



EMBRACING CHANGE

BANISH FEAR AND CHOOSE YOUR LIFE

You want a new job. You are planning a move to Los Angeles. You'd like to live a healthier life. Your department was reorganized again. The doctor told you that you have diabetes. What do these have in common? They all involve

CHANGE

We have a love/hate relationship with change. We say we want change, and sometimes can't seem to make it happen. We resist change, yet can see the good that often comes out of it.

How do you feel about change? Your feelings come from your personality, your experience, and your present circumstances. Perhaps you like change in theory, and struggle with implementing it. You may prefer things to stay the way they are. You may not be happy with your life today, and at the same time be reluctant to change.

Whatever you think about change, one thing is always true...

CHANGE IS CONSTANT



CHANGE IS NORMAL

SEASONS MOVE

FOOD METABOLIZES

EMOTIONS FLUCTUATE

CIRCUMSTANCES SHIFT

RELATIONSHIPS EVOLVE



CHANGE IS DIFFICULT

Our brain is hard-wired to resist change. The limbic system, which is the most primitive, instinctive part of our brain, tries to protect us at all costs. It wants to keep us safe. The best way it knows to keep us safe is to direct us down familiar paths where it believes there is no danger.

UNKNOWN = DANGER

Thus, even when we consciously want to make change, our sub-conscious mind often derails our attempts. When change is thrust upon us and is not something that we want, we often wage full-out war against it.

The only sense that is common in the long run, is the sense of change and we all instinctively avoid it. –E.B. White

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

The process of change can be fearful, painful, or difficult. It can also be liberating, a welcome challenge, and an opportunity to grow.

Change is possible when we believe it is.

Change is possible when we have a plan.

Change is possible when we want the change more than we want the status quo.

Change is possible when we can overcome our sub-conscious mind's protection system.

Nothing happens until the pain of remaining the same outweighs the pain of change. –Arthur Burt



THE OPTION OF NOT CHANGING

At times change happens whether you like it or not. You are now at a cross-road; you must choose a new path. Trying to remain as you were will only leave you frustrated and stuck in the mire of uncertainty. I know because I've tried it. When my husband died suddenly, I instinctively knew that life was forever changed. Yet my mind tried to keep things as they were – keep *me* as I was. I followed many of the same routines and tried to keep my life as “normal” as possible. It did not work. The more I resisted, the more painful it became. Eventually, I recognized my need to forge my own path and made a new life for myself.

When you *do* have a choice, there are times when deciding not to change is a wise decision. If you are torn, the reasons for change are not compelling enough, the timing isn't right, or you have no support system, then you may decide to postpone the change or not do it at all. Be confident in your choice, whatever it is. You will be happier if you do not second-guess yourself.

