

All Change

***Aim :** This piece is an extreme version of the many make-over programmes there are on television nowadays. It serves as a humorous introduction to the subject of self-esteem as we are bombarded with images of how our lives can be improved.*

Characters :

Janice – young/middle aged woman

Anna – gratingly bright and bubbly presenter

2 assistants – originally written for female performers, but can be played by men if they don't mind going over the top with it!!

Props/Costumes :

Shopping bags & keys

Letters

Outdoor coat for Janice

Bright, smart clothing for Anna

Assistants could be in overalls or dungarees, or smart clothing like Anna's

***Notes :** This piece is meant to be fun, so the acting can be as expansive as possible, with Janice starting off naturalistically but building in anger until she blows a fuse at the end. The assistants are particularly extreme and it would be good to co-ordinate their actions where possible. There should be a lot of teathy grins from all the presenters, who should also have an awareness that they are supposedly talking into a camera to the viewers throughout.*

It would be good to use some bright theme music to frame this piece.

All Change

Anna and her two assistants look very excited as though they have just finished their project as Janice is returning home. There should be a sense throughout of all the participants speaking into a camera.

Anna) Here she comes now, so let's make ourselves scarce and watch her reaction. I think she's going to be surprised!

The three presenters go and hide in a corner, and grin to each other as they watch Janice return.

Janice enters, carrying bags of shopping and keys. She is obviously agitated.

Janice) Simon? Simon! What have you been doing to the front garden? I can't get my car in (*she stops and looks around as though noticing the décor*) and what have you done to the hall? Simon? (*She drops keys onto a table, which is no longer there so they fall to the floor*) And where the hell's the table? Simon! Simon!

All) (*bursting out of their hiding place*) Surprise!!

Janice) What the . . . ?

Anna puts her arm round Janice and turns her so she is facing the viewers

Anna) That's right, Janice, it's me, Anna Llewellen-Dinmarsh, and the All Change team – the ultimate make-over show.

Janice) I don't understand.

Anna) Now don't you worry. All will be revealed. Maybe this will help explain. I have here (*assistant hands her a letter*) a letter from your neighbour and good friend, Sheila . . .

Janice) Oh right

Anna) She wrote to us, saying (*she reads*) "Janice is a lovely person, a kind friend and a caring neighbour"

Janice) Oh, how nice!

Anna) (*continues*) "But sadly she has little sense of style in the area of home décor"

Janice) What?

Anna) "She does try, but seems to have made a series of disastrous choices with her home and garden"

Janice) (*annoyed*) Well, really, I don't think . . .

Anna) “And frankly it’s becoming an embarrassment”

Janice) This must be some sort of joke

Anna) “And I’m sure it’s beginning to affect our house prices”

Janice) I really don’t want to hear any . . .

Anna) “Please, oh please, All Change team, do something to help her. She, and indeed we, deserve much better.”

Janice) (*furious now*) Well she can just go and . . .

Anna) (*folding away letter*) What a super friend to be so concerned with your well-being and reputation.

Janice) but . .

Anna) and our experts agreed

Assistant 1) Oh yes, we found it just as Sheila described

Assistant 2) Shocking decoration

A1) Dubious taste

A2) In definite need of the All Change treatment

Janice) Now hang on just a minute

Anna) No dear, you just hang on. I know you’re excited to see what we’ve done, so let’s talk you through it.

A1) Right, well, firstly we stripped all the walls

A2) Of that hideous, flock disaster, wallpaper

A1) And brought you bang up to date

A2) With greens, reds, oranges, purples and yellows

A1) Neon

A2) Of course.

A1 & A2) Fabulous

Anna) Speechless, eh, Janice?

Janice) !?!

Anna) Delighted, I can tell – and we didn’t stop there. Next we turned our attention to the outside

A1) Shameful

A2) Who has a drive nowadays?

A1) Wood chippings did the trick

A2) A few potted plants

A1) And, of course, a water feature

A1 & A2 & Anna all make water sounds and trickle their fingers down through the air

All) (*rapturous*) Aah!!

Janice) Look! Wood, plants and water are all very well

Anna) Of course

Janice) but where am I going to put my car?

A1) Oh don't worry about that

A2) All taken care of

Janice) Well at least that's something

A1) Yes, it's being towed away right now

A2 is busy signalling for the "car" as it is reversed out

Janice) This is a joke, surely

Anna) (*putting her arm around Janice and leading her across the stage*) No, dear, you were the style joke with that particular vehicle, as in fact (*A1 passes her a letter*) Susan and Steve from number 27 pointed out. What a wonderful set of caring neighbours, eh Janice . . . Janice? You're looking a bit pale, dear

Janice) It's all a bit of a shock. I feel slightly faint.

Anna) And you're not in the best condition are you, dear? Several people in the street have noticed that (*A1 & A2 hand Janice more letters*) and as you know viewers, we're concerned with all aspects of your lifestyle here on All Change. And that means

A1) No car

A2) New bike

Anna) And a vigorous exercise regime

A1 & A2 do an exercise routine as they say

A1) Burn that fat

A2) Lose those inches

A1) Tone that flab

Janice) Look, even if I wanted to change my body, which I don't, I don't have time for all that. My job's far too demanding

Anna) All sorted dear

A2) We gave in your notice this morning

Janice) What?

Anna) Well, your neighbours never see you. And how do you expect to keep up house and garden and work? You've got to re-order your priorities.

Janice) (*infuriated*) We'll see what Simon has to say about that

Anna) Not Simon, dear, Sam

Janice) I think I should know the name of my husband

Anna) Not any more

Janice) You've changed his name?!

Anna) No dear!

Janice) Oh

Anna) We've changed your husband

Janice) What?

A1) He needed such an overhaul

A2) It was easier to get new than to try and mend

Anna) Your neighbours will love him

A1 & A2) And you will too

Janice) Look, this is ridiculous. I'm not usually one to complain but. . .

Anna) And that's why we at All Change have booked you into a series of workshops on Self Assertiveness – Jean, Joyce, Paul, Greg and Helen have all noted that you're a bit of a push-over

Janice) I've had enough of this

Anna) I know. All Change is enough for anyone, eh viewers?

Janice) I want you all out of my house, now!

A1) Of course

A2) You'll want some time to enjoy it for yourself

Anna) As well as the delectable Sam

Janice) I mean it. All of you, get out now!

As Anna addresses the camera, Janice throws the assistants out

Anna) Well, that's all for this week. If you know of someone who deserves the All Change treatment, do write into us. As you can see, Janice is delighted, and is already becoming stronger in her decisive personality. Immediate results.

Janice) (*coming over for Anna*) Seriously, if you want me to throw you out

Anna) Such enthusiasm!

Janice) GET OUT!!

Anna) Right. We'll leave you to enjoy your new house, garden, transport, husband, exercise and personality. And there's no need to thank us

A1) All part of the service

A2) All in a day's work

Anna) But let's leave the last word with you, Janice. Is there anything left at all that you could possibly want to change after the All Change treatment?

Janice) Oh yes. Absolutely.

Anna) Yes?

Janice) My neighbours!!!
