

# MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

PREPARING  
PEOPLE FOR  
CHANGE

WILLIAM R. MILLER  
STEPHEN ROLLNICK

*second edition*



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SECOND EDITION

*Preparing People for Change*

WILLIAM R. MILLER  
STEPHEN ROLLNICK



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*To our parents,  
Hazel and Ralph Miller  
and  
Sonia and Julian Rollnick*

*May we succeed in passing on  
such love to the next generation*

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## About the Authors

**William R. Miller, PhD**, is Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of New Mexico and Codirector of UNM's Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions. Dr. Miller's publications encompass more than 300 articles and chapters, as well as 27 books, including, most recently, *Quantum Change: When Epiphanies and Sudden Insights Transform Ordinary Lives* (with Janet C'de Baca; Guilford Press, 2001). He maintains an active interest in pastoral counseling and the integration of spirituality and psychology. Dr. Miller is supported by a 15-year senior career Research Scientist Award from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, which allows him to focus full time on clinical research.

**Stephen Rollnick, PhD**, is on the faculty in the Department of General Practice at the University of Wales College of Medicine. He has also worked for many years as a clinical psychologist in the British National Health Service. With a background in the addiction field, his interest turned to consultations about behavior change in wider health care practice, where practitioners try to encourage patients to change their lifestyle and use of medication. Dr. Rollnick's research and teaching activity is now focused on the behavior of practitioners and other topics. He has trained practitioners in many countries and continents, and has published a wide range of research papers and articles. His most recent book is *Health Behaviour Change: A Guide for Practitioners* (with Pip Mason and Christopher C. Butler; Churchill Livingstone, 1999).

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# Contributing Authors

**Jeff Allison, MA, CertEd**, was a specialist social worker and service manager in the U.K. addictions field. He is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers. Mr. Allison now runs an international training consultancy providing short courses and practice supervision in motivational interviewing and health behavior change techniques for a wide range of organizations and professional groups. His special interests include applications within the criminal justice and smoking cessation fields.

**Hal Arkowitz, PhD**, received his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. After a predoctoral internship in clinical psychology at the University of California at San Francisco Medical Center, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Following this, Dr. Arkowitz was an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Oregon, and is presently Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Arizona.

**John S. Baer, PhD**, is Research Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Washington in Seattle. He is also the Director of the Interdisciplinary Fellowship in Substance Abuse Treatment at the VA Puget Sound Health Care Center, also in Seattle. Dr. Baer's research interests and activities focus on the etiology, prevention, and treatment of addictive behaviors. He has studied smoking cessation and relapse, developed and tested brief interventions for heavy drinking in both adolescents and young adults, and participated in multisite trials of pharmacotherapy and behavioral treatments of alcohol dependence.

**Stephanie Ballasiotes, MC**, a Health Behavior Consultant for the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington, provides training and consultation on motivational strategies for the Women's Health Initiative, a nationally funded disease prevention study with 60,000 participants in the United States. Ms. Ballasiotes previously trained health care and addictions treatment personnel in motivational and educational methods in working with HIV/AIDS/HCV issues, as well as authored numerous publications for use in the Seattle community. She also helped establish one of the first harm reduction community treatment programs for methamphetamine users in the Seattle area and provides community-based motivational interviewing training.

**Tom Barth, PhD**, is a clinical psychologist in Norway. Since 1980, he has worked in the Bergen Clinics Foundation in outpatient and inpatient settings with a variety of addictive behaviors. Currently, he is head of an outpatient clinic for addic-



tions. Dr. Barth's clinical work has been based on motivational interviewing since 1983, with individual patients, with groups, and as a consultant to community-based treatment and prevention projects. He is also coauthor of a textbook on the Norwegian version of motivational interviewing.

**Belinda Borrelli, PhD**, is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior in the Center for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine at Brown Medical School. She currently has two federally funded grants (National Cancer Institute and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute) involving training home health care nurses to deliver a motivational interviewing-based smoking cessation treatment versus standard care; one trial targets home-bound medically ill smokers; the other focuses on promoting smoking cessation in parents of children receiving home care for asthma. Dr. Borrelli has trained nurses, psychology students, medical students, and psychiatric residents in motivational interviewing.

