



Day Crafting

The Change Workbook



**Daily practice for
growth, identity and
behaviour change**

By **Bruce Stanley**

- Exploring intentional change and resilience
- Applying design thinking to habit and behaviour change
- Daily progress on character and identity shaping
- *See inside for more ...*

The Change Workbook

Your time in the Day Crafting workshop so far has been methodical, following some of the suggestions in the **Introductory Workbook** and any other specialist workbooks to understand and balance your days. This specialist workbook builds on the diagnostic tools in the Introductory Workbook and takes you deeper into the practice – we move from systematic to unknown territories of invention and the unfamiliar.

This workbook continues from wherever you are (you don't *need* to have read any of the other *specialist* workbooks) but with a more challenging and personally demanding subject matter – **change**.

I feel obliged to call change *difficult*, but it is also where innovation, adventure and creation happen. The new and novel can be rich sources of delight and meaning for us. This is where the craftsperson addresses the stifling side-effects of a balanced practice that becomes boring and habitual.

Use change to keep your life exciting and create more Remarkable Days. Use change to rewire your self-talk to be more confident and less stressed. Use what you can learn about change to be less fearful of the future.

This workbook is the **last in the apprentice series**. The Introductory Workbook covers the powerful foundational skills of the craft. The Body-clock, Productivity and Self-care Workbooks deepen the practice in specific / optional ways and this final workbook shows the apprentice how to make something new from their skills. In it, you'll find information on habits and behaviour design, as well as material on the importance of rituals and identity change.



The **end of history illusion** is the idea that all of the significant changes, growth and adaptations you'll experience lie in your past, but from here onwards, no more change is required; you and your circumstances are fixed. Sorry to break it to you, but ...

The next step is change

Despite the dream of arriving at stable circumstances, where not even the slightest inkling for improvement would occur to us, we never really stop changing. Days and Moments can be crafted around **being** rather than **becoming**, but we're never far from the impulse to adapt, modify, or improve. Occasionally, I reach the end of a *Remarkable Day* thinking this day couldn't have been improved (changed) – days like this should be our *apprentice pieces*, but they're not *every day*. Remarkable Days are important aspects of the story of who we are, but days full of problem-solving, growth and achievement are critical for a flourishing life.

Change is constant, if that isn't an oxymoron, as are the absorbing and distracting cognitive and emotional states accompanying it. Change can mean an unpleasant but necessary adaptation, or an inspiring call on our creativity and problem-solving. Even if we don't *pursue* change, it'll be *required* of us as our circumstances shift. We've never been at a point of stability for very long, so change is an ever-present topic in the Day Crafting workshop.

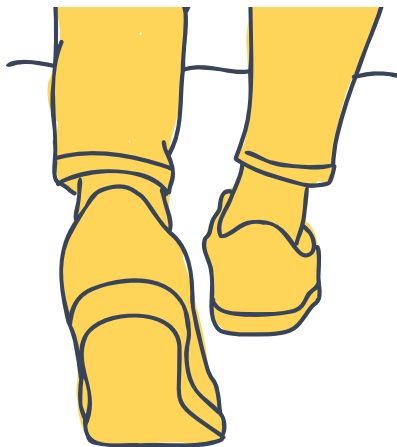
A desire for something better can prompt change or to move away from something worse. If we ever find ourselves in stable circumstances, we would probably invent the need for change to alleviate boredom.



What drives change for you? Do you **dread** it as you're pushed out of your comfort zone, or do you **relish** the growth process and promise of better things?

If you follow the most basic pattern in the practice of Day Crafting, **design – craft – review**, then change is part of the learning cycle as you seek to improve; *it is the next step*. Wanting to improve, trying something new, or adapting all require change.

The Introductory Workbook, *which explores balance*, complements this one, which explores **dealing with imbalance**. Change is the deliberate causing and solving of imbalance, or the reaction to imbalances that happen to us; the changes we choose and the change that chooses us.



