

Review of Session Two - Motivational Readiness

Thanks for attending

Thank you for attending session two and keeping the commitment you made to yourself. You said you would be here and you were. I congratulate you on your integrity and on your desire to make meaningful changes in your enduring health habits.

You can do this!

Whenever individuals embark on something as important as changing their health for the rest of their lives, it's normal to experience feelings of fear, uncertainty, or discouragement. This is especially true if you have struggled in your past attempts to change.

When you find yourself wondering if you can really change this important part of your life, take a few minutes to breathe deep and get yourself get centered and relaxed. Remember that all you really need to do right now is to open your mind to the possibility of changing your enduring health habits. Take this one step at a time. Don't let uncertainty overcome your hope just because you fear it is too far for you to ever reach the top of the stairs. The next step is always attainable. You can do this! You need not run faster than you are able or do more than you have the capacity to do. Remember, you are going about this process in a new, more powerful way than you have used in the past. Let your hope grow within you. Nourish it. It is gift, not a trap door through which you will invariably fall.

We'll introduce the steps one at a time

When you make a cake, the recipe identifies how much of each ingredient is to be added and in what order. In a similar fashion, Powerful Mind -- Powerful Nutrition takes you one step at a time through the process of change. It will all come together in the end and you will understand why each step was so important. Please be patient and take things one step at a time. Just as importantly, take every step. Don't get left behind. Remember the 7 keys to success we covered last week. Don't fall into the trap of merely "learning" rather than "doing". The biggest obstacle for many folks is their mistaken notion that a step-by-step process is somehow beneath them.

Step One – Honest Evaluation

The evidence-based change process presented in Powerful Mind -- Powerful Nutrition has three basic steps. The first step is called Honest Evaluation. This involves asking yourself a series of questions to evaluate – with brutal honesty – why you want to change, what you want to change, and how you will go about the process. These are questions that you must answer for yourself. The choice is yours and only yours. Clarifying what you really want will increase your power.

The homework assignments are designed to help you fully evaluate your readiness to change. The four questions from your homework last week asked you to identify and clarify any feelings of reluctance that you might

have about changing. The questions from your homework this week will ask you to look closely at what might get in your way, to identify patterns of what didn't work in the past, and clarify your present readiness to make the clear commitments