

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 837

CG 014 435

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TITLE Intentional Change Interview Schedule.
PUB DATE Mar 80
NOTE 14p.; For related document see ED 167 885. Supplement may film marginally.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Change; *Decision Making; Individual Development; *Individual Power; *Interviews; *Locus of Control; Questioning Techniques; Responsibility; *Self Determination

IDENTIFIERS *Intention

ABSTRACT

This interview schedule was designed to be used by researchers replicating the study "The Largest Intentional Change During the Past Two Years" (ED 167 885). It consists of a series of questions which focus on the decision to make a change, the process involved, and the significance of the change. The schedule includes preliminary notes for the interviewer, step-by-step interviewer instructions and script, necessary forms, and supplementary questions. (NRB)

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INTENTIONAL CHANGE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

for use by anyone replicating the study called
"The Largest Intentional Change During the Past Two Years"
(which is ERIC Document no. ED 167 885)

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[Interview schedule for ERIC document no. ED 167 885.]

Intentional Change Interview Schedule

Allen Tough

Some preliminary notes for the interviewer:

[In order to get an accurate deep understanding of intentional change, it is essential that the interviews be sufficiently leisurely, with plenty of probing and dialogue.]

[Throughout the first part of the interview, you will probably have to dialogue at various times to help the person grasp the precise phenomenon and criteria. It may help if you use the phrase "intentional changes" or "intentional portion of the change." It may also help if the discussion shuttles back and forth between the actual change and the decision to change? talking about either one alone is misleading.]

[Throughout the interview, be sure both of you focus on the correct portion of the change. Exclude all chosen-but-not-yet-completed change. Exclude all achieved-but-not-chosen change.]

[Dialogue may be particularly necessary to help the person capture the change (or the intentional portion of a change) for question #1. Changes are complex, many-faceted, and intertwined: as a result, there are often several ways of viewing and defining the focus of a change. Help the person work out the best one.]

[The change may become clearer if you ask this question regarding the change that is chosen: "Within this area, what exactly is different now -- in you or your activities or your surroundings -- compared to the time before your decision to change?"]

[Use a separate sheet for your notes until the answer to question #1 becomes fairly clear. Then record it on the data sheet that is provided for you to use.]

Revised November 1979 and March 1980

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The assistance of the following persons in developing this interview schedule is gratefully acknowledged: David Blackwell, Bill Brown, Jeanne Eddington, Henry McGrattan, Don Smith, and Marsha Young.

Please tell me about any data, papers, or theses based on these interview questions, so that I can refer other readers to them in my future writing. Thank you. My address is Allen Tough, Department of Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Canada M5S 1V6.

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During the past two years, you have probably experienced various changes in yourself, in your activities, and in your life.

Some of these changes probably happened accidentally, but today we'll focus on the intentional changes, the changes you decided to achieve.

Some of your changes were probably small or not very important. But today we will look at the changes that were especially large and important for you. In fact, our first step is to select your largest, most important change during the past two years. They don't have to be huge, earth-shattering changes! And I don't care how large or important it was to other people. All I need is the one change, out of all your intentional changes, that seems to you to be larger or more important than any other change you can recall.

Let me reassure you that all the information you give me will be used only for research purposes, and I will certainly not attach your name to any of this information. You are free to ask any questions, of course, and to stop the interview at any time.

[Give sheet #1. Point to appropriate parts of it during the rest of this paragraph.] Here's a summary chart. At some point you decided to change something about yourself or your life. Then you took one or more steps to achieve that change. And then you actually did achieve the change. Take your time looking over this sheet. Feel free to mark it if you wish.

[Point out the instructions at the top of the sheet. Dialogue about one or two tentative choices.]

Before you make the final selection of the largest change, I want you to recall all of your changes during the past two years that might qualify. But it's hard to remember all your changes, even the big important ones, over a two-year period. So I have a memory-jogging sheet here. It may help you recall some especially large change that you haven't mentioned yet.

