

A FREE GUIDE FROM
ART BASED COACHING

Esok,

Esok,

Esok.

**You know the way.
So why the delay?**

PUSH, PULL, PATH:

Start Today.

WITH ENCIK ESOK



INSIDE

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00

BEFORE WE BEGIN

Meet the man who always starts tomorrow.

Esok means tomorrow. You have probably met him. You may have been him.

Esok, Esok, Esok



BEFORE WE BEGIN

Meet Encik Esok.

Esok means tomorrow. Which is exactly when Encik Esok plans to start.

Encik Esok is a small, glossy ceramic man. He is smart. He works hard. He has read the books, and he could explain the steps to anyone who asks.

Ask him what he should change, and he will tell you in one breath. Ask him when, and he will smile and say, “Esok.”

And still, nothing moves.

You may know someone like him. You may have been him, once or twice. Most of us have.

This guide is about why Encik Esok knows how to change, and still does not.



BEFORE WE BEGIN



A pattern is a shape that was fired so many times it now feels like you.



He was clay once.

Look closely. Encik Esok is ceramic. Shiny, hard, finished.

But he was not always like this. **He was clay once.** Soft, warm, easy to shape.

Then life put him in the kiln. A busy family. A boss who always wants more. A teacher who was hard to please. Each time, he came out in the same shape, a little harder than before.

That is all a pattern is. Not a fault. Not a weakness. Just a shape that was fired so many times it now feels like you.

The good news hides in the same picture. A cup feels fixed. The person holding the cup is still soft.

01

PART ONE

Why knowing is not enough.

You can read every book on swimming and still sink.



PART ONE · WHY KNOWING IS NOT ENOUGH

The swimming book.

You can read every book on swimming and still sink.

Encik Esok has read about boundaries. He has watched the videos on saying no. He even made a plan in a nice notebook.

Then Monday comes. His boss asks for one more report. And before his head can say a word, his mouth has already said, “Okay, *can*.”

This is not because he is stupid or lazy. It is because **knowing lives in the head, and habits live in the body**. The head reads the book. The body still does what it has always done.

So reading one more book will not help him. Neither will a stronger promise to himself.

Knowing how is not the same as doing.



PART ONE · WHY KNOWING IS NOT ENOUGH

What the old way still gives him.

Here is the part nobody likes to say out loud: the old way still pays.

When Encik Esok says yes to everyone, everyone is happy with him. He feels needed. Nobody is disappointed. Nobody is angry.

It is like an old pair of slippers. Old and a bit ugly, but so comfortable that the new shoes stay in the box.

So the pattern is not stupid. **It made sense once.** Maybe it kept him safe as a child, or kept the peace at home.

It is also costing him. His evenings. His energy. His own voice. Both things are true at the same time, and change starts when you can hold both.



The pattern made sense once. It is also costing you.

02

PART TWO

The three things that move a change.

Push. Pull. Path. Most of us only know the first one.



PART TWO · THE THREE THINGS THAT MOVE A CHANGE

The big picture: push, pull, path.

Start with the map.

Think of change as a car trip. You need an **engine** to move, a **road** to drive on, and an **address** to reach. Push is the engine. Path is the road. Pull is the address. Miss one, and the car does not arrive.



Now, each one up close.



Push

THE ENGINE

WHAT IT IS

The pressure that says, “not this any more.”

PICTURE IT AS

A fire alarm. It tells you to get out, but it does not say where the exit is.

ASK YOURSELF

What am I tired of?

WHEN IT IS MISSING

Nothing feels urgent. Life is fine, just a bit grey.



Path

THE ROAD

WHAT IT IS

A step small enough, somewhere safe, with someone beside you.

PICTURE IT AS

Stepping stones across a river, and a hand held out.

ASK YOURSELF

What is the smallest first step?

WHEN IT IS MISSING

Big promise on Monday. Old way back by Friday.



Pull

THE ADDRESS

WHAT IT IS

A picture of life after the change that you can feel, not only think.

PICTURE IT AS

Standing in the kitchen of your new home, in the morning light.

ASK YOURSELF

What would one ordinary evening look like?

WHEN IT IS MISSING

“Less tired, lah.” A wish with no picture.

You cannot plan the push. Pull and path can be built.

Based on the Formula for Change (Gleicher; Beckhard & Harris; Dannemiller): Dissatisfaction × Vision × First steps > Resistance

PART TWO • THE THREE THINGS THAT MOVE A CHANGE

Push: what you are leaving behind.

Push is the pressure that says, “*Not this any more.*”

Think of a fire alarm. It is very good at telling you to get out. It is no help at all in finding the exit.

Push comes slowly (one more late night, one more yes you did not mean) or all at once (a burnout, a loss, a door that closes on you). You cannot plan the second kind. Life decides it.