**Brian L. Burke, MA**, is currently completing his doctoral studies in clinical psychology at the University of Arizona. His research interests include a meta-analysis of motivational interviewing studies as well as a pilot study adapting motivational interviewing for the treatment of clinical depression.

**Christopher C. Butler, MD**, graduated in medicine from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and after various hospital posts in urban and rural South Africa, completed residency training in general practice in the United Kingdom. After nearly 10 years in the Department of General Practice at the University of Wales College of Medicine, he joined the faculty at McMaster University, Canada, in 2001. Dr. Butler was awarded a doctorate for work on health behavior change in 1999 and is the coauthor of a book on consulting around health behavior change (with Stephen Rollnick and Pip Mason). In 2001, he was a visiting professor in Japan to advise on research into health behavior change. He has also published 35 peer-reviewed papers, helped win 12 research grants, and is a family physician in private practice.

**Kelly Conforti, PhD**, received her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She is the Psychologist-Manager of Psychotherapy Services and the Intensive Outpatient and Partial Hospital Programs at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center Mental Health Center. Dr. Conforti's clinical interests include combining cognitive-behavioral coping skills therapies and motivational interviewing in the treatment of individuals with dual disorders, while her research interests lie in the use of psychophysiological outcome measures.

**Carlo C. DiClemente, PhD**, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He is the codeveloper of the transtheoretical model of behavior change with James Prochaska. Dr. DiClemente is the author of numerous scientific articles and book chapters on motivation and behavior change and the application of this model to a variety of problem behaviors. He is coauthor of a self-help book based on this model of change, *Changing for Good*, as well as several professional books. For the past 20 years he has conducted funded research in health and addictive behaviors and is a member of the Project MATCH and COMBINE research groups. He also serves as a consultant to private and public treatment programs.

**Colleen DiIorio, PhD, RN, FAAN**, is a Professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Health Education of the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory

University. She holds a secondary faculty appointment at the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, also at Emory University. Dr. DiIorio is a nurse by training and has extensive experience in health promotion and disease prevention, including HIV/AIDS prevention research. She has served on national review panels and advisory boards, is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, and has received awards for her research, teaching, and service to the community. She has numerous publications describing her work and presents frequently at national and international conferences.

**Christopher Dunn, PhD**, is a psychologist on the Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences faculty at the University of Washington in Seattle. He specializes in brief interventions for substance abuse and other lifestyle changes among patients with a chronic medical disease. Dr. Dunn's research focuses on brief intervention outcomes among substance abusers and the training of primary care residents to perform brief behavioral change counseling.

**Denise Ernst, MA**, is a Senior Research Associate at the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, Oregon. Her research interests include the application of motivational interviewing to health behaviors in medical and community settings.

**Joel I. D. Ginsburg, PhD**, received his doctorate in experimental psychology from Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. He is a National Trainer and Quality Control Coordinator for the Correctional Service of Canada's Substance Abuse Programs, and a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers. Dr. Ginsburg's interests include motivational interviewing practice, research, and training in the criminal justice system.

**Nancy Handmaker, PhD**, is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of New Mexico. She is experienced in the training and practice of motivational interviewing applications for health care settings and in substance abuse treatment facilities. Currently, Dr. Handmaker is engaged in the study of the effects of motivational interviewing on drinking during pregnancy toward the prevention of fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorders.

**Jacki Hecht, RN, MSN**, is a Motivational Intervention Coordinator at the Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine, Brown Medical School and The Miriam Hospital. She currently works on numerous federally funded studies where she provides training and supervision in delivering motivational interventions and consultation on intervention design. Ms. Hecht recently copresented at the Introduction to Motivational Interviewing workshop at the Society for Behavioral Medicine meeting in 2001.

