

## Changing Behaviours: *5 Simple Strategies*



## *“If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a thousand times.”*

If that sounds familiar you probably had a childhood like mine! But it actually has a lot of sense behind it in terms of changing someone’s behaviour.

Most of our workplace behaviours are habits, and habits aren’t easy to break. When we’re trying to change a behaviour in the workplace someone may genuinely want to change and ‘do better’, but as our mothers also told us; *“old habits die hard”*.

When supporting someone to change their behaviour at work - expect them to relapse! When they do gently remind them about the change. If you’re inconsistent about letting them get away with it sometimes and not others - do you have the right to be surprised if they are inconsistent in their behaviour change?

## “One step at a time.”

There’s another phrase I heard my parents say a lot! (I’m beginning to think I undervalued their wisdom). All too often in changing workplace behaviour, managers ask for too many changes at one. Writing in the Harvard Business Review, Katzenbach, Steffen and Kronley pointed out that:

*“People will change their behaviour if they see the new behaviour as **easy**, rewarding and normal”.*

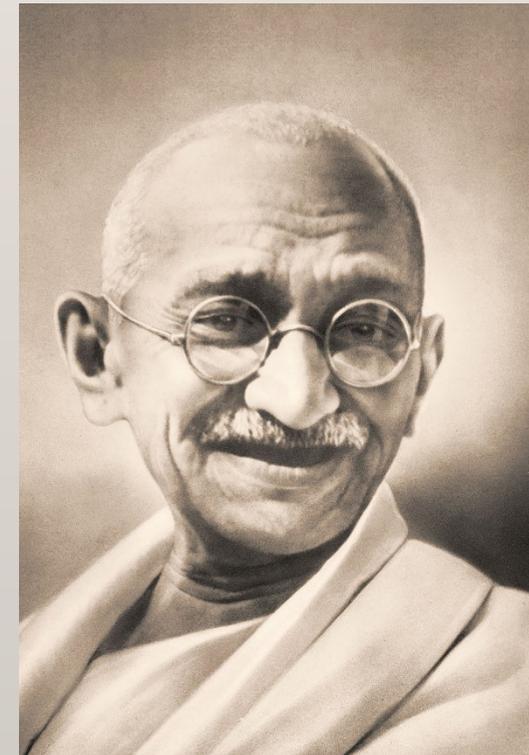
If I were to ask you to change 4 or 5 different behaviours at a time and someone else asked you to work on changing 1 - which one would seem easier?



## *“Be the change you want to see.”*

Wise words, not from my parent this time, but from Gandhi; and highly applicable in terms of changing behaviour in today’s workplaces.

Remember the HBR quote from the last slide? Change has to seem normal. In our brains we have a particular set of neurons called ‘mirror neurons’, the literally lead us to mirror, or copy the behaviour of peers, people we respect. Combine that with that fact that human beings are essentially pack animals and we come to the conclusion that the more YOU and those around you role model the behaviours you desire, the more likely it is that others will adopt them too.



## “The carrot can be mightier than the stick”

OK I made that saying up, but the sentiment holds. Remember the HBR quote - people will change if the new behaviour feels *rewarding*.

If there is a sense that this behaviour gives desired results, and connects to personal values, motivation to change tends to increase. For example, if someone wants to look after their family and we help them see how giving up smoking could give them a longer, healthier life; they will tend to find giving up smoking a rewarding behaviour.

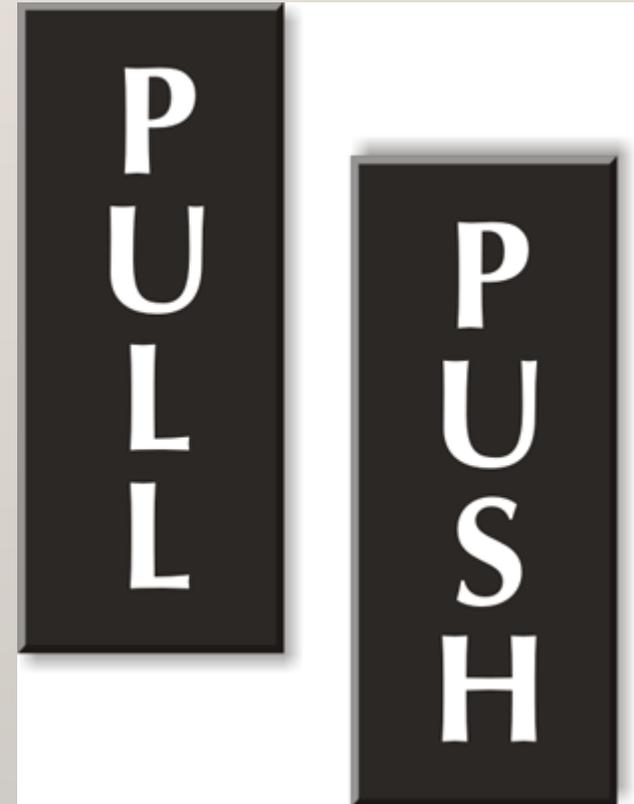
The trick is remembering that it has to feel rewarding to THEM.



## “Pull don’t push.”

The funny thing about humans is we like to resist when people *push* us to do something. (And it’s not just me being stubborn - I’ve checked, 90% of people resist being pushed).

BUT, most of us will go along with something when we are *pulled*. On dealing with difficult people courses, we emphasise that when backed into a course (given no choice), people tend to come out fighting. Give them a choice and they’ll often comply.



We hope you find this useful and it can help you to bring about positive behaviour changes in your workplace!

If this has sparked a thought, touched on an issue or surfaced a problem in your workplace that you would like to explore further then please [contact us](#) for more details on our brain-friendly solutions!

**TJ** Awards

*Finalist*