Why push alone does not move us:

- It only looks back. You know what you hate, but not where to go.
- It fades. Pain that lasts long enough starts to feel normal.
- It makes us feel ashamed, and shame makes us hide, not move.
- Many of us were raised to *tahan* and *sabar*. We can carry push for years.

Encik Esok has plenty of push. It has been loud for three years.

If push were enough, Encik Esok would have changed long ago.



PART TWO · THE THREE THINGS THAT MOVE A CHANGE

Pull: where you are going towards.

Pull is a picture of life after the change, one you can feel, not only think.

Think of moving house. Nobody packs boxes only because the old flat is bad. They pack because they have stood in the new kitchen and imagined the morning light there.

Why most goals do not pull:

- They are not clear. “Less stress” is only “less pain”. It is not a place you can go.
- They live only in the head. The body does not walk towards sentences.
- They belong to someone else. A picture from someone else does not pull you much.

Feelings are information. Before we act, the body looks at the sky, like checking the weather before going out. A flat picture gets a quiet no.

Ask Encik Esok what life looks like after the change. He says, “Less tired, lah.”

“Less tired, lah” is not a picture. It is just a complaint, said softly.



PART TWO · THE THREE THINGS THAT MOVE A CHANGE

Path: how you get there.

Path is a first step small enough to take, somewhere safe to practise, and someone beside you.

Small enough. “Leave at six every day” is not a step. It is a whole new life, asked for on a Monday. Leave at six once, on a Thursday. That is a step.

Somewhere safe. New feels unsafe, even when new is better. So we practise first where nothing is at stake, like a fire drill on a calm day. When the real day comes, the feet already know the way.

Someone beside you. A pattern is like an accent. You picked it up from the people around you, and it softens around people too. Beside means beside: not fixing you, not judging you. Walking with you.

Encik Esok tried to leave at six every day, alone, starting on the busiest week of the year. On day five, his boss walked past at 5.55pm. He sat back down.

Encik Esok did not fail. His path was a cliff.



PART TWO · THE THREE THINGS THAT MOVE A CHANGE

Engine, address, road.



Change moves like a car. Push is the engine. Pull is the address. Path is the road.

You have	It feels like	Picture
Push only	Stuck and exhausted	Engine on, car not moving
Pull only	Lovely plans, nothing moves	An address, no car
Path only	Busy, going nowhere	A road, no reason to drive
Push + pull	Knows, wants, still esok	Engine on, address set, no road
Pull + path	Gentle change, no crisis	A calm Sunday drive
All three	Change that sticks	The car arrives

Encik Esok lives in the highlighted row. And look at the row under it: **you cannot plan the push, but pull and path can be built.** You do not have to wait for a crisis.

03

PART THREE

What gets in the way.

Even when new is better, new feels unsafe.





PART THREE · WHAT GETS IN THE WAY

New feels unsafe.

Even when new is better, new feels unsafe.

The old way is tiring, but the body knows it by heart. It is the route home you could drive with your eyes half closed. The new way is a road you have never taken, at night, with no map.

So at the first sign of pressure, Encik Esok goes back. Not because he is weak. Because **what we already know feels safe**, and the body chooses safety first.

Pushing harder does not fix this. Telling him off does not fix this. What helps is meeting the new road on a calm day, a few times, until it is no longer a stranger.

By the time it matters, it is not the first time any more.

What we know is not always good. It only feels safe.

PART THREE · WHAT GETS IN THE WAY

The step was too big.

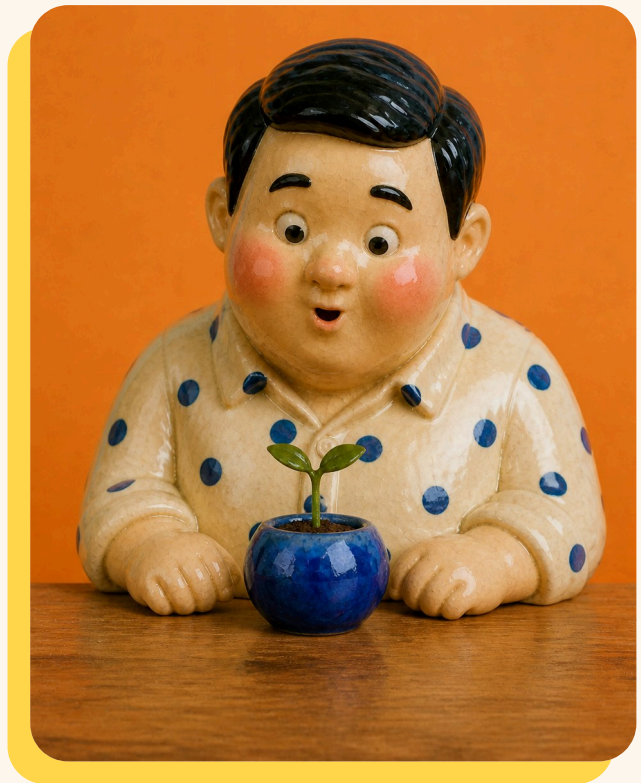
When a change does not last, the problem is usually not you. The step was too big.

