

Kaizen Approach

The literal translation of kaizen is "change for better" (Graban & Swartz, 2012). The concept of kaizen are small, continuous, meaningful, regular/daily improvements in all areas of life such as mind, body, spirit, and personal/professional/family life. Kaizen does not demand perfection, but it is a cyclical process of reflecting, re-evaluation, readjusting, and making positive babysteps (Graban & Swartz, 2012; Tetteh, 2012). Kaizen was first used in Japanese business models after World War II, and since then, has been adapted into the processes and philophies of many entities including healthcare (Graban & Swartz, 2012).

The Deming Cycle (plan, do, study, and adjust, ...repeat) is an important part of adopting the kaizen approach. Understand the current situation and problems--plan for change. Execute small scale changes to test the success and direction--do. Then study the outcomes, and adjust as necessary.

I use this approach with myself in all aspects of life--work, school, relationships, and health/fitness. When I coach or counsel my friends, I use this same model of kaizen. I adapted it to a weekly goals/worksheet format published weekly on my website. I believe it is useful in promoting accountability, self-efficacy (small, regular, daily "wins" are better than infrequent, irregular "wins"), and consistency.

References

Graban, M., & Swartz, J. E. (2012). Change for health. *Management Services*, 56(2), 35-29.

Tetteh, H. A. (2012). Featured article: Kaizen: A process improvement model for the business of health care and perioperative nursing professionals. *AORN Journal*, 95104-108.