Change draws on our resources of energy and time. It destabilises our **maintenance**, challenges our **quality of inner life**, places new demands on the **quality of our actions and behaviour** and resonates (not always harmoniously) with our **purpose**. The tension for the Day Crafter is to find the effective position between these two states of balance and change, the effective zone for change just outside our comfort (*where little changes*). Use what you have learned from your practice to increase your tolerance for the demands that change brings.

What counts as change

Throughout Day Crafting, I've emphasised the practice of small experiments that *don't* destabilise us. The process of making daily Meaningful Progress is hugely impactful to our wellbeing. However, the change I am exploring in *this* workbook is different. Not the *gradual* change we hardly notice (ageing, gaining experience, learning, adapting) but more *conscious* and *deliberate* change – stopping an unhealthy habit, starting a new self-care routine, changing underlying identity rules that lead to busyness and how to respond to big life changes – even making more of the rites of passage that are significant milestones marking change. Change also means taking on new challenges and experiences.

What might be involved?

This is more than a workbook about habits; it covers many more tools, techniques and ideas. Habit formation is a tool for basic nonconscious change, but other more complex tools that require conscious attention, such as *routines*, *rituals* and even *ceremonies*, are suggested. The emphasis of this workbook, as always, is on your practice and your construction of your learning journey.

The Day Crafting perspective

Change across time can follow different trajectories, for example:

Coping: Something negative happens and we slowly adapt.

Step: Dramatic *step* change that happens quickly.



Turbulent: Change takes us through big ups and downs.

Gradual: Slow, incremental change that's hardly noticeable.

There are many other possible graphs and most of us have experience of a wide variety. Regardless of the trajectory across time, in Day Crafting terms the focus is at the *working surface*, on the day we are in. Our attention is here because this is where we're crafting change, step by incremental step. Change may become easier if we make the **process** more important than the **product**. The follow-up question is:

How do I practice the daily process of change skilfully?



Specific days during change can be somewhere between (predictably) **simple** and **complex**, or (unpredictably) **erratic**.

Days can be ...

Simple ● ————— ● Complex ● Erratic

If the change is turbulent then the days may be complex or erratic where very little seems to be under control and energy maintenance is hard. The days might be simple if change is gradual or even a managed step change. Days during a more protracted change process might vary between all of these.

Simple, complex and *erratic* days need different Day Crafting skills and time and energy managing strategies. Diligent Preparation is the foundation for skilful daily practice.

I want to bring about or cope with change around me what do I do?

You will find a lot of building blocks here but not, at first, a *prescription* of how to use those blocks. These are resources for you to apply and experiment with as you see the need, but the section ends with a **change design canvas** that you can use to bring together all of the content so far.



Start with reflection

Some changes can be inconsequential and carried out on a whim, but if you're considering something more important and possibly irreversible, a time of reflection is wise. Essential aspects of reflection time are thinking about a possible change from different cognitive perspectives (rational, logical, creative, wild) and in various emotional states – particularly away from hot emotions.

During reflection we're answering three critical questions

- 1. What to change and why**
- 2. How to carry out the change**
- 3. Deciding whether to go for it, making the commitment**

I'm assuming you may already have some answers but if you'd like to go further into the *first* of these questions, here are two exercises (old school and Day Crafting) to push your thinking.



Free-form journalling prompts for change ideas

1. Every New Year's, I resolve to ...
2. I'd be absolutely fantastic at ...
3. I think I could really be ...
4. One thing everyone's tried, but me is ...
5. If I weren't scared, I would ...
6. My dream is to ...
7. If I could change one thing in my life, it would be ...
8. I really wish I would no longer ...
9. If I won the big one, I would ...
10. If success were guaranteed, I would ...

S, M, L, XL size change

Change comes in various sizes and if you're the one choosing, consider which is best for you. How do you decide the right scale for a change project? We can use the example of switching to a healthier, more sustainable diet.

A **small change** could be cooking from whole ingredients once or twice weekly. A **medium change** could be adding meat-free days. The **large change** could be switching to a diet 95% free from ultra-processed and planet-unfriendly foods. What could the **XL** change be? Growing your own? Become a locavore or vegetarian?