BJ Fogg, who studies habits at Stanford, makes this point in his book *Tiny Habits*. We are told to dream big, and then we try to climb the whole staircase on the first morning.

Encik Esok decided to exercise every day for an hour. He lasted three days.

A step that works is so small it feels almost silly. One push-up. One line in a journal. One slow breath before answering an email. Small enough to do even on the worst day.

And then, the part most people skip: **let yourself feel good about it.** That small good feeling is what helps a habit put down roots.



Small enough to start today. That is the right size.

PART THREE · WHAT GETS IN THE WAY

Change is what you do. Transformation is who you become.

People use the two words as if they mean the same thing. They do not.

Change is a new behaviour. Encik Esok leaves the office at six. He can plan it. He can also stop doing it next week.

Transformation is a new self. Encik Esok stops believing that staying late makes him a good person. Then leaving at six takes no effort at all. It is simply who he is.

Think of a caterpillar. Putting a hat on it is change. Becoming a butterfly is transformation.

You can decide to change. You cannot decide to transform. But every small change you practise makes a little more room for it.

You can plan a change. You cannot schedule who you become.



04

PART FOUR

Why we start with the hands.

Reading the recipe is not the same as tasting the dish.



PART FOUR · WHY WE START WITH THE HANDS

Reading the recipe, tasting the dish.

Talking about a change is like reading a recipe. Making something with your hands is like tasting the dish.

Both are useful. Only one tells your body what it is really like.

Hands build pull. When you shape a small picture of life after the change, it stops being a sentence in your head. It sits in front of you, with colours, size and space. And because you made it, it feels like *yours*.

Hands build path. Moving a piece of clay to a new place is a tiny practice run. Nothing is at stake. It is only clay. That is exactly why the body is willing to try.

This is why, at our table, the hands go first and the words come after.

The body does not walk towards sentences. It walks towards pictures it has felt.

PART FOUR · WHY WE START WITH THE HANDS

Put it where you can see it.



What stops you lives in your head. In there, it feels huge, and it has no shape.

It is hard to face something you cannot see. Like a strange noise in the dark house: the not-knowing is worse than the thing itself.

So give it a shape. Give it a colour. Put it on the table.

Now it is in front of you, not inside you. You can walk around it. You can look at it from the side. And very often, it is **smaller than it felt from inside**.

Once seen, it loses some of its power. Encik Esok did not solve anything that evening. He simply saw it, for the first time, with some distance.

Once seen, it loses some of its power.

PART FOUR · WHY WE START WITH THE HANDS

We look after the soil.

We cannot promise you transformation.
Nobody honestly can.

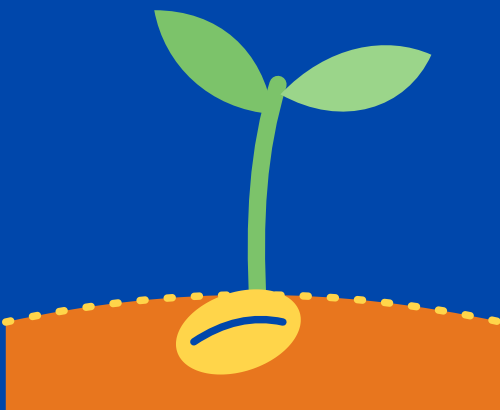
A gardener cannot make a seed open. She cannot pull the shoot up faster. What she can do is look after the soil: water, light, patience, and time.

That is what we offer. A table. Simple materials. A safe place to practise, with someone beside you.

A few things stay the same every time:

- Nobody tells you what your picture means. You know your life best.
- You never have to tell your story out loud.
- It is not about making something beautiful. No art skills needed.
- The person guiding you walks beside you. They do not fix you.

Do the change. Let the rest grow.



05

PART FIVE

Beyond push, pull and path.

What are you protecting yourself from?



PART FIVE · BEYOND PUSH, PULL AND PATH

The handbrake.

Sometimes the engine runs, the road is clear, and you know the address. And still the car does not move. The handbrake is on.

Beyond push, pull and path, there is one more thing: **what we are protecting ourselves from.**

- “If I do not start, I cannot fail.”
- “If I do not send it, nobody can judge it.”
- “If I stay busy, I do not have to feel it.”

This is what procrastination and avoidance often are. Not laziness. A handbrake the body pulled up long ago, to keep you safe.

You cannot argue a handbrake down. Pushing harder only makes the engine louder. What helps is to see it from the outside, where it is smaller than it felt from inside.

That is what our next free programme looks into.

