

Make that CHANGE

It won't be easy, says **Claudia Chung**, but it'll be worth it

In order to quit smoking, I regularly drank until I got too drunk to hold a cigarette. To stop consuming sugar, I replaced it with stevia. And to curb my spending, I went old school. I pay for everything in cold, hard cash. Have

you ever tried paying your dentist in cash after some mold work? I have and it's super uncomfortable.

I once heard someone say: "Big changes first come slowly and

poorly." And not only do I find this to be absolutely true, all kinds of funky things happen to me when I want to change.

For instance, I expect to lose seven pounds in one week if I cut out all carbohydrates. Then I expect to find the man of my dreams because I'm seven pounds lighter. And, of course, I'll move into his apartment on Central Park West and we'll live a happy, carb-free life together. Forever.

This never happens. Instead, I eat way too much to compensate for all the carbs I can't eat. I'll eat four eggs with six sausages. But no toast. I'll order a case of Lily's chocolate bars and eat

an entire bar every single day. Fruit is forbidden, so I'll replace it with sugar-free chocolate pudding — the same ones Bill Cosby use to hawk. And in one week's time, I am fatter, epically single, and still living in a tiny, wheel-free NYC Winnebago.

Sometimes, it's the things we don't do that are the bad habit. For example, I procrastinate. I get lazy and brush off adult responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, and paying bills.

And when I start slacking off on the big ticket items like writing and meditating every day — that's when things can become hairy. They're the two cornerstones that keep me on the beam.

After I became a widow, I got addicted to TV. I couldn't be alone in my home without having it on. I would be on a schedule depending on what was coming on and at what time. If the TV wasn't on, I felt anxious, lonely, and sad. I also got addicted to reading the news and

About CLAUDIA

Claudia Chung is a writer who moonlights as a school teacher. She is currently working on a book of essays and stories on the trials, tribulations, and the funny in being a young widow.

browsing the internet on my phone. And I did this while the TV was on. All I knew was I couldn't handle silence. I was in a coma — away from life. But at some point I woke up and an opportunity came my way. A path to change. For me, I had to move home.

I no longer own a TV. I still read the news, but with purpose. And never, ever on my phone. I've changed everything about my relationship with digital entertainment. I was — and still am — all in.

Will I ever own a TV again? Probably not (unless I meet someone and it's a dealbreaker for him, like smoking is for me). I just know that if I have one in my home, I'll simply binge watch some crap on Netflix. And before I know it, I'll have it on a 24-hour rotation. Instead,

I'm committed to the change I made.

I've learned that, if you truly want to break your bad habits, you have to go extreme on yourself. Take it seriously. Be in the no-matter-what club. And get ready to fail like nobody's business. Why? Because it'll be worth it. If it isn't, why bother in the first place?