BEFORE YOU START



Take time to **STOP**

BREATHE

Go for a **WALK**

Come to terms with the

PAST

EXPERIENCE the
moment

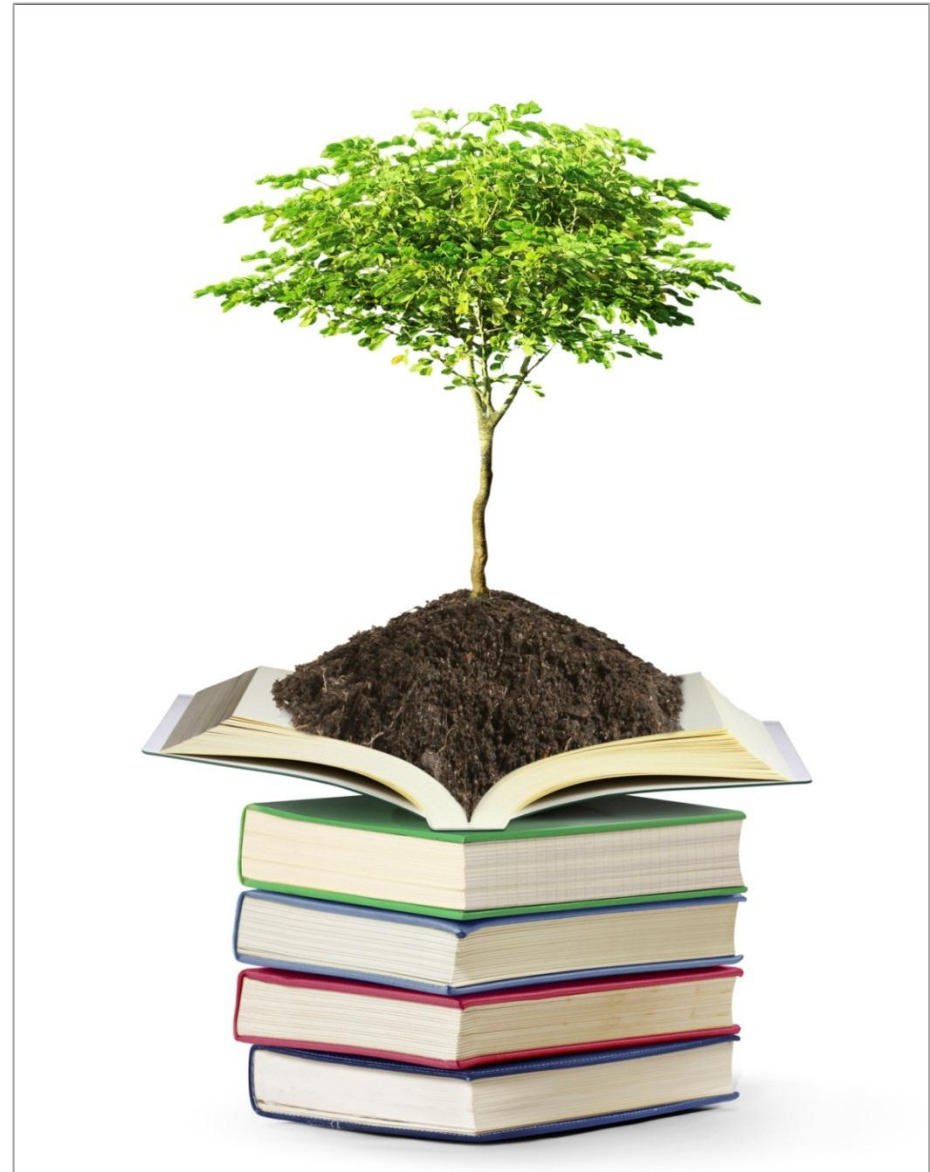
Gain **PERSPECTIVE**

SEE the opportunity

Deal with your past and learn from it. Dragging the past to the present or future does not help you. Do not live in the future at the expense of the present. Ground yourself in the present to propel you toward the future.

HOW TO EMBRACE CHANGE

- NAME
- NOTICE
- NURTURE



NAME IT

What type of change is it?

CREATE: You want and initiate the change yourself
▶ *Get an MBA, be more healthy, move to Hawaii*

SHARE: You want and share ownership of the change
▶ *Buy a house with your spouse*

PARTICIPATE: An opportunity comes your way, and you decide to participate in it
▶ *An invitation from your co-worker to join an exercise group*

REACT: Change is thrust upon you and it isn't something that you want.
▶ *Reorganization, serious illness, death of a loved one*

NOTICE WHERE YOU ARE

The Change Spectrum



NOTICE WHERE YOU ARE



The Change Spectrum is not a progression. It helps define your present state of mind regarding a change.

You will not always experience all four stages in order or at all.

You may fluctuate between stages at any time.

With practice, you more quickly embrace change and grow, whether or not you asked for or wanted change.

