celebrating wins! Rewards, recognition, and maybe even a little bribery might all be on the table. When was the last time you celebrated the successful rollout of the new system? That pizza party won't organize itself.

It's not enough to define these Processes of Change. You must remember which stages they are most appropriately used within. When you deploy these processes strategically, you can create a change management plan that works. Here's how the developers of the TTM saw their processes best applied to the different stages of change.

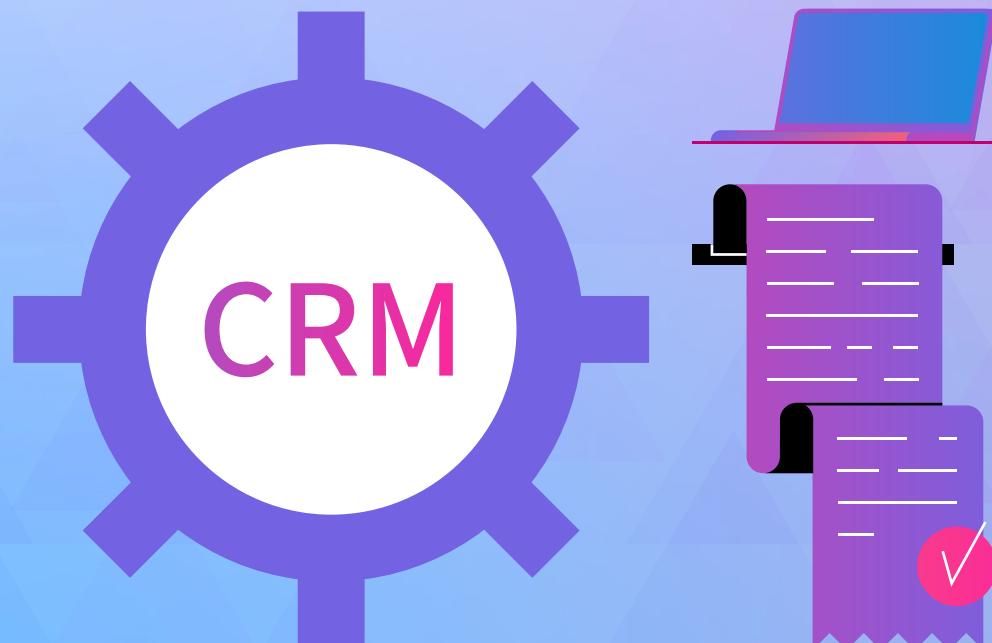
Remember:

It's about giving people the right tools at the right time in their journey through the larger system change. It's about recognizing that people will cycle forward and backward and be at different stages from each other on any given day. With that in mind, let's see how a Process-of-Change approach might work within the rollout of an organizational change.

The Organizational Change

Let's talk CRM. It's that three-letter acronym that can evoke either dread or...well, does anyone get excited about swapping customer relationship management systems?

Let's pretend your company is rolling out a new CRM. Everyone's done their due diligence. There have been vendor presentations, sign-offs, rollout Gantt charts, and the whole nine yards. How might the TTM, specifically its Processes of Change, make all the difference in your change management plans?



Applying the Processes of Change:

Instead of simply announcing the new CRM, what if you started by using Consciousness-Raising to highlight the pain points of the current system? Use data, testimonials, and even a touch of humor to illustrate the need for change. "Hey, remember that time we lost a major client because of a spreadsheet error?" you might say. "Yeah, this new CRM would have helped." Speaking of humor, what other elements of Dramatic Relief could you deploy? Compelling stories? Tearfully happy customers? Tales of frustration from peers fed up with the old way of doing things?

Now, remember, while a vast majority of your users might be practicing CRM denialism, others might already be contemplating the benefits of a change. For these folks, consider how processes like Self-Reevaluation can help them make stronger connections between the new CRM and their own goals. Environmental Reevaluation is a great parallel process you can use to not only highlight the benefits of the CRM across the whole organization but also get them to notice just how many others are also impacted by this change.

To round out your change-management plans for the doubters and deniers, consider offering tailored training and resources based on individual or department-specific needs (the Self-Liberation process at work). Social Liberation can also help highlight available resources. You could also use that process to create a network of "CRM champions" who could provide another form of social support.

Let's say the big day has come. The old model is officially sunset, and the new CRM has gone live. While many will inevitably still be contemplating this change (remember: Chutes and Ladders and temper tantrums), what processes can you use to help people who need to take action with the new system?

