

Behaviour change experiment for becoming conscientious



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Personal Behavior Change

Behavior change is never an easy task and calls for discipline and patience. A successful behavior change requires more effective tools for, trial and error with different techniques and goal setting. Change is a process, and before it is fully attained, an individual is more likely to repeat unpleasant behaviors (Martin & Pear, 2015). Often times, individuals become discouraged and give up on their goals as they seek to change unpleasant behaviors. Many behaviorist psychologists propose the techniques that can help an individual to stay motivated in the process of behavior change. According to Tolman, a behavior is purposive and is guided by expectancies. An individual should, therefore, find ways that influence and guide their goals and expectations (Lefrancois, 2012, p. 175). The following review focuses on my personal behavior change, the strategies to be implemented to help attain the desired behavior and the consequential results.

I have always admired conscientious leaders like Barack Obama who demonstrate enduring patterns of responsibility, great planning and being super organized regardless of the situation and the challenges. By looking at the great works of these admirable individuals, I am convinced that conscientiousness is an essential ingredient for success. For this reason, therefore, I wish to become conscientious, and I will do whatever it takes to attain conscientiousness. In my journey of life, I have had various ups and downs, made blunders after blunders and even suffered out of my own sheer stupidity because I lack conscientiousness. According to the “ Big Five” model, conscientiousness makes up for one of the big five personality traits that are exhibited by wildly successful individuals in different spheres of life

<https://assignbuster.com/behaviour-change-experiment-for-becoming-conscientious/>

(Roberts et al. 2014). By being conscientious, I have to be organized, punctual, systematic, dependable and more goal-oriented in my motives.

A trait that I have always exhibited is being less cautious when doing things and a bit disorderly, a habit that being conscientious will modify and I am convinced that this has made me less dependable in many instances. I have been easy going and even threw less caution to the wind when doing my day-to-day activities. By being less goal-oriented and less hardworking, I have scored low on conscientiousness. I, however, need to be more focused and careful when doing things. Doing things haphazardly has costed me in many counts and is the very essence for some failures I could have avoided. I, therefore, intend to practice conscientiousness in each and every activity that I pursue.

B. F Skinner, in his Operant Conditioning theory, argued that learning is a function of change in overt behavior. He mentioned that behavior change could only occur if someone responds to events that occur in the environment. According to Skinner, a behavior with unpleasant outcome is less likely to be repeated while a behavior with pleasant consequences is likely to be repeated (Blackman, 2017). In my case, therefore, I have encountered failure on numerous counts by being less conscientious. In many instances, I have had to work under pressure and even beat deadlines because of lack of planning and being unsystematic. I fail to plan in advance, and as a consequence of this, I do my things at the last minute rush, and this has costed the outcomes of the things I do. For instance, I fail to plan earlier and revise for my exams prior to the day of the exam. By beginning being conscientious, I will be more organized, focused and systematic and avoid <https://assignbuster.com/behaviour-change-experiment-for-becoming-conscientious/>

last minute rush which has been the very essence of my failure to meet the desired expectations.

3-week strategy plan for being conscientious

An experiment by Skinner on factors influencing behavior showed that positive and negative reinforcements influence the probability of a habit being repeated or not. A number of behaviors can be learned from their consequences (Blackman, 2017). In my case, I would apply both positive and negative reinforcement to be conscientious. Positive reinforcement strengthens behaviors with rewarding consequences. I would, therefore, establish several motivators that will strengthen conscientiousness. For instance, I will create a schedule that I will ensure I adhere to the latter. If I adhere to the schedules and do things within the allocated timelines, I will reward myself with a favorite dish, a trip to my favorite destination and any other presents that I value and cherish most. For every conscientious act attained, I will reward myself, and this will make me repeat similar behaviors within the three weeks and even in the future. Douglas McGregor in his Theory X mentioned that human beings are lazy, do not like to work and therefore like motivation (Aithal & Kumar, 2016). I would ensure that I put motivators in place that keep me going every time I think of quitting. I also intend to put negative reinforcements in place to remove undesirable behaviors that result in unpleasant consequences. If I fail to meet the deadlines, then I won't get the reward.