NURTURE EFFECTIVE CHANGE PRACTICES

CHANGE THAT YOU PLAN

- **DEFINE**

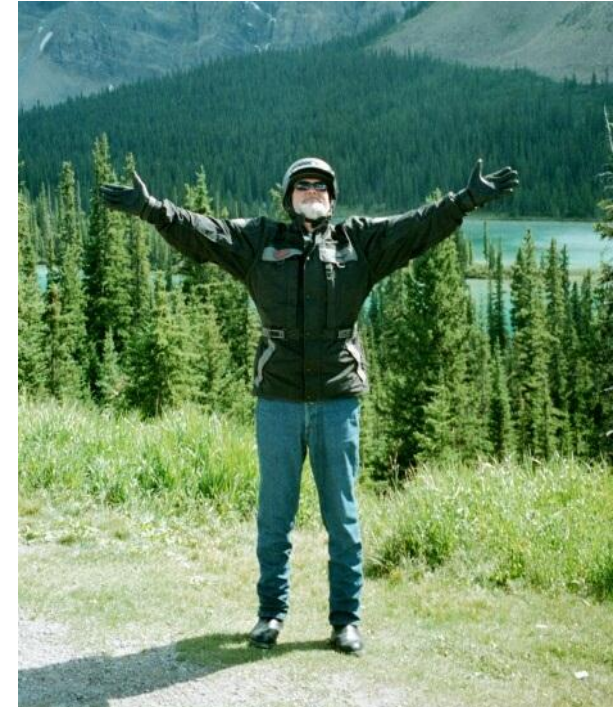
Clearly define the desired outcome. “Lose weight” is neither clearly defined nor an outcome. “Be strong and healthy so I can play outside with my children” is a specific tangible outcome.

- **NOTICE**

Where you are on the Change Spectrum

- Get to **WHY**

Ask why you want this change. When you have an answer, ask why again. Go deeper. Keep asking why until there are no more answers. This will likely be a more emotionally compelling reason for wanting the change.



NURTURE EFFECTIVE CHANGE PRACTICES

CHANGE THAT YOU PLAN - CONTINUED

- **PLAY** it Out
Both positive and negative scenarios for changing and not changing. What is the best that could happen if I make this change? What is the worst that could happen? What is the best that could happen if I do not change? What is the worst that could happen? Imagine far into the future as you think through each possibility. The differences between the options will often appear greater the farther you play them out.
- **CHOOSE** Your Action(s)
Break actions into small bite-sized manageable pieces. Put dates on the actions to make them more real. Keep in mind that one possible action is to choose to not change.
- Fight **RESISTANCE**
Expect it, recognize it for what it is, and push through. Remind yourself of your “why”.

NURTURE EFFECTIVE CHANGE PRACTICES

CHANGE THAT YOU PLAN - CONTINUED

- **START**
This can be the most difficult part. Find a way to make it more compelling to start than not start. When you stop, start again.
- Create **RITUALS**
Repeating actions so they become habits inhibits your brain's default mode.
- Get Used to **DISCOMFORT**
Comfort does not lead to growth. Find the sweet spot between comfort and distress and be willing to stay there.
- Find **SUPPORT**
You are more likely to succeed when you have support from others.
- **CELEBRATE** every success, no matter how small.

To go to the Worksheet, click [here](#). Click [here](#) for a Quick Review Summary.

NURTURE EFFECTIVE CHANGE PRACTICES

CHANGE THAT COMES AT YOU

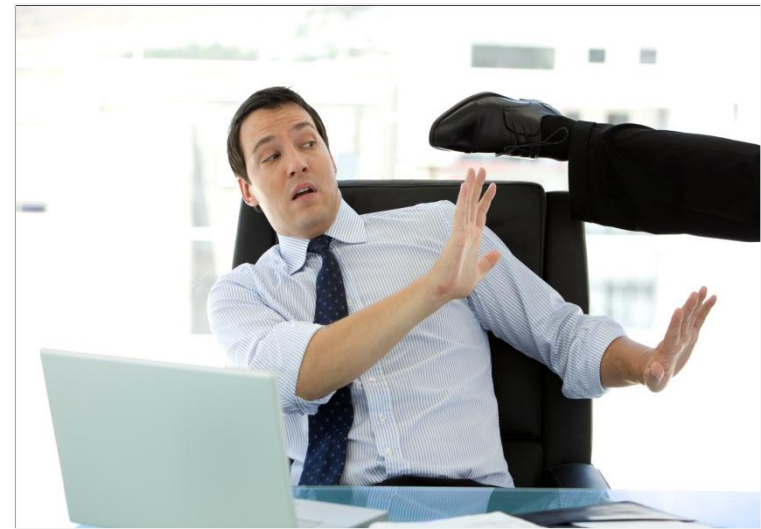
The steps are similar, but with a twist.

- **DEFINE**

Clearly define the change and how you think it may impact you. Be specific. Here is an example, “My department had an organization change. I do not know my new manager and am unsure if my role will change.”