**Alexander Kantchelov, MD**, is a Senior Trainer and Managing Founder of the South-east European Institute for Motivational Interventions and Behavior Change, Deputy Director of the National Centre for Addictions at the Ministry of Health in Bulgaria, and Chair of the Expert Council of the National Drugs Council, Bulgarian Council of Ministers. Dr. Kantchelov is a member of the Society for Psychotherapy Research-European Continental Chapter, the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers, the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association, the Bulgarian Association of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychotherapies, and the Bulgarian Physicians' Union. He has written more than 40 publications and presentations for Bulgarian and international congresses, conferences, and magazines focusing on

drug- and alcohol-related issues and implications of psychotherapy and treatment modalities in the addictions field.

**Ruth E. Mann, MSc**, is Head of Sexual Offender and Domestic Violence Treatment Programs in Her Majesty's Prison Service, in England and Wales. She oversees five programs for sexual offenders, running in approximately 30 prisons and treating over 1,000 sexual offenders per annum. Ms. Mann is currently studying part time for a doctorate, investigating schemas related to sexual offending. She has published a number of clinical and research articles and book chapters on the topics of relapse prevention, motivational interviewing, and sexual offender treatment in general.

**John E. Martin, PhD**, is Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University and a faculty member of the SDSU/UCSD Joint Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology since 1986. He has conducted motivational interviewing training since 1996 with his doctoral psychology students, as well as for therapists, social workers, nurses, community action workers, addictions counselors, and probation officers in both California and South Africa. Dr. Martin's research and publications have focused on the behavioral and health aspects of smoking treatment in recovering alcoholics, diet, exercise, medical compliance, high-risk drinking and drug use in college students, and spiritual and behavioral approaches to change.

**Richard Ogle, PhD**, received his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of New Mexico. He is currently a postdoctoral psychology fellow at the Center for Excellence in Substance Abuse Treatment and Education at the VA Puget Sound Health Care Center, Seattle Division. Dr. Ogle is a motivational interviewing trainer and his research interests include the role of alcohol in aggression and substance abuse treatment outcome research.

**Michele Packard, PhD**, is the Executive Director of Sage Institute, in Boulder, Colorado, specializing in training of mental health and substance abuse professionals. In 1997 she was the recipient of the Best Practices Award from the Managed Care Behavioral Health Interest Group, and in 1993 she was voted best trainer by Colorado substance abuse program directors. Dr. Packard's current areas of interest include curriculum development that integrates the use of motivational interviewing in the treatment of serious and persistent mental illness and treatment of co-occurring Axis I and Axis II disorders as well as treatment of affective and anxiety disorders. She has also developed manualized protocols for criminal justice and substance abuse treatment programs.

**Peggy L. Peterson, PhD, MPH**, is a Research Scientist at the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute at the University of Washington in Seattle. She has published in the areas of drug prevention and HIV risk reduction. Dr. Peterson's current research concerns testing a brief motivational interviewing intervention to reduce alcohol and drug risk among homeless adolescents.

**Ken Resnicow, PhD**, is a Professor in the Department of Behavioral Science and Health Education at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. His research interests include the design and evaluation of health promotion programs for special populations, particularly cardiovascular and cancer prevention interventions for African Americans; understanding the relationship between ethnicity and health behaviors; substance use prevention and harm reduction; motivational interviewing for chronic disease prevention; and comprehensive school health pro-

grams. Dr. Resnicow also serves as a co-investigator on several studies and has also published over 100 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.

**Gary S. Rose, PhD**, is Clinical Instructor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers and lectures widely on topics of motivation, treatment compliance, and behavior change in clinical health psychology and the addictive disorders. Dr. Rose teaches at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology and is also a consulting psychologist with the University of Massachusetts Medical Center Division of Behavioral Medicine and the Joslin Clinic, Harvard Medical School. He also maintains a private practice in behavior therapy in Chelmsford, Massachusetts.