Learning is a continuous process and takes time. Nothing good comes the easy way and calls for dedication, orderliness, and self-discipline. I will not

depend so much on the reinforcements but have self-discipline. I will make daily plans for the next three weeks. These plans will be divided into three; week 1, week 2 and week 3. By setting my own schedule and following through it, I become more organized and focused. I will see to it that I avoid distractions that will deviate my focus from set schedules. I will focus on the specifics of the schedules and avoid less significant things that are not placed in the daily plans. The plan will be followed week-by-week until the three weeks are over. I know that I am not naturally conscientious and to avoid the temptation of straying off course; therefore, I will put reminders in place. The daily plans will be accompanied by set targets and I will be doing an evaluation at the end of the week to find out my attainments, mistakes and areas that need improvement.

Being conscientious calls for support from other people. I will, therefore, establish a network of friends and family that we share similar goals or who can help encourage me to attain my goal of being conscientious. The network of friends and family will serve as reminders by reminding me about the time and target, serve as positive reinforcements through encouragements and also help identify areas of weakness that will need improvement.

By working with people, it is easy for one to uphold commitments and have an internal locus of control knowing that other people other people are looking upon them (Barnard & Teasdale, 2014). Knowing that you are committed to other people enhances an individual's dependability and take responsibility for every course of action taken. Abraham Lincoln is one of the most conscientious leaders in history. He knew that he was committed to the <https://assignbuster.com/behaviour-change-experiment-for-becoming-conscientious/>

people who depended so much on him to abolish slavery. Lincoln, despite leading his country in the most tragic in time in history, remained visionary and focused on his goal of ending slavery. Making a commitment and staying visionary is therefore essential to be conscientious.

With a plan in place, the next essential thing is to cultivate conscientious habits. Embracing good habits help improve the life of an individual in enormous ways (Magidson et al., 2014). I will, therefore, embrace behaviors that benefit me the most and reflect on conscientiousness. Such behaviors that I intend to embrace include being punctual, ensuring formality, honesty and integrity. One must exhibit some personality traits such as honesty, integrity, hard work and demonstrating that you are reliable at all costs possible. Being conscientious begins with simple individual habits. For instance, conscientiousness can be shown by the little things that an individual does such as going to bed with a purposeful dream, waking up with purpose and leaving the room organized by spreading the bed.

Thousands of millionaires interviewed in a Gallup 2018 survey demonstrated common traits in which they all showed that they had organized minds which translates to an overall outlook on their lives.

Mahatma Gandhi states that “ become the change you want to see. “ change begins with me and I do not necessarily need someone to push me around or any other motivation to make me desire to attain the goals. Assuming that there is no form of motivation or persons who motivate and monitor my progress, I will be guided by the desire to be a better me. Nothing can deter the spirit and willingness of a determined mind as long as it knows what it wants. For instance, an eagle retreats to a mountaintop where it plucks its
<https://assignbuster.com/behaviour-change-experiment-for-becoming-conscientious/>

feathers and talons in anticipation for change that will rejuvenate its strength and make it become more vibrant and energetic. An eagle is motivated by own desire to become a better version of itself. No one tells the eagle that by plucking its talons, feathers and cracking its beak against a rock will make it more energetic again. I would, therefore, be self-motivated and not depend on others to be drivers to my success of being conscientious. Human learning and behavior change is all in mind and cannot happen if an individual has not made his mind to modify behavior.

The above-mentioned treatment plan will be applied in sequence. The first important thing to do is to set the goals after which daily plans will be made. The actions will then be pursued, and these actions must exhibit conscientiousness. The network of family and friends will help to check if I have attained the desired goals of conscientiousness. I would then apply positive and negative reinforcements depending on the outcomes of my actions.

Evaluation of the results

Implementation of the three-week strategy plan to becoming conscientious has been very effective though characterized by a number of ups and downs. Implementation of the behavior change program was easy if I had to adhere to the set timelines. Time management was, however, an issue as I would frequently get distracted and pursue other activities that are not within the laid down plans. For instance, I would easily get distracted by checking the social media using my phone, and this would deviate my focus. I, however, tried as much as possible to check on social media once I am done with

whatever set activity I was pursuing. As a consequence of this, I improved my ability to manage time and even spent less time on activities that I previously took more time to complete. I can also tell that the implementation of the strategy was effective as I received several compliments from my established network of friends and family. I improved week by week and by the third week I needed nobody to push me around. I also rewarded myself several presents and even visited a destination of my choice, a clear indication that the strategic plan was effectively implemented. Out of the ten goals set, I managed to achieve seven of them at the end of the third week. I, however, had several areas of weakness that call for improvement next time. I hope I won't find difficulties while making amendments to the few areas identified.