- **NOTICE**

Where you are on the Change Spectrum. If the change has hit you hard, give yourself time to be angry, mourn, and deal with the emotions. Also notice what about your life is still precious and beautiful. We so often only see the change and do not see the perspective of our life as a whole.



NURTURE EFFECTIVE CHANGE PRACTICES

CHANGE THAT COMES AT YOU – CONTINUED

- **PLAY** it Out

Positive and negative scenarios for acting and not acting. What is the best that could happen if I take action? What is the worst that could happen? What is the best that could happen if I do nothing? What is the worst that could happen? Imagine far into the future as you think through each possibility. The differences between the options will often appear greater the farther you play them out.

- **CHOOSE** Your Action(s)

What is the best I can do in this situation? What can I learn from this? Once you decide on your actions, break them into small, bite-sized chunks, and assign dates to them. Taking action will give you a sense of control. You cannot control the circumstances, but you can control your response.

NURTURE EFFECTIVE CHANGE PRACTICES

CHANGE THAT COMES AT YOU - CONTINUED

- **WHY**
Do not ask “Why me?” Ask “Why this action?” Be as descriptive and go as deep as you can as you ask this question. Because this is a change that you did not ask for, understanding why you chose the response you did is more likely to keep you moving ahead.
- Fight **RESISTANCE**
Watch for subtle, passive resistance here.
- **START**
Make it as easy as possible. When you stop, start again.
- Create **RITUALS**
Repeating actions so they become habits inhibits your brain’s default mode.

NURTURE EFFECTIVE CHANGE PRACTICES

CHANGE THAT COMES AT YOU – CONTINUED

- Get Used to **DISCOMFORT** –
You're probably already uncomfortable, since you didn't start this change. Push through and grow from it. Reward yourself when you keep going, and forgive yourself when you stop.
- Find **SUPPORT**
When you are dealing with something that you didn't ask for, you need even more support through the process.
- **CELEBRATE** every success, no matter how small.

To go to the Worksheet, click [here](#). Click [here](#) for a Quick Review Summary.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Make a conscious choice whether or not to change. Do not let your subconscious mind make the choice for you.
- Do not make decisions with your head alone. Be wholehearted. You will need that commitment in order to succeed.
- Take your time with the Why, Playing It Out, and Choosing Actions. Breathe deeply and go for a walk, write, draw, video, or pantomime it. When body and mind are working together, the idea becomes much more a part of you.
- Keep noticing where you are on the Change Spectrum. If you find yourself resisting in the middle, allow yourself to fully experience it. Then remind yourself of your “Why” and take another step.
- Affirm your “Why” on a daily basis.
- Stay grounded in the present, even in the midst of change.
- Forgive yourself when you slip.
- Celebrate success, no matter how small. Celebration reinforces your decision and builds the success habit.

REMEMBER



Change is a process,
not an event.

CHANGE is constant.

Endings and beginnings are a
NORMAL part of life.

Find the **SWEET SPOT** between
comfort and distress.

Learning to navigate change helps
you **GROW**.

You don't have to do it **ALL AT
ONCE**.

QUICK REVIEW SUMMARY

PLANNED CHANGE

DEFINE

NOTICE

GET TO WHY

PLAY IT OUT

CHOOSE YOUR ACTION(S)

FIGHT RESISTANCE

START

CREATE RITUALS

GET USED TO DISCOMFORT

FIND SUPPORT

CELEBRATE

UNPLANNED CHANGE

DEFINE

NOTICE

PLAY IT OUT

CHOOSE YOUR ACTION(S)

GET TO WHY

FIGHT RESISTANCE

START

CREATE RITUALS

GET USED TO DISCOMFORT

FIND SUPPORT

CELEBRATE

NEXT STEPS

In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing. –Theodore Roosevelt

Congratulations for finishing this book. By thinking about change, you have taken a step that many will not. How about celebrating right now?

This guide works well if you do it alone or with others.