Counterconditioning can be as simple as making sure the new CRM login has taken over the spot on the screen previously held by the legacy icon. Or perhaps old file paths should now be re-linked to display training material for the new CRM instead. The old clicking patterns no longer produce the old results. For an example of Stimulus Control, think about discouraging reliance on old CRM spreadsheets by limiting access to those files to only a few designated administrators.

Finally, Reinforcement Management will be key in recognizing power users and your org-wide celebrations of successes. Both big and small wins are important here, as is acknowledging all the Helping Relationships and champions who have helped make this change possible every step of the way.

By focusing on the right processes, you move beyond simply telling people to change and delve into the **why** behind the **how** of change. You address the underlying psychological factors that drive behavior and create a more personalized and effective change management strategy. You go from simply telling people to change to actually **helping** (and managing) the change.

The Beautiful Chaos

Remember, the whole point of the TTM is that change is not a straight, predictable line. So, if you're truly ready to embrace this model, you should also be prepared for a healthy dose of chaos. This section is your guide to navigating that beautiful, messy reality—because even the best-laid plans will encounter a few (or many) problems. Some things to watch out for:

Misdiagnosing the Stage	Ignoring the Individual	Applying the Wrong Processes	Forgetting About Maintenance	Overcomplicating Things
<p>One of the biggest mistakes new practitioners make is misjudging where people are in the Stages of Change. It's easy to assume everyone is ready to run with the new system simply because it's been announced. Don't rely on assumptions or messages from leadership to simply plow ahead. Make use of surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations to get a clear picture of the state of readiness across the organization (and remember, you'll likely uncover pockets of people in each stage all at once!).</p>	<p>Similar to the above, remember that each person's journey through a change is unique. Some might move through the stages quickly, while others will take their time. Some might respond better to one early-stage process, while a different early-stage process will work best with others. Offer a variety of resources and support options to cater to varying needs and preferences.</p>	<p>Using Reinforcement Management for someone still completely unaware of the need for change will be ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst. Remember, things like Consciousness-Raising and Dramatic Relief are great tools for early stages. Meanwhile, Counterconditioning and Stimulus Control are great interventions for teams that feel ready to take action.</p>	<p>Many change initiatives focus on the initial rollout and then assume inertia will take over. They celebrate the initial adoption of the new behavior but forget about the crucial Maintenance stage (some practitioners of the TTM include a sixth stage: Elapse where returning to old behavior is an anticipated event). Be sure you provide continued support, reinforcement, and resources. All significant changes should be thought of as marathons, not sprints.</p>	<p>TTM can seem daunting at first, but it doesn't have to be overly complex. Focus on the core principles and adapt them to your specific context. Don't get bogged down in jargon or try to implement every single process. Keep it simple, practical, and focused on the desired outcomes.</p>

Troubleshooting isn't just about fixing problems. It's also about fostering dialogue and building buy-in, not just for the change itself but also for the process you use to manage it. Be sure to communicate clearly and consistently about your change management plans and even the TTM model you use to guide it. Explain its rationale, address any skepticism about its therapeutic origins (emphasizing that human behavior is human behavior, regardless of context), and highlight its proven effectiveness. Make sure to listen and respond thoughtfully to your team's feedback. A two-way street of communication, including open discussion of and about the TTM, is essential for navigating the complexities we all face.

The Conclusion

So, there you have it. We've journeyed through the messy, unpredictable, and ultimately human landscape of change. We've explored the Stages of Change and armed you with the essential tools—the Processes of Change—to navigate that terrain more effectively.

The goal of this ebook was not to give you yet another change management framework. We hope to offer something far more valuable: a process for understanding and influencing human behavior regardless of the larger models or acronyms you might be working within. Change isn't just about what needs to happen; it's about how to help people get there by providing the right support at the right time.

Knowing is only half the battle (consider your self-consciousness raised!). The real challenge lies in taking action. So what do you think? Are you at the Action stage in your journey yet? Are you approaching the edge of Contemplation?

You might be surprised what help is available, even for those just contemplating changing their change-management practices. ELB Learning specializes in helping organizations sort through their own contemplations, and navigate the complexities of change. We do everything from helping assess team readiness to actively deploying change-management strategies and ROI-driven training programs.

Don't let your next change initiative become another statistic. Don't lose your momentum to the forces of resistance and confusion. Let us help you by deploying the proven practices explained here. If you're ready to supercharge your change management efforts, visit our website at elblearning.com for a free consultation.



Let's make change happen!