Depending on the change, the choice of size matters and the small option, often recommended, isn't *always* the right choice.

	Pluses	Minuses
Small	Non-threatening, test the water, gain confidence with easy wins.	Not enough difference or benefits to be motivated to work on the change.
Medium	Balanced approach with noticeable impact, some sense of achievement.	May use insufficient effort to achieve change against resistance.
Large	Motivated by what seems like an ambitious aim with big wins.	Feeling discouragement as this seems like too much of a challenge.
X Large	Radical transformation with maximum benefits, if fully committed	Extremely challenging with high risks, requiring all your resources.

Designing for optimum motivation

Small, slow, low-risk change is a good way to build confidence and motivation. The XL, one-way-ticket, bridge-burning change forces you to stick with it because there is no way back; you're all in, but your designed change can be a combination of sizes.



HMI design change to maximise motivation? How can I break the change into small milestones and build on quick wins?

(For *How Might I*, see Introductory Workbook page 18).

Metrics and milestones

Measuring your progress through change has three clear benefits. It tells you if change is actually happening, it gives you feedback so you can course correct and it fuels motivation, especially during slow incremental change. If we're focusing on the daily process, we don't see the big shifts, so we need an encouraging way to make our own good news headlines worth celebrating.

What defines a good metric?

- It should be a quick **rate** or **ratio**, ideally quantifiable. It has to be simple, quick to use, or even automatic, or you won't bother.
- It has to be an **actionable** metric. This means that you should only measure something you can affect.
- It has to measure only what **matters**, something you care about. We must know, 'What would I do with this information if I had it?'. If confused, don't measure it. What will you do differently based on changes in the number? If you don't know, it's a bad metric.

Visual and Playful ways to measure progress: sticker chart, progressively adding to a drawing or paint by numbers canvas, counting pasta, stones or buttons into a jar, extending a paper chain, slowly completing a puzzle, stringing beads, making an origami sculpture park, taking a photo each time, marking places on a map, knitting a scarf a few rows at a time.

Progress plateaus

Sometimes, the metric is critical, such as a sales target, fitness goal, or skill improvement. If you're relying on *progress* to be what encourages you, it's essential to realise that often, carefully measured metrics don't go up consistently; often, they plateau (and sometimes they go down). These may be good opportunities to review and improve your practice and trajectory, but frequently, even if you're doing everything right, *expect plateaus in progress* and don't allow them to derail your sense of purpose and progress.



Urge surfing

Day Crafting advocates Preparation over self-control and self-discipline. Preparation minimizes the need for self-control by making the desired actions easier and it reduces Moments of decision where our rider's *sensible* options can easily lose to the elephant's *impulsive* ones. But Preparation doesn't eliminate the need for self-control altogether and here's a technique that can strengthen our self-control [rider-control] when we need it.



Tool: Urge Surfing



When I get tempted to indulge in a bad habit, I want to manage or resist the urge so I can make healthier choices, reinforce my self-control and feel proud of the outcome.

What is it:

Urge surfing is a technique where you imagine your urge as a wave that you can ride out. Instead of giving in immediately, you tell yourself, **maybe, but not yet**. You decide to wait for 10 minutes (or so) and see if the urge is still as strong. More often than not, it will have dissipated; the elephant will have moved on.

Use it to:

Recognise, when you are experiencing an urge, without judgment. Acknowledge its presence and accept that it's happening. Imagine the urge as a wave that rises in intensity, peaks and then crashes. By saying, *maybe*, you're not setting up an internal battle. Sometimes, you may give in, but the practice gradually builds your ability to manage for longer in the future.

If you practice urge surfing regularly, with easier temptations, it can increase your resilience and ability to manage harder to resist cravings. Using this tool and observing yourself as you use it, can teach you a lot about the hot emotions and demands of the elephant and how they can dissipate relatively quickly.

Also, *this gets easier with age*.

Habits and rituals are explored here as tools (amongst many) in the context of designed or managed change. They can, of course, also be used in many other contexts unrelated to change.