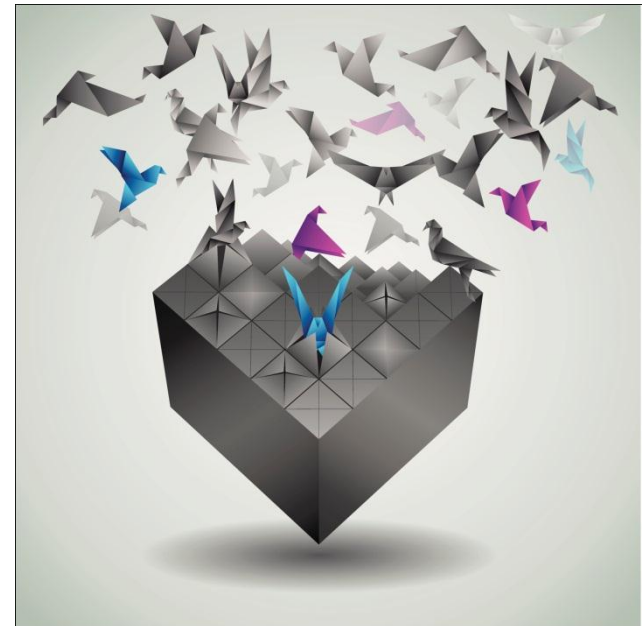
Use the worksheet to keep you focused

If you do this alone, enlist a few people to help you keep your commitment.

Reassess and adjust as you move through the process. Review the worksheet at regular intervals to take a fresh look at the situation. There may be room for further growth.

[WORKSHEET](#)

[KATHLEEN'S CHANGE](#)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



KATHLEEN THOMPSON helps others love the life they have, define the life they want, and bring their vision to life. She blogs, speaks, produces web-based courses, and conducts webinars about Embracing the Present, Having a Success Mindset, Effective Change, and Living Well. She hosts live workshops and does a limited amount of individual coaching.

Kathleen has been a change agent throughout her career in the corporate world, leading technology and process change as part of seven mergers. She has also experienced significant personal change throughout her life – changing careers from singer/songwriter to corporate leader, the sudden death of her husband, and an unexpected medical condition. Her combination of inspiration, compassion, creativity, and practicality give her a unique voice.

In her free time, Kathleen sings operetta, ministers in music at her church, and rides a motorcycle. She loves to read, cook, garden, walk on the beach, and spend time with friends talking about deep philosophical issues.



CONTACT

BLOG: www.kathleenthompsonsings.com

LINKEDIN: www.linkedin.com/in/kathleenthompsononline

LINKEDIN GROUP: [Transformational Thinking](#)

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/KThompsonSings

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/kathleenthompsonsings

EMAIL: kathleen@katthom.com

A PERSONAL NOTE:

This change method helps me grow, and I am delighted to share it with you. I'm still learning, and would love to learn from you. If you want to journey together, join the conversation.

Here's to exciting adventures ~Kathleen

COPYRIGHT

Version 1.1. Copyright © 2014 by Kathleen Thompson. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means—except for brief quotations in published reviews—without the prior written permission of the author.



EMBRACING CHANGE

HOW I USE THIS MODEL IN MY OWN LIFE

When my husband died, I developed insomnia. I tried and could not resolve it myself. I assembled a team of experts to help me sleep. After more than a year, the situation improved. However, maintaining this improvement has required changes to my lifestyle, which I do not instinctively embrace. Here's how I am working through this change.

DEFINE

I want to average seven hours of sleep per night.

NOTICE

Although I would like to say that I was rejoicing at that definition, I was actually at Resign. I was passively resisting the actions needed to make successful change.

GET TO WHY

I wrote 5-7 reasons that I wanted to change this pattern. The most compelling was, "I will think more creatively." Since creative thinking is very important to me, this really resonated with me.

PLAY IT OUT

Advantages to the change: I will think more creatively, I will have energy to do what I enjoy. It will take me less time to accomplish my goals and tasks.

Disadvantages to the change: I will not be able to do everything that I need to.

Advantages to not changing: I can get more done in a day.



EMBRACING CHANGE

HOW I USE THIS MODEL IN MY OWN LIFE - CONTINUED

PLAY IT OUT - CONTINUED

Disadvantages to not changing: I will become increasingly exhausted. I will not enjoy the life I have, will be crabby and negative, and my thinking will become sluggish.

As I did this exercise, I found that the only reason not to change is because I believe I can get more done if I sleep less. In addition, that will only be true for a short time. If I do not change, exhaustion will soon negate that advantage. (That certainly was true before I started this change journey. I was usually exhausted, and had little joy.)