Take your time. [Give sheet #2. After the person has gone through it reasonably carefully, move toward selecting the largest intentional change, which is question #1.]

1. What was the intentional change (or the intended portion of the change)?

[Give concrete details if possible. Be sure that what you record is a change, and that it was intentional. Please be sure that the change meets the criteria on sheet #1.]

2. What percentage of your desired change did you actually achieve?

[Relate this question to the diagram if that will help the person understand.]

- 3-6. Here are four further questions. Just circle the answers that come closest to describing the intentional portion of your actual change.

[Give sheet #3.]

7. Now let's turn our attention to three major tasks that you may have performed -- or that someone else may have performed for you -- in order to achieve your change. The top part of this sheet outlines the three tasks.

[Give sheet #4. Then help the person understand the three tasks, and relate them to his or her particular change.]

The bottom part of the sheet lists various possibilities for who might have performed the task. For example, the first possibility on the list is you, and the second is books, booklets, etc. [Pause.]

Now let's look at the first major task, right at the top of the sheet. How would you divide the credit or responsibility for performing this task? That is, what percentage of the task was performed by you, and what percentage by each of the others in the list? I'm not just thinking of who actually made the final decision. No, what I'm thinking of is who or what played some part in the process of assessing the possible change, weighing its consequences, and so on. For instance, a magazine might have been very helpful by getting you to think about the change in the first place, or by getting you to see that such a change really would be possible for you. [Add possible examples for this person's particular change if you can.] Don't worry about being perfectly accurate with this question: just your best estimate. And don't bother including any category that was under 10%.

[Before you record the percentages, please be sure they add up to 100. Also, in this question and the next two whenever you get a percentage for b,c,d, or e, please jot down a few words to identify the particular book, person, or group.]

8. Now, let's do the same for the second task.
9. Now the third task: what were the percentages for that?
10. We've been talking about a change that was chosen and intentional. Can you think of any unintentional change over the past two years -- in yourself or your life -- that is even larger and more significant than the change we've been discussing?

[This question is usually worth only three minutes: skip it entirely if it's a difficult interview. If the answer is YES, record the unintentional change or changes.]

11. Throughout the interview we have been talking about changes that you did achieve, at least partly. Looking back over the past two years, has there been some change that you certainly wanted, but did not achieve?

[Record the desired change, and any hunches you have about the blocks or about what help/resources would have been useful. This question is usually worth only three minutes: skip it entirely if a difficult interview.]

12. Highest educational qualification completed:

(a) less than grade 10

(b) grade 10 through secondary-school graduation

(c) one or two years of post-secondary education

(d) three or four years of post-secondary education

(e) graduate degree or other advanced qualification

13. Are you employed outside the home these days? What is your specific occupation?

14. Could you tell me your age? [If refused, give an estimate.]

[Interviewer records the rest of this information after the interview.]

15. Interviewer estimate of social class: upper (U); middle or upper middle (M); working class (W); lower (L).

16. male or female

17. Member of which racial or ethnic group (such as Spanish-speaking, black, white).

DATA SHEET

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

[Please be sure that each of the next three lines adds up to 100%.]

7. a b c d e f

8. a b c d e f

9. a b c d e f

10. NO YES:

11.

12. (circle one:) a b c d e

13.