Two live evenings with Prof. Hildrun Rolff (40 years in art therapy and sensorimotor, trauma-informed work) on procrastination and avoidance: one for you, one for the child in your life, and the child you once were. Wed 18 and 25 November 2026, 6.00pm to 8.30pm Malaysia time, on Zoom.

Find out more:

mini.learnartbased.com



06

YOUR TURN

Which one is missing for you?

A page to write on, where the idea comes from, and who we are.



YOUR TURN

Your page: which one is missing?



Pick one change you have been saying “esok” to. Then sit with these questions. There are no right answers, and nobody needs to see this page.

Push

What am I tired of? How long have I been tired of it?

Have I felt it for so long that it now feels normal?

Pull

If the change had already happened, what would one ordinary evening look like?

Does that picture feel warm, flat, or frightening? Is it mine?

Path

What is the smallest first step, so small it feels almost silly? Where could I try it safely, and who could sit beside me?

Of push, pull and path, which one is missing for me right now?

FOR COUNSELLORS AND COACHES

Where push, pull, path comes from.

Push, pull, path is our plain-language version of one of the oldest ideas in the study of change.

$$C = D \times V \times F > R$$

D Dissatisfaction = **Push**

V Vision = **Pull**

F First steps = **Path**

R Resistance to change

The three are **multiplied**, not added. If any one is close to zero, the total cannot outweigh resistance, however strong the other two are. This is the client who can explain the pattern perfectly and still returns next week unchanged.

Where the idea comes from

- **The Formula for Change.** Created by David Gleicher (Arthur D. Little, early 1960s), published by Richard Beckhard and Reuben Harris in *Organizational Transitions* (1977, 1987), and refined by Kathleen Dannemiller and Robert Jacobs (1992) into $C = D \times V \times F > R$.
- **Force field analysis.** Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (1951): change happens when the forces driving it outweigh the forces holding things in place.
- **Push and pull.** Everett S. Lee, “A Theory of Migration,” *Demography* (1966): people move when push from where they are meets pull from where they could be.
- **Shape the path.** Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* (2010).
- **Small steps.** BJ Fogg, *Tiny Habits* (2019).
- **Feelings as information.** Norbert Schwarz’s research on how people use their feelings as information when judging and deciding.
- **Developing discrepancy.** William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick, *Motivational Interviewing*: the gap between how things are and what a person values.

What we add

Most models treat vision and first steps as things to *talk* about. In art-based work, the hands build them. A vision shaped in clay is felt, not only described. A first step tried with materials is a rehearsal the body can remember. And because nothing has to be said out loud, it suits clients for whom words come slowly, or for whom saying it directly feels unsafe.

For your sessions: listen for which factor is near zero. “I am so tired of this” is push. “I do not even know what I want” is missing pull. “I know, I just cannot start” is missing path.

YOUR TURN

Where to go from here.

If you wrote “pull” or “path”, good news. Those are the two you can build.

And if you answered the pull questions in words, but could not quite see the picture, that is normal too. That is usually where the hands come in.

At Art Based Coaching, we run small, live evenings where you practise exactly this with paper, colour and clay. You do not need art skills. You do not need to share your story.



FREE · LIVE ON ZOOM · WITH PROF. HILDRUN ROLFF

40 years in art therapy and sensorimotor, trauma-informed work

“I’ll start tomorrow.”

Two evenings on procrastination and avoidance. Encik Esok’s favourite topic.

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Lee Ling · Art Based Coaching Sdn Bhd

info@artbasedcoaching.com · +6011-3338 6754 · www.artbasedcoaching.com

45A, Level 1, Jalan 17/45, Section 17, 46400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

ABOUT US

Who we are.

Art Based Coaching is a small studio in Petaling Jaya. We help people understand themselves through their hands, with paper, colour and clay, before words.

We are not psychotherapy, and we do not diagnose. We are a place to practise: to see a pattern from the outside, try a new step somewhere safe, and walk with someone beside you.



Prof. Hildrun Rolff

Curriculum lead. Founded Germany's first Art Therapy – Social Art degree at Alanus University, with forty years in art therapy, art-based coaching and university teaching. Developer of Biography-Based Art Coaching.



Honey Khor

Studio facilitator. Trained in art therapy in Germany and the UK, with a clinical internship in Berlin. HRD Corp accredited trainer.



Lee Ling

Writer of this guide. A counselling student and a student of art-based coaching under Prof. Rolff, sharing what she is learning from the people who taught her.

Art Based Coaching Sdn Bhd · TP Reg. No. 1648193X
45A, Level 1, Jalan 17/45, Section 17, 46400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor
info@artbasedcoaching.com · WhatsApp +6011-3338 6754 · www.artbasedcoaching.com

Follow Encik Esok

Instagram

@artbasedcoaching

Facebook

Art Based Coaching

Website

artbasedcoaching.com

WhatsApp

+6011-3338 6754

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