CHOOSE YOUR ACTIONS

1. Move bedtime earlier in 10-minute increments per week until I reach the desired bedtime.
2. Get ready for bed at 10:00. After getting ready for bed, read or do relaxation exercises if desired.
3. Get up at the same time and standardize morning routine.

FIGHT RESISTANCE

I resist these actions almost every night. Why? To a large degree it is out of habit. Another reason is that I get so engrossed in what I am doing that I do not want to stop. It is difficult for me to do what is best to attain an important goal. I fight it by reminding myself of my “why” and the negative consequences of not changing. Sometimes I fight and win, and sometimes I lose. When I lose the battle, I start again.



EMBRACING CHANGE

HOW I USE THIS MODEL IN MY OWN LIFE - CONTINUED

START

In order to make it easier to end what I am doing, I put an appointment on my calendar with a reminder 30 minutes before I want to end. I put another at the end time. I remind myself of my goal. When I go past the reminder, I start again the next day.

CREATE RITUALS

1. Getting ready for bed at the same time.
2. Employ the same bedtime steps in the same order; this tells my subconscious mind that I will be sleeping soon.
3. Purposely choosing relaxing activities closer to bedtime. One is doing a slow, meditative walk while reading my Kindle.

GET USED TO DISCOMFORT

I am not at *all* comfortable with this routine. I like it because it is helpful, but that is not the same thing as being comfortable. I have reconciled myself to that reality.

FIND SUPPORT

I track my sleep. I discuss it in regular appointments with my naturopathic doctor. I share with a few friends who care deeply about my well-being.

CELEBRATE

I celebrate any success, no matter how small. And many of them are indeed small.



WORKSHEET

DATE _____

NAME the Change Type

CREATE	SHARE	PARTICIPATE	REACT

DEFINE. If you are initiating the change, clearly define the desired outcome. If you are not, describe the situation as clearly as you can.

NOTICE where you are on the Change Spectrum

RESIST	RESIGN	RELAX	REJOICE

[GO TO PLANNED CHANGE](#)

[GO TO UNPLANNED CHANGE](#)



EMBRACING CHANGE

WORKSHEET - CHANGE THAT YOU PLAN

WHY?

PLAY IT OUT

CHANGE	
NOT CHANGE	



EMBRACING CHANGE

WORKSHEET - CHANGE THAT YOU PLAN

CHOOSE Your Action(s) and Dates

Fight **RESISTANCE**

START

Create **RITUALS**

Get Used to **DISCOMFORT**

SUPPORTERS _____



EMBRACING CHANGE

WORKSHEET - CHANGE YOU DO NOT PLAN

PLAY IT OUT

CHANGE	
NOT CHANGE	

CHOOSE Your Action(s) and Dates



EMBRACING CHANGE

WORKSHEET - CHANGE YOU DO NOT PLAN

WHY THIS ACTION?

Fight **RESISTANCE**

START

Create **RITUALS**

Get Used to **DISCOMFORT**

SUPPORTERS _____



RESOURCES

ANDY ANDREWS – Author, speaker, story-teller. He has published several best-selling books, and blogs at www.andyandrews.com

STEPHEN COVEY, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Free Press, Revised Edition, 2004)

DANIEL COYLE, *The Little Book of Talent: 52 Tips For Improving Your Skills* (New York: Bantam Books, 2012)

ROBERT D. SMITH, *20,000 Days and Counting* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012). Robert blogs at www.therobertd.com

STEVEN PRESSFIELD, *The War of Art* (New York: Black Irish Entertainment, 2002)

STEVE RIZZO, *Get Your Shift Together* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013)

JULIA CAMERON, *The Artist's Way* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, Revised Edition, 2002)

SETH GODIN – Author, blogger, entrepreneur. www.sethgodin.typepad.com/



EMBRACING CHANGE

PHOTO CREDITS



© cloudnumber9/Thinkstock



© Lena_Zajchikova/Thinkstock



© 2NIX/Thinkstock



© Michael King/Thinkstock



© Fuse/Thinkstock



© denphumi/Thinkstock



© Amstock/Thinkstock