



Each year when January 1<sup>st</sup> rolls around, we think about New Year's resolutions. So this winter's newsletter focuses on change. Since good health depends on living a healthy lifestyle, resolutions often focus on making positive lifestyle changes.

### **Are You Ready for Change?**

Everyone is in a different place when it comes to change. Some of us are ready to take action right away and others aren't. According to Dr. James Prochaska, a behavioural change expert, there are 6 stages of change. That's why it's important to know where you stand! As research shows, when health programs are designed around the 6 stages of change, they are much more likely to be successful. So, your best chances at making a lasting change are made when you apply change strategies that target where you're at.



### **The Stages of Change**

1. **Pre-contemplation.** This is the stage where a person first starts thinking about making a change, but sees it happening at some point in the future. Smokers often stay in this stage for years, knowing they want to quit, but never setting a specific date.
2. **Contemplation stage.** People in this stage are thinking about making a change in the near future, usually within 3-6 months. People who break their New Year's Resolutions may be in this stage when they begin and not really ready to take action.
3. **Preparation stage.** This is where people plan to make a change soon. In this stage, people look for advice, or ask their friends about a smoking cessation program, or a diet plan or a good gym to join. When it comes to New Year's resolutions, these are the people who are more likely to succeed because they're ready to move into the action stage.

4. **Action Stage.** Once someone has reached the action stage, the real commitment begins. And once the commitment to change is made, it is time to move! This is where you'll need your specific and individualized plan to help you make a positive change that will stick. During the action stage, it is imperative to keep stress levels in check with appropriate stress management tools since the number one reason why people relapse is stress!
5. **Maintenance stage.** Once change has been made, it is important to remember the dangers of relapsing into old behaviours. Maintenance is not a time to sit back and relax; it is actually an active stage where you need to be proactive and realistic about setbacks and triggers. Maintaining the change over the long haul is the hardest job of all. That's why having support both before, during and after you've made a change is so helpful.



### **Not Quite Ready to Take Action?**

For those of you who have a behaviour that you'd like to change, but aren't yet ready to take action – you're not alone! Many people get overwhelmed with the idea of changing and become stuck in the contemplation stage.

### **Why People Get Stuck:**

#### **a) The search for absolute certainty**

Often people hope that the problem will go away while they are thinking about it and researching it, or they hope they will eventually find enough pieces to the puzzle to complete the picture and make change happen easily.





- b) Waiting for the magic moment** – Waiting until “the time is right” or “when I’m good and ready” or “when things slow down” to make a change. But when will the time be right? When will you ever be 100% ready? And of course, things never slow down unless you actively slow them down yourself!
- c) Wishful thinking** – Wishful thinkers want to go on living as they always have, but with different consequences. For example, “I wish I could eat whatever I want and not gain weight,” “I wish I could drink as much as I like and not lose control,” “I wish I could work a seventy-hour week and spend lots of time with my children.”

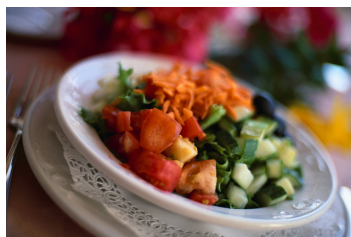
“Wishful thinking is passive and external. Hope, by contrast, is active and realistic. Hoping demands that you envision your success, and then work toward it.”

– Dr. James Prochaska in his book *Changing for Good*

- d) Premature action** – Despite the traps of the contemplation stage, a period of contemplation prior to preparing for action is essential for lasting and meaningful self-change.

### How to Move Forward in Making Healthy Changes

- 1. Ask the right questions.** For example, “how many calories should I consume daily, and from what types of foods?” “How much exercise do I need to do?” “What effects does nicotine withdrawal have on my body and behaviour?” A Naturopathic doctor is well equipped to answer these questions for you.
- 2. Define your own goals.** Ask yourself: “Exactly what behaviour(s) do I wish to change?” “How can I measure and track my progress?” If you can’t think of a way to measure your progress, the chances are good that your goal is too vague.



### Make change a priority

Since we lead such busy lives, intentional change cannot happen unless it is given a prominent place on our list of goals. Change requires energy, effort and attention. And successful change means change that is sustained over time – not months, but years, decades, a lifetime.

As a Naturopathic doctor, one of my main roles is to support patients in making healthy lifestyle changes. That means giving you the appropriate information, emotional and physical support, and motivation you need to help make those important positive changes.



Consider starting 2010 off on the right foot by making a commitment to yourself! If there’s a change you’d like to make, I would be honoured to help you make it a reality! Please see the “Programs” section of our website ([www.wholehealthtoronto.com](http://www.wholehealthtoronto.com)) to see how Naturopathic medical care can support you in improving your health and wellness.

Wishing you all the best for a happy and healthy year,  
*Dr. Amanda Guthrie, ND*

#### Edamame Guacamole

1 cup shelled edamame (about 12 oz. unshelled)  
½ cup unflavored soy milk  
2 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro (coriander), without stems  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 large ripe avocado  
2 tsp. fresh lime juice  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Cook edamame in salted boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain and cool to room temperature. Combine edamame, soy milk, 1 tbsp. cilantro, and garlic in food processor. Process until mixture is very smooth, about 3 minutes. Set aside. Peel and seed avocado and place in a medium mixing bowl. Add lime juice and mash with a fork, leaving small chunks. Add edamame mixture and stir just to combine. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with remaining 1 tbsp. cilantro.

*Note: This delicious imposter has 30 percent fewer calories and fat than traditional guacamole—plus more protein, greater nutrient diversity, and lots of isoflavones.*

*Serving size=2 tbsp. (16 servings)*

*39 calories, 3 g carbohydrates, 3 g protein, 2 g fat per serving*