



Kaizen: The Japanese Secret to Lasting Change: Small Steps to Big Goals

Sarah Harvey

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If change is the primary law of the universe, why is it so difficult to make lasting changes to our own personal habits and routines? Why does our body/mind vigorously rebel when we set out to cut down on our sugar intake, commit to taking a jog before work in the morning, save an extra \$25 a week, or some other modest goal? Is it because we're creatures of habit, beholden to routine?

If so, is there a proven technique to help us modify our behavior and put us on the path to positive change?

In a word, *kaizen*—Japanese for small, incremental improvements—is an idea developed by the US government and introduced to Japan in the aftermath of WWII as a means to rebuild the country's all but destroyed infrastructure and economy, with Toyota as the preeminent example. The Japanese soon came to realize the concept of *kaizen* is ideal for personal improvement, as well.

In *Kaizen: The Japanese Secret to Lasting Change*, Sarah Harvey applies the easy, achievable steps approach to making positive changes in one's health, work, money, relationships, and modern life. Awareness, she stresses, is vital to recognizing the parts of your daily routine that hamper your progress. Once identified, these impediments can be dealt with calmly and methodically, using steps so small and doable as to be barely noticeable.

Harvey's experience living in Japan greatly informs her writing. She is the ideal West-meets-East guide to *kaizen*'s profound benefits.

MATT SUTHERLAND (January / February 2020)

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