Identity is not permanent

It is easy to imagine changing our *behaviour*, but many of us consider our more profound sense of self and *identity* to be fixed and unchanging. We may see ourselves as static beings having *arrived* at an understanding of *ourselves*, shaped by experiences, environment, circumstance and even our genes. However, a liberating body of evidence shows that our identity, from which much of our behaviour flows, can be moulded and crafted. Our character can be developed, allowing us to become freer, happier and open to more possibilities in our days.

So far we've contrasted **behaviour** and **identity** [page 15] as broad levels we can approach change. Here is a quick definition of further distinctions between related identity concepts.

Related terms: **Personality** means behavioural dispositions, expressions and responses. **Beliefs** are deeper, almost automatic, cognitive constructs and frameworks that shape our perceptions, reactions and responses. **Identity** is our self-concept in relation to the world and our sense of purpose and belonging. This is an oversimplification but when I refer to *identity*, I am also including elements of the *belief* definition.

Our identity shapes our behaviour and mindset. We tend to behave in ways that align with our self-image, so if we want to change our behaviour, one option is to shape our identity. It works the other way too; as we modify our actions, our identity shifts. Each time we manage to stick to a new behaviour or habit, it can be a vote towards changing our sense of identity. E.g. I started *running* (or reading, playing the piano), now I am a *runner* (reader, musician) the behavioural *verb* becomes the identity *noun*. Identity change is both a cause of and a result of behavioural change.

Fixed or free?

Our identities naturally evolve in response to the continuing shaping experiences listed above, but can we proactively set out to change our identity? The answer depends on your mindset, whether *you* see identity as *fixed* or *changeable*.



Many popular personality or typing tests give results that not only restrict identity to binary distinctions (introvert / extrovert) but reinforce superficial, overly simplistic definitions of self. The most restricting sense, from these test results, is that this is who you are and will always be and that your behaviour can be predicted to follow the definitions in the results. Our identities and resulting behaviour can change across a day depending on circumstance, energy and social context – we're *not* fixed as 1 of 16 *types* forever.

What do you think about identity change?

If this inspires you, explore your motivation and ideas.

Why might you want to explore identity change?

- Desire for personal growth
- Help through life transitions
- Dissatisfaction with current self
- Inspired to become more like another
- Improve Connections with others
- A fresh start or escape from past mistakes
- Greater confidence and self-worth
- Break free from habits, behaviours or labels



What would identity development mean and enable for you?



Rites of Passage

Identity Change in Connection

A handful of our days should be remarkable, becoming the highlights in the story of who we are. We remember them because they contain memorable Moments. Rites of passage are particularly significant *remarkable days* that mark identity changes.

A rite of passage is an experience that marks a transition from one significant life stage or social status to another, or marks a challenge overcome. It could take the form of a ritual, ceremony or longer multi-day retreat and incorporates three distinct stages.

- 1. Separation:** We move out from our current identity and context, creating internal and external distance. The familiar, habitual and routine is stripped away.
- 2. Transformation:** We experience and inhabit a liminal space where we are neither who we were nor who we're becoming. Our attention is present and focused in this space and the new identity components are highlighted and internalised.
- 3. Incorporation:** We are reintegrated into our community with a renewed sense of self, witnessed and supported by others. Through our meaningful social Connections, our new identity is recognised and validated.

The identity change may be quick if the new identity traits have been latent within us for some time, waiting to *become*. The change is more than a title or qualification; there is a shift in wisdom, confidence, responsibility, self-assurance and self-respect. As our purpose and QIL change, so does our QAB. Social acknowledgement is vital as it confirms that change is not just internal and personal but external and relational. Ideally those around us create a supportive expectation that helps us see ourselves, and behave in, a new way.

The essence of this transformation is more than symbolic; it is an active change in how we perceive our roles, responsibilities and future. The objective isn't about the steps taken or the actions performed but about what is felt and how the community relates to us through and beyond the rite. Common celebration days (becoming parents, naming ceremonies, significant birthdays, graduation, welcoming new hires or promotions, marriage, retirement, etc.) can be rites, but only if they're intentionally designed that way. These events are easy and accessible opportunities to develop meaningful rites of passage.

