



MONDAYS

with Mike

AULTCARE

Weekly
PLAN

monday

Understanding change by learning to ride an elephant!

I am sure that today's title made you smile AND piqued your curiosity! What does understanding change have to do with riding an elephant, you ask? The answer: More than you ever thought possible!

Jonathan Haidt, University of Virginia psychologist, wrote a book called *The Happiness Hypothesis*. He says our brain's emotional side is an Elephant, and our rational side is its Rider. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But the Rider's control is precarious because the Rider is so small relative to the Elephant. Anytime the six-ton Elephant and the Rider disagree about which direction to go, the Rider is going to lose. He's completely overmatched.

The weakness of the Elephant, our emotional and instinctive side, is clear: It's lazy and skittish, often looking for the quick payoff (ice cream cone) over the long-term payoff (being thin). When change efforts fail, it's usually the Elephant's fault since the kinds of change we want typically involve short-term sacrifices for long-term payoffs. Change often fails because the Rider can't keep the Elephant on the road long enough to reach the destination. But here's the kicker, the Elephant is actually the one that gets things done when change is successful!

If we want to change things, we've got to appeal to both. The Rider provides the planning and direction, and the Elephant provides the energy. So, if we reach the Riders of our team, but not the Elephants, our team will have understanding without motivation. If we reach our Elephants, but not our Riders, we'll have passion without direction. In both cases, the flaws can be paralyzing. But, when Elephants and Riders move together, change can come more easily.

As we lead ourselves, our teams, and our families, let's continually find ways to hone our elephant riding skills!

Have a great week!