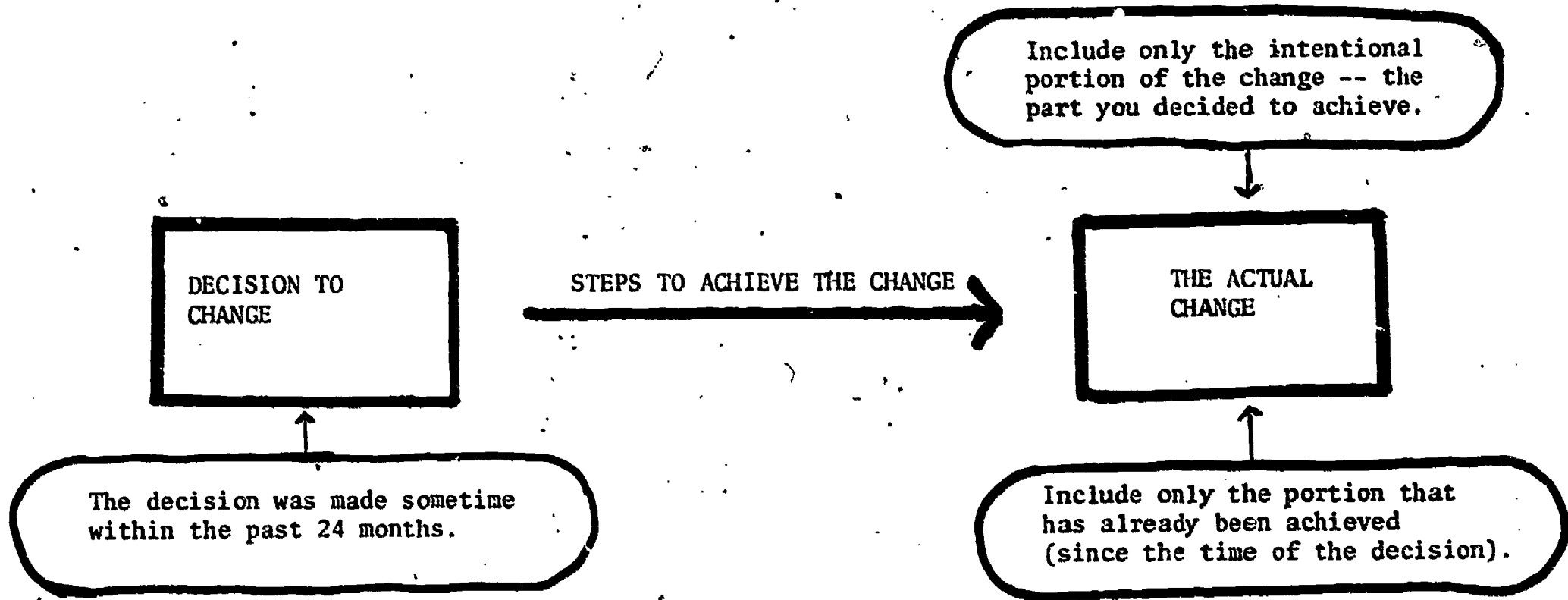
14. 15. U M W L

16. F M

17.

From all of your intentional changes during the past two years, please select your largest, most important change. If in doubt between two changes, choose the one that will affect you and your life the most, or the one that will last the longest.

Sheet #1



To help you recall your own major intentional changes over the past two years, here are some areas in which people sometimes change intentionally:

body, health, appearance, fitness, relaxation

knowledge of the world, history, psychology, etc.

personal finances; property; possessions

marriage; family relationships; child-raising; separation

home and car maintenance; decorating; furniture

enjoyable activities (social activities, travel, crafts, art, theater, music, friends, sport, hobby, recreation, vacation, etc.)

residence; living arrangements

goals and values

psychic awareness; expanded consciousness; ultimate reality

spiritual and religious understanding; relationship to God or to the world

voluntarily helping others; making a contribution

human relationships; emotions; self-perception; self-confidence

change through a group, course, person, book, kit, or TV program

lifestyle; activities; circle of friends

the meaning and purpose of life

managing one's time and life; the balance of various activities

reduce some psychological problem, emotional difficulty, or bad habit

reduce male-female stereotyping

reading speed; writing or speaking ability; problem-solving; or other basic skill

job; responsibilities; income; training; education

begin, end, or change a close relationship

assertiveness; authenticity; spontaneity

wisdom; understanding; empathy; caring

3. Which response comes closest to describing the size and importance of your change (or of the intended portion)?

- a. a huge or enormous change, or of central importance in my life
- b. a fairly large and important change
- c. a definite change with some relevance and importance in my life
- d. small, trivial, petty, unimportant