Responding to change you *didn't* want

It's happening! Change has chosen you. Was it unexpected, or could you see it coming? Was the anticipation worse than the reality? Is the change, and your response to it, compartmentalised in one area of your life, or are you finding that it is affecting everything else? How would you describe your **mindset**?



Labourer

Change is happening *to me*; it's unfair. There's nothing *I* can do about it. It is *their* fault. I won't be able to cope.



Architect

HMI cope with this? Is there an opportunity here? How can I change the situation or my influence over it? I'll be okay.



Mystic

I accept that this is happening, I'm not resisting it. Do I even have a problem *right now*? I trust in the journey.

If change is turbulent and your days are complex and erratic, you may vacillate between all three and your days' design may switch between survival mode and moving forward. If you're dealing with a major life crisis, your Design Objectives will be unstable; your QIL may take a hit and the demands on your maintenance will require you to revisit simple steps: setting intentions, working on maintenance and giving yourself many breaks.

In survival mode, we focus on coping and holding it together, not putting energy into crafting change. Our focus shifts to crisis management and stabilisation before change can be addressed. Remember the basics:

- Craft maintenance first, look after your energy.
- Try to develop kind self-talk and QIL, be the *Mystic*.
- Gently dispute any catastrophic *Labourer* predictions.
- When you can be the *Architect* use the Change Canvas on page 46 to prioritise your options and find support.

You may find content elsewhere in this workbook helpful.

- Emotional stages, page 17
- Change can be challenging 18
- The paradox of peaceful paths 29
- Strengths based Change Profile 42
- Change Canvas 46
- The identity to cope with change 60

Are you ready to move forward?

It might depend on the change challenge and your mindset but don't expect being *ready* to be a straightforward transition, as if one day you're in survival mode and the next day, that is forever behind you. Revisit the various *stages* on pages 16 and 17 – in reality, we're likely to move through and unpredictably jump around them. This can feel frustrating if, for example, you thought you'd passed through *anger*, but it is back again today.

Trying to move through uncertainty

If you're in the midst of erratic circumstances, it's very hard to navigate. Your QIL is clouded with what-ifs and open worry loops, making decisions feels nearly impossible because you can't see the whole picture. An example could be waiting for a medical diagnosis, or to hear back about a job, or wondering about the status of a relationship. In these circumstances, finding any sense of peace or happiness is incredibly hard. But here's the strange part: once you know for sure, *even if it's bad news*, something shifts. When the diagnosis comes back, when you get the rejection letter, when the relationship officially ends, the fog of uncertainty lifts. Surprisingly, this is when you can be clearer about moving forward, not because the outcome was what you wanted, but because certainty, even difficult certainty, gives you solid ground to stand on. You can finally start dealing with *what is* rather than being trapped in the limbo of *what might be*.

Preparing resilience

How well do you cope when unwanted change happens? Resilience might be what helps us in a crisis, but it's best understood as a skill *Prepared in advance*, like building a protective foundation before the storm. When you have it practised, resilience helps you navigate change with intention, balance, Strength and self-care, getting external help when you need it.

Resilience vulnerability audit

You have some resilience already, but where are you vulnerable? Think about past situations and stressors and reflect on any patterns you can spot to help pinpoint areas where you could prepare additional resilience. Where are the gaps you need to fill?



- What situations tend to overwhelm me?
- When I'm stressed, which of my Design Objectives falls apart?
- When am I tempted to withdraw from others and Connection?
- What do I become overly self-critical about?
- Do I have a habit of catastrophising, or can I keep setbacks in perspective?
- How well can I shift my perspective or adapt my mindset when facing unexpected challenges?
- When I experience change, do I feel secure or shaken in my sense of self?
- When I'm exhausted, am I able to recognise it?
- What potential changes scare me the most?

What development priorities do you take from this exercise?



You might think of resilience as self-investment, being kind to future you. Developing your resilience equips you to take on more with greater stability and confidence.

On the opposite page are some ideas and exercises you might incorporate into your resilience Preparation.