By starting to be conscientious, my performance improved significantly. The success was tremendous and evident. In the course of the three-week, I did a continuous assessment test and my performance was exemplary! I was very prepared and confidently tackled it. Unlike the previous times when I do things at the last-minute rush, this time around I prepared in advance, was more organized and time-bound. I also realized that I achieved so much by being more careful and being a good planner. I have been wasting a lot of time and making mistakes that could have been avoided, but my self-efficacy improved a great deal. My success was not only manifested in my academic performance, but other persons also realized my change in traits and behavior. I was complimented and even requested to lead a group of youth in a community program as I presented the image of a more reliable and dependable person outwardly and by my character traits.

Piaget argued that human development is a process of adaptation (Lefrancois, 2012, p. 207). This conception by Piaget was evidenced in my attempt to self-regulate my behavior. At first, adopting the new behavior was challenging but as the weeks progressed adapting the new behavior became easier. While trying to self-regulate behavior, one has to manage disruptive emotions and impulses. I tried to attain equilibrium in the behavioral change process by maintaining a balance between assimilation and accommodating a changing behavior in response to the environment. I also learnt that one has a choice on how he or she self-regulates behavior and instead of focusing on transient emotions, it is important to focus on deeply held values to attain a desired behavioral change. It is also clear that self-regulating behavior calls for resilience, as making a change or breaking from everyday routine, is tempting. It is however rewarding when one remains resilient.

Unconscious use of learning principles was an idea conceived by Sigmund Freud and involves automatic learning. It is based on automatic thoughts which reflect one's reaction to a given event (Lefrancois, 2012). When I carefully examine my judgments and find the evidence to support them, I find none. My thoughts tend to be automatic in some instances, and this has been advantages and detrimental in some situations. For instance, my automatic thought tells me that I am not worth it, and I have failed, and this makes me feel stupid or even lowers my self-esteem. In essence, this is not, however, the case and the conscious response should have been I was not well-prepared for the task and thus did not perform as I expected.

Cognitivism argues that a person's negative and positive behaviors are shaped by the environment (Lefrancois, 2012, p. 193). I would, therefore, <https://assignbuster.com/behaviour-change-experiment-for-becoming-conscientious/>

associate with persons or events that encourage conscientiousness. The phrase “ you are a reflection of the persons you associate with can justify cognitivism and for this case, I seek to associate with persons that demonstrate conscientiousness, are more organized and display a positive outlook about life regardless of the many challenges they endure. Social cognitive behavior theory, on the other hand, puts forth the premise that new behaviors and knowledge can be obtained when learners observe a model (Augoustinos, Walker & Donaghue, 2014). In this regard, therefore, I intend to modify my behavioral change plan by looking at the habits of wildly successful individuals I admire such as Barack Obama and Lewis Howes and start imitating them. I do not have to be exactly like them but at least emulate the examples of these successful conscientious characters.

References

- Aithal, P. S., & Kumar, P. M. (2016). *Comparative Analysis of Theory X, Theory Y, Theory Z, and Theory A for Managing People and Performance* . Sage.
- Augoustinos, M., Walker, I., & Donaghue, N. (2014). *Social cognition: An integrated introduction* . Sage.
- Barnard, P., & Teasdale, J. (2014). *Affect, cognition and change: Remodelling depressive thought* . Psychology Press.
- Blackman, D. E. (2017). *Operant conditioning: an experimental analysis of behaviour* . Routledge.
- Lefrancois, G. R. (2012). *Theories of human learning* . Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

- Magidson, J. F., Roberts, B. W., Collado-Rodriguez, A., & Lejuez, C. W. (2014). Theory-driven intervention for changing personality: Expectancy value theory, behavioral activation, and conscientiousness. *Developmental psychology* , 50 (5), 1442.
- Martin, G., & Pear, J. J. (2015). *Behavior modification: What it is and how to do it* . Psychology Press.
- Roberts, B. W., Lejuez, C., Krueger, R. F., Richards, J. M., & Hill, P. L. (2014). What is conscientiousness and how can it be assessed? *Developmental Psychology* , 50 (5), 1315.