

## Who Moved My Chair?

Written by Steve Marr  
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Recently my wife rearranged our living room. I tend not to make such adjustments, but over a few weeks; I've come to appreciate the changes that improved flow and work over the previous room configuration. One of the changes was that she moved my chair from one side of the room to the other. For the first few days when I started walking toward my chair, I would instinctively go the wrong way. Even after six weeks, I caught myself taking two or three steps in the wrong direction.

This experience illustrates how developing new habits requires a degree of time. My experience has been that it takes about 90 days to establish a new habit or a change. That's why making an alteration is not necessarily easy. Once we make a change and consistently stick with it for about 90 days, the change tends to become ingrained in our brain and will likely become permanent. However, it is always easy to slide back into a bad habit or a former routine.

When I work with clients in making business changes, I stress the importance of staying focused for the first three months to ensure that the change in behavior becomes an established routine. Though making changes is not always easy, after they become routine; they are easier to maintain. This requires a lot of focus and conscious effort.

Because change requires concentrated effort, I stress with clients that they should not change too many things at once. If we try to make eight to ten different changes in life at the same time, we're typically unable to properly concentrate on each with equal focus. We end up frustrated, toss our hands in the air, give up, and consider our attempts a complete failure.

Peter Drucker, who is the father of modern management in my opinion, taught that the word *priority*

was not a plural word until well into the 20<sup>th</sup>

century. Drucker's perspective was that we need to focus on one thing to get it done quickly,

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thoroughly and completely. Then we can turn to the next key item and give it the same focus. In our current environment, we may not be able to focus only on one item. However, when it comes to life changes; I believe his point is well taken. If we struggle to get to work on time, we need to focus on altering personal schedule and lifestyle as needed to make it possible to get to work as an employer expects. If there is work that we can't finish on time, we need to focus on that work exclusively before moving to the next change.

King Solomon wrote, "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness." (Proverbs 26:11, NLT) In our personal life we may tend to slide back into an old habit which is not be helpful. After reflective prayer that confirms you need to make a change in your business or personal life, focus on one change at a time. I believe this is one reason that New Year's resolutions don't work very well. Too many people try to attempt changing six to eight items, more than most of us can manage. Follow Drucker's advice and focus on one change at a time.

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