**David B. Rosengren, PhD**, a clinical psychologist in Seattle, Washington, divides his time between research at the University of Washington's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute and private practice and community-based motivational interviewing training. His research focus has been on the application of motivational interviewing across addiction and nonaddiction settings. Dr. Rosengren was the first coordinator of the international association of motivational interviewing trainers (MINT) and is former editor of the MINT newsletter. He also has authored several journal articles and book chapters, as well as served as a guest editor for *Addictive Behaviors and Addiction*.

**Frederick Rotgers, PsyD**, received his doctorate in clinical psychology from Rutgers University. He has had extensive experience in corrections, and was a faculty member of the Rutgers Center for Alcohol Studies and Assistant Chief Psychologist at the Smithers Alcoholism Treatment and Training Center. He is currently an independent practitioner and consultant. Dr. Rotgers has published widely and is senior editor of *Treating Substance Abuse: Theory and Technique*. He was a member of the consulting team that designed the Differential Substance Abuse Treatment (DSAT) system that is being implemented in the State of Maine Department of Corrections and Drug Courts. DSAT is an assessment-driven, research-based approach that makes extensive use of motivational approaches.

**Francisco P. Sanchez, PhD**, is a staff psychologist in the New Mexico VA Healthcare System, where he works with seriously mentally ill patients and those who abuse substances. His research interests include the effects of spirituality on mental health and incorporation of spirituality in psychotherapy.

**Johanna E. Soet, MA**, is a Senior Associate Faculty member at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. She provides training and supervision to several projects evaluating the effectiveness of motivational interviewing in health care settings.

**Angelica K. Thevos, PhD, MSW**, is Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Medical University of South Carolina. Her experience in clinical research and treatment spans almost two decades and is reflected in numerous publications and scientific presentations. Her interests and expertise lie in the transfer of recent advances in behavioral science research to practical clinical applications in the community. She is internationally recognized as a cross-culturally competent trainer. Dr. Thevos is also Director of the Sahred Scientific Resources Core of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism-funded Charleston Alcohol Research Center and is a co-investigator for the Southeastern

Node of the National Institute on Drug Abuse-sponsored Clinical Trials Network. She also serves as a consultant to several international research and aid organizations and is on research journal editorial and advisory boards.

**Georgy Vassilev, MD**, is Director of the National Centre for Addictions at the Ministry of Health in Bulgaria and a Founder of the South-east European Institute for Motivational Interventions and Behavior Change. He is principal author of National Program for Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Addiction for Bulgaria, 2001-2005. He is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers, the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association, the Bulgarian Association of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychotherapies, and the Bulgarian Physicians' Union. Dr. Vassilev has written more than 30 publications and presentations for Bulgarian and international conferences, symposiums, and magazines. Along with his administrative work, he is deeply involved with the introduction of motivational interviewing in Bulgaria.

**Mary Marden Velasquez, PhD**, is Associate Professor in the Department of Family Practice and Community Medicine at the University of Texas-Houston Medical School. Her background and training are in the areas of clinical psychology, health psychology, and public health. Dr. Velasquez is a motivational interviewing trainer and has presented many workshops in the United States and abroad integrating motivational interviewing with the transtheoretical model of change.

**Christopher C. Wagner, PhD**, is a clinical psychologist and faculty member in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University and a consultant with the CSAT-funded Mid-Atlantic Addiction Technology Transfer Center. He hosts the motivational interviewing website at [www.motivationalinterview.org](http://www.motivationalinterview.org). Dr. Wagner's research interests focus on interpersonal aspects of psychotherapeutic and other treatment relationships as well as incorporating individual and group motivational interviewing approaches into community treatment settings.

**Scott T. Walters, MA**, is a predoctoral intern with the VA Boston Healthcare System and Boston University School of Medicine. His research has focused on brief interventions for heavy-drinking college students, aspects of group dynamics, and philosophical and spiritual issues in treatment. Mr. Walters has authored several empirical and theoretical articles on addictions treatment.

**John R. Weekes, PhD**, is Manager of Program Policy and Information Management for the Correctional Service of Canada and Adjunct Research Professor of Forensic Addictions in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. He has served as a consultant on forensic substance abuse, harm reduction, and drug strategy issues for a large number of international correctional jurisdictions. Dr. Weekes has also served as a member of the American Correctional Association's (ACA) "Best Practices" Coordinating Council and as a member and Chair of ACA's Substance Abuse Committee.