4. How much has this change contributed to your happiness, your satisfaction with life, or your well-being?

- a. an enormous amount
- b. a large amount
- c. some definite benefit
- d. little or nothing
- e. it has done me more harm than good

5. Now let's imagine a certain situation for a moment. Let's imagine that you describe your change to all your friends, relatives, neighbors, people at work, and everyone else who knows you. And then you say to each of these people, "Have you noticed this change?" Approximately how many would say yes? (Circle your best guess.)

zero 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 / over 10

6. Let's set aside your own benefits for a moment, and look at any benefits for other people. Your change might be of some benefit to your family, your friends and relatives, your boss, other people in your organization, colleagues in your field, and so on. To what extent has your change provided some benefit to people other than yourself?

- a. only to a small extent
- b. medium amount; of some definite benefit to at least one or two persons
- c. to a fairly large extent

THREE TASKS

1. Deciding to go ahead with this particular change. As part of making this decision, you or someone else or a book might have examined various aspects of your life, provided information, estimated the costs and benefits of this change, etc.
2. Planning the strategy and deciding the steps for achieving the change.
3. Actually taking the steps for achieving the change.

WHO PERFORMED THE TASK?

- a. You.
- b. Books, booklets, magazines, television, films, tapes, phonograph records.
- c. A person who was paid to help, or was doing so as part of his or her job, or was designated by some organization to help, or was trained to help-- and your interaction with this person was individual one-to-one interaction (possibly with one or two other persons also present).
- d. A group in which the same sort of person as above (paid, employed, designated, or trained to help) was the leader or at least was an important resource. (The group, class, workshop, or audience could be of any size, as long as it had at least four persons meeting in the same room.)
- e. A group of people who met fairly regularly, and who almost always met without a professional or expert as the leader or resource person.
- f. One or more family members, friends, relatives, acquaintances, co-workers, or neighbors--in individual one-to-one interaction (possibly with one or two other persons also present).

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS FOR STUDYING DIFFICULTIES,
TASK DETAILS, AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS

[Note: Question 6A is best inserted after question 6, and questions 9A through 9F are best inserted after question 9.]

- 6A. Looking back over your total experience in choosing, planning, and achieving this change, what was the one most difficult part of the whole thing for you?
- 9A. Now, going back to the first task, I'm interested in knowing some of the things you did during that task -- what you took into consideration, any information you gathered, how you arrived at the decision to go ahead with this change, and any other step you took.
- 9B. Moving on to the second task, just what did you do during that task? For instance, did you gather any information, make a list of different possibilities, or take any other steps in order to plan your strategy?
- 9C. The third task refers to actually taking the steps for achieving the change. What were your major steps or methods for achieving your change?

[During this portion of the interview, if you become aware of any other major tasks that are not included on sheet #4, please jot them down.]

- 9D. This next question applies to all three major tasks that we've been discussing -- the three tasks at the top of your sheet. Suppose with each of your tasks and decisions, additional help had been available in the form of a book, some other form of printed material, a tape, a film, or a TV program. Is there anything you would have liked additional help with?

[If necessary, probe with the following question: what sorts of additional help would you have liked?]

- 9E. Suppose additional help for all three tasks had been available in the form of a particularly helpful or encouraging person, an expert, a group, or a professional. In what ways could such a person or group have been useful for you?
- 9F. Now let's imagine some magic; let's imagine someone had waved a magic wand two years ago, and as a result you had an incredibly high level of skill, competence, and expertise in performing the various aspects of all three tasks. Was there any sort of skill or expertise -- in addition to what you already had -- that would have been especially beneficial for you in moving ahead with your change?

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS TO STUDY ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

9G. Why did you want this change? In this question I'm looking far ahead to the ultimate benefits you expected -- the benefits that you anticipated eventually from this change.

[Probe for a variety of ultimate and intermediate benefits, and record them as precisely as possible in your own words.]

9H. Was your change, or your decision to make this change, related in any way to the spiritual side of life, or to the question of what is the ultimate meaning and purpose of life?

[If yes, ask in what ways.]