



Knowledge and Action Are Needed to Change

Both knowledge and action are needed for change. What does that mean exactly? If you want to change, you must know the right steps to take, but you must also be willing to put that knowledge into action. Both are required.

Knowledge

Suppose you're overweight or obese, and you decide to lose weight. To change yourself. You go to your doctor and ask him how to do this. Will that help?

Probably not. A [study of U.S. physicians](#) found that, in their sample (498 physicians), 53% were overweight or obese.

That means that more than half of doctors either don't know how to lose weight, or lack the will to do so. Given the intense drive and ambition required of people to become physicians, lack of knowledge seems more likely.

If you check the internet or popular diet books, many of these won't have the right knowledge either. If they did, one wouldn't expect a combined overweight/obesity rate of 70%.

The same principle applies to many other areas of life which you might want to change. Generally, the more universal the problem that needs addressing, the more different the opinions you'll find and the more likely it is that those opinions will be wrong; that is, they'll have little relation to reality and won't help you solve the problem.

Some examples of areas where you're likely to get bad information:

- dating and sex relations

- physical fitness
- healthy food
- education
- dressing well.

There are at a couple of reasons that sources may be unreliable: they genuinely don't know the right answers; or they act out of self-interest, i.e. they're corrupt.

Many sources genuinely don't know the right answers. Take the matter of healthy food. For several decades now, medical authorities have told us to eat a low-fat diet for health. It will keep our cholesterol levels low and thus prevent heart disease, they've said. But it turns out that [low-fat diets are associated with higher death rates](#). Oops.

Other sources of information are corrupt.

Take the matter of college education. Asking a college counselor if you need more education is like asking a barber if you need a haircut. Counselors and other college officials are simply not going to recommend that you don't need their expensive product, despite the fact that a degree in gender studies is unlikely to get you a more exalted job than a Starbucks barista.

Corruption is rampant among health authorities too. Many doctors who recommend statins have [lucrative ties to the drug industry](#). Can you believe their recommendations?

In other areas, self-interest isn't necessarily financial. For instance, a man taking dating advice from a woman isn't usually a good idea.

How does one discover whether information is correct or not?

There are a few signs to look for. For example, see whether the person or institution that provides the information benefits from providing it, directly or indirectly. While some will legitimately charge money for good information, if they benefit by telling the population in general to follow their instructions, then be suspicious.

If a source has financial ties to a recommended product, then be careful.

If a source has a bad track record in providing information or in making predictions, or no track record at all, then scrutinize it carefully.

Action

To change oneself, knowledge is not enough. All the knowledge in the world won't help you if you're unwilling to take action and use that knowledge.

Take the overweight or obese person. Assuming he obtains the right knowledge, putting it into practice requires effort and willpower. Reading a book doesn't make fat melt away. When I tell people what I eat, the most common response is "I could never stop eating" whatever it is I tell them I don't

eat.

Likewise in other areas that you want to change.

Inertia is a strong influence in life. Most people prefer to do what they've always done. Habits become ingrained and change can be difficult.

Furthermore, you're influenced by everyone around you. If they all do something one way, for instance if they all eat the same kind of food, dress a certain way, and generally live their lives a certain way, then you're more likely to do that too.

Taking action to change something often requires going against the grain and thinking for yourself. If you worry about what others will think, you're unlikely to make the change you want and need. So don't care about what others think; [they're probably not thinking at all about you anyway](#). People are concerned about themselves, and the idea that you'll be shunned is a phantom.

Only you can take responsibility for yourself and to change. No one else can do it.

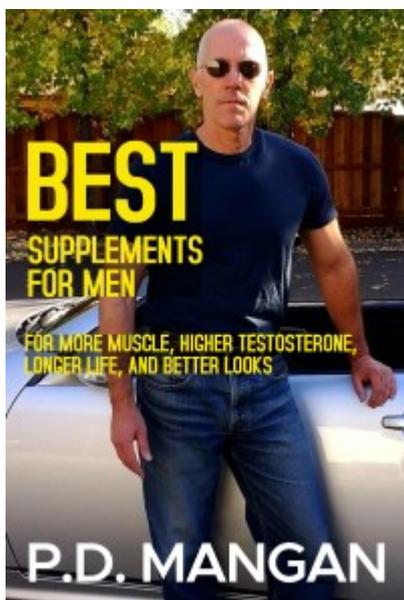
Maybe life hasn't been fair to you, although the concept of fairness applied to life is a dubious one. Even so, only you can make the change.

Conclusion

Skepticism is a virtue, but too much skepticism can be a vice. Be judicious in evaluating whether a source of information is reliable or not. Seek out experts, but scrutinize their integrity.

Take personal responsibility for enacting change. Blame others or circumstances all you want, but that won't help you change.

PS: My most recent book is [Best Supplements for Men](#).



PPS: [Check out my Supplements Buying Guide for Men.](#)