**Allan Zuckoff, MA**, is Research Instructor of Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and Codirector of Training, Center for Psychiatric and Chemical Dependency Services, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is also a PhD candidate in clinical psychology at Duquesne University. His work has focused on development and testing of adaptations of motivational interviewing to enhance treatment adherence in the areas of dual dis-

orders, HIV risk reduction, traumatic grief, bipolar disorder, and depression. Mr. Zuckoff has coauthored a book as well as several articles and treatment manuals related to this work.

**Allen Zweben, DSW**, is Director of the Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Research and Professor of Social Work in the School of Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has expertise in a variety of areas related to substance abuse treatment, including early detection and screening, brief intervention, family treatment, adherence/retention techniques, and patient-treatment matching. His publications have been focused primarily on innovative approaches in the treatment of alcohol problems. Currently Dr. Zweben is one of the principal investigators in the COMBINE study, a National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism-funded multisite collaborative project studying the efficacy of combining pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy interventions for alcohol problems.

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# Preface

A decade has passed since we sat together in Sydney, Australia, and envisioned the first edition of *Motivational Interviewing*. Before we met in 1989, we had been working separately in the United States and the United Kingdom on methods for practicing and learning this clinical approach. Little had been written about it, and we imagined a book for clinicians, bringing together what had been learned about motivational interviewing, not only by ourselves but by others. The result was an unusual volume: half authored, half edited. We had no idea what would come of it.

By the time The Guilford Press approached us about preparing this second edition, much had changed. In the addiction treatment field, on which we had focused the original book, practice had shifted substantially away from the confrontational methods of the 1970s and 1980s. Meanwhile, applications of motivational interviewing had spread into many other areas, including general medical care, health promotion, social work, and corrections. Responding to rapidly growing requests for clinical training, we had prepared more than 300 trainers who formed an international organization of motivational interviewing trainers. The first edition had been published in Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese, with several other translations in progress. A website had been developed ([www.motivationalinterview.org](http://www.motivationalinterview.org)), and various briefer adaptations of the clinical method had appeared.

As a result of these and other developments, this is quite a different book from the first edition. Its focus has been broadened from addictions to behavior change in general. With 10 more years of experience in seeing what seems to help or confuse people as they learn the clinical method, we have sharpened up some presentations and left out other material that seemed to be distracting. Among the stylistic changes, we have departed from citing references within the text of the first 14 chapters and have used citations more sparingly in endnotes. This and other changes are meant to render the narrative even more accessible and relevant to a broad range of clinicians, while we retain documentation for those who wish to pursue background reading and research.

Part I is almost entirely rewritten. We have removed most of the material that contrasted motivational interviewing with other counseling approaches,



and the prior counterpoint with confrontation is gone. Instead we have focused on a clear description of what the method *is* rather than what it is *not*. We have removed from the first 14 chapters nearly all the material on approaches with which motivational interviewing has sometimes been confused: FRAMES, assessment feedback, motivational enhancement therapy, the transtheoretical stages of change, brief negotiation, and other brief adaptations. These topics are now covered in special chapters in Part IV.

We have taken a further step away from the traditional concept of resistance as motivated client defensiveness. We now present (in Chapter 5) change talk (formerly self-motivational statements) and resistance behavior as opposite sides of the same coin, simply reflecting the poles of a client's ambivalence. After some deliberation, we did decide to retain the term "resistance" because of its familiarity, but to rehabilitate it a bit. Alternative terms that we had tried out (e.g., countermotivational statements, counterchange talk) seemed no more satisfactory or less pejorative. Change talk and resistance are now presented as complementary behaviors, and we have a chapter on how to respond to each: Chapter 7 is completely new and Chapter 8 is a reworking of our prior chapter on handling resistance. We have removed (but still discuss) the concept of therapeutic paradox, distinguishing it from the clinical method of motivational interviewing.

