

# BREAKING BAD... HABITS!

## 4 Steps to Implement and Sustain Change



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Judy Kay Mausolf is a speaker, author, and dental culture specialist with expertise in helping others get happier and more successful. She coaches dentists and their teams how to become better leaders, communicate effectively, work together better and deliver service with more focus and passion. She is past President of National Speakers Association (Minnesota Chapter), Director of Sponsoring Partners for the Speaking Consulting Network and a member of the National Speakers Association and Academy of Dental Management Consultants and recognized as a leader in consulting by Dentistry Today. She is author of three books; "TA-DAH, Delivering W.O.W. Service, and "Rise & Shine!", and a contributing author for many dental magazines. She also publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Show Your Shine". Judy Kay lives in MN with her husband Steve and Zoe, her 7-pound Yorkie.

*"I Am a Habit!"*

*I am your constant companion.  
I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden.  
I will push you onward or drag you down to failure.  
I am completely at your command.  
Half the things you do might just as well be turned over to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.  
I am easily managed – you must merely be firm with me.  
Show me exactly how you want something done and after a few lessons I will do it automatically.  
I am the servant of all great people and, alas, of all failures, as well.  
Those who are great, I have made great.  
Those who are failures, I have made failures.  
I am not a machine, though I work with all the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a person.  
You may run me for profit or run me for ruin – it makes no difference to me.  
Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet.  
Be easy with me and I will destroy you.  
Who am I?  
I am a habit!"*

*~ Author unknown*

All the good intentions and great ideas in the world will not make a difference if they are not sustainable. The challenge with change and implementing something new is it often takes longer to complete. We must think about how and what we are doing. It can feel uncomfortable and awkward, and we can no longer operate on automatic pilot. The minute we feel stressed or work gets chaotic we have the tendency to revert to old habits. That is why if we wish to sustain change long term, we must commit to the action/

behaviour until it becomes a habit.

I have the awesome privilege of helping dental teams nationwide cultivate a happier, healthier, and higher performing culture. I utilize the R.I.S.E. Process (a four-step process) to help them not only create but also sustain their improved culture results. I have found the same process works awesome for achieving individual goals as well. R.I.S.E. is an acronym for Review, Implement, Sustain and Evaluate. So here is how to apply my four-step R.I.S.E. Process to implement and sustain change.

## R IS FOR REVIEW!

Review the core business values defined by the owner doctors. What 4 words in order of priority describe the business core values and purpose? Would other people be able to recognize those values in your practice? For example, my four core words in order of priority are: Lifter, Authentic, Happy, and Committed. They are important to know because they will help guide the entire team in decision making. They also will help team know how they are expected to show up as every day. Have a team meeting and review what you are currently doing and WIIFTPPT (what's in it for the patients, the practice and the team) if you implement this new change.

## I IS FOR IMPLEMENT!

Define the implementation process by clarifying the following details: what, who, when, where, why and how.

- **What** area(s) do you want to change or grow? Prioritize if you have several areas. Start with the area that will make the biggest impact.
- **Who** can help you? Who is out there already successfully doing what you want to do? Who is a potential mentor? What books or blogs are available on the subject? Also, who on the team will do it and for which patients.
- **When** will you do it? It is important to schedule time to fit it in to your day, week, month, and year or it will not happen.
- **Where** will you do it? Do you need a specific location to achieve the

results you desire?

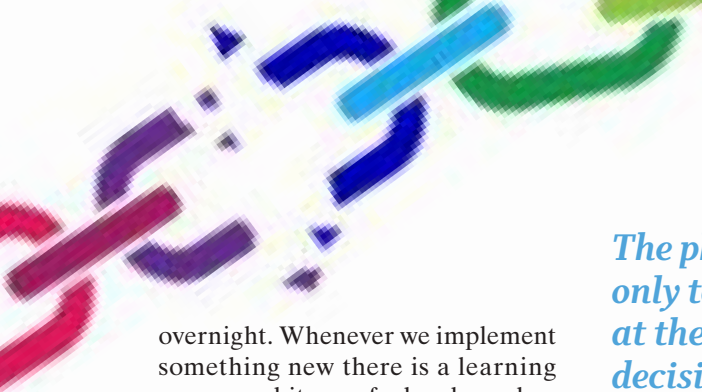
- **Why** will you do it? This is the most important part to successfully sustain growth. What is it that will motivate you to continue to do the new behavior when you do not feel like it or you are pressed for time? It must be a big enough why. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being high it must rate and 8 or above in value. Otherwise, the chances of sustaining the new habit are greatly reduced.
- **How** will you do it? Clearly spell out the attitude, mindset and action steps will you need to take to be able to succeed.

## S IS FOR SUSTAIN!

This is the most important step! Be realistic and be consistent. Ask yourself is it realistic to accomplish the new protocol with the current team, time allowed, equipment available and current training etc. If not, address the roadblocks. Once all roadblocks have been addressed you are ready to implement. Consistency is a must and expected by all. Old habits die hard, and we may need an occasional reminder. Continue doing the same process over and over until it becomes so automatic it becomes a habit. Do not expect it to happen

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overnight. Whenever we implement something new there is a learning curve, and it may feel awkward or uncomfortable. The time it takes to learn something new to the time it becomes a habit is the transition period. The average time of a transition period is 66 days. Precise and consistent repetition helps to shorten the transition period. Informing the team that the discomfort is temporary during the transition period will help them to persevere. The phrase, “Change is painful,” is true, but it is only temporary! Once it is a habit you are no longer at the mercy of your emotions when making the decision of whether to do it or not. You will not even think about it you will just do it!

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## **E** IS FOR EVALUATE.

Schedule regular check-ups. I suggest quarterly team meetings (in addition to regular monthly team meetings) dedicated to discussing what is working and what is not with your systems and protocols. Our life, the people in our life and our circumstances continue to change. Evaluation will help you diagnose to continue to enhance and grow. What is working what has changed? What would benefit the practice, patients, and team

most? Sometimes what we thought would work doesn't. Maybe, it is time to try a new approach or a new path. There is more than one way.

Implement these four steps to implement and sustain change to help you R.I.S.E. to success. The sky's the limit! 

*Please email me, [judykay@practiceresolutionsinc.net](mailto:judykay@practiceresolutionsinc.net) if you would like white pages for the R.I.S.E. Process and Core Value Words Sample.*

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