Exercises from the **Self-care Workbook** complement the subject matter in this section of the **Change Workbook**

Stoic contemplation

Continuing with *Preparation ahead of change we don't want*, we can focus on more specific circumstance changes. If *resilience* is about *general* Preparedness, this exercise is more targeted. It is inspired by a creative and sober idea from Stoicism called *negative visualisation*, which, if done effectively, reduces present worrying about the future, replacing it with increased gratitude and appreciation for your present circumstances.

The idea is to assess, *with emotional detachment*, possible future changed circumstances such as loss, illness or failure, to be more practically and emotionally rehearsed for them. There are plenty of potential changes to consider ...

- **Health related:** Diagnosis of serious illness, accidents or injuries, mental health episodes, pandemics.
- **Relational changes:** Divorce or separation, death of a loved one, friendship changes, loneliness and isolation.
- **Environmental changes:** Relocation and cultural adjustments, natural disasters, economic fluctuations.
- **Societal and technological changes:** Technology advances, political changes, social movements, crime and war.

Once you've considered the likelihood of these changes happening to you and their potential impact on your days, you're in a better position, so the Stoics would say, to handle them when they come, worry less about them before they come and appreciate what you currently have without taking it for granted.

Instinctively, it feels like a grim exercise, but it's not about method acting and feeling upset; it's more like a cognitive risk assessment exercise. If you're very emotionally disturbed by the exercise, you might be doing it wrong. It is a contemplation, but if it feels risky or challenging to your QIL, practice with some smaller, simpler and more removed possibilities.

Done right, this exercise can shift your mindset towards the Architect and Mystic. Also practice with the Day's Expectations and Day's Surrender tools (see the Introductory Workbook).

ABCD 5-day sprint

When you think about changing the world around you (your community, policy, politics, justice, climate action, cultural enrichment, poverty etc.) it's easy to feel daunted by the challenge and what's missing to solve it. This exercise revolves around a mindset shift from *deficit* to *asset* thinking, which means being more Architect. **ABCD** stands for **Asset Based Community Development**, it means starting with what you do have. You can use this idea with a cooperative group or just you as instigator and follow the template over the next few pages. (You will easily find more ABCD resources or workshops online.)

- 1. Use Strengths:** Deficit thinking leads to inertia, but asset thinking shifts the thinking to creative, expansive HMI territory. By identifying what you already have, you can build confidence and agency. Instead of focusing on what's lacking (which can develop feelings of scarcity or helplessness), identifying strengths builds the mental and emotional mindset to tackle challenges.
- 2. Expands control:** Focusing on assets leads to sustainable solutions. Instead of relying on external fixes or waiting for the perfect circumstances, asset thinking encourages the use of what is within your control to create a foundation for ongoing improvement and it suggests you can start now.
- 3. Encourages Connection:** Asset thinking immediately fosters a collaborative mindset as you draw on collective assets to align towards the objective.
- 4. Develops identity:** Connecting change to identity and purpose is transformative. ABCD helps you see yourself as capable and resourceful, reinforcing a positive identity and you build towards consistent, meaningful progress.

Over the following pages are some minimal instructions for an exercise that is designed to help you practice asset thinking in a structured way. It doesn't take all of your time; it is only day 4 that would require more of the day (so Prepare for that).

You can do this exercise on your own or with a group. Before you start, read through the sprint and ensure you have the time and resources you'll need for however you decide to use day 4. You can use the sprint to test the whole of one big idea or use it to test critical parts. You can repeat the model to test new aspects.

An ABCD sprint can be so full of Connection and Play I wish I was there with you.

How often are your days as they could be?

Day Crafting is a set of practices and tools to help you make a good life one day at a time.

For makers of renewed days

“The essence of Day Crafting is change – understanding yourself and what matters to you to intentionally create better days.

This book skilfully relates all aspects of change to this process. As usual Bruce has created a workbook full of useful concepts, tools and exercises to explore and navigate all types of change.”



Nick Butler

Pharmacist, trainer and facilitator

#behaviourchange
#personaldevelopment

#habit
#ritual



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