Other chapters contain new material as well. This time we included a definition of motivational interviewing (Chapter 4). Chapter 9 is entirely new, addressing an issue on which we had been mostly silent before: What do you do when importance is high but confidence is low? We have introduced an approach to enhancing confidence that, while incorporating some familiar strategies, places them in the collaborative change-talk context of motivational interviewing. It is accompanied by case material, and new clinical dialogue appears throughout the book, although the extended case example (Chapter 11) has been retained with relatively little change. There is a new chapter, Chapter 12, on ethical aspects of practice.

Part III is almost entirely new. Instead of presenting specific techniques for teaching, we focus on how people learn motivational interviewing. We reflect on processes of learning (including our own) in Chapter 13, and then on broad ways for facilitating learning in Chapter 14.

Finally, Part IV consists of all new contributed chapters focused on various applications of motivational interviewing. We intentionally avoided chapters dealing with applications to specific problems or disorders, both because there are so many and because there is an insufficient research base in most specific problem areas at present. Instead these chapters focus on applications of motivational interviewing in particular contexts (e.g., correctional settings, groups, public health) and populations (e.g., medical patients, adolescents, and couples). Other chapters in Part IV examine the relationships of motivational interviewing to values (Chapter 19) and the transtheoretical stages of change (Chapter 15), and provide a review of outcome research on this method to date (Chapter 16).



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# Acknowledgments

There is little that is truly original in motivational interviewing. We have built on the extraordinary contributions of Carl R. Rogers and his students, particularly Thomas Gordon, who developed the methods of client-centered psychotherapy over the past 50 years. Also influential in our thinking about motivational interviewing was the work of James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente on the transtheoretical model of change, Milton Rokeach on human values, and Daryl Bem on self-perception theory.

We cannot thank enough our colleagues from the international Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT) for the enthusiasm, collaborative spirit, and sheer talent that they bring to our annual meetings, steering committee, newsletter, videotapes, website, and training workshops. One of the great joys of our work over the years has been the opportunity to meet and work with such remarkable people as the MINTies, whose creativity and generosity manifest what they teach. Our own thinking and approaches have been greatly enriched by their collaboration and friendship.

We particularly thank Gian Paolo Guelfi, who opened to us his summer home in the northern Italian village of Fumeri for a concentrated sabbatical during which we drafted most of this second edition. It was a wonderfully peaceful time when we traded in our offices, faxes, and e-mail for green hillside walks, birdsongs, and a wood-fired pizza oven. We are also indebted to our families and colleagues who made this time away possible. This is a much better book for it.

William Miller acknowledges with gratitude the ongoing support of the U.S. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, from which a senior research scientist award (No. K05-AA00133) has permitted him for the past 11 years to devote full-time effort to developing and evaluating new methods for the treatment of addictive behaviors.

Having worked on a variety of book projects over the years, we have come to appreciate greatly the qualities and invaluable contributions of a highly skilled editor. We have been fortunate to work with some of the very best. Seymour Weingarten saw promise in our first edition and began our long

relationship with The Guilford Press. Kitty Moore shepherded this second edition from start to finish, always providing patient support and expert guidance. We received expert help from dozens of capable staff throughout the process of producing and releasing this second edition, for which we are most grateful.

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PART I

*Context*

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## CHAPTER 1

# *Why Do People Change?*

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness, concerning all acts of initiative and creation. There is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision.

—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Interest in the topic of motivation often begins with wondering why people *don't* change. It is a common frustration for health professionals and teachers, counselors and parents, and those who work in social service and judicial systems. It seems apparent that what a person is doing either isn't working or is self-destructive; you can see a better way, yet the person persists in the same behavior. In a way, it is captured in the words, "You would think . . ."

You would think that having had a heart attack would be enough to persuade a man to quit smoking, change his diet, exercise more, and take his medication.

You would think that hangovers, damaged relationships, an auto crash, and memory blackouts would be enough to convince a woman to stop drinking.

You would think that it would be apparent to any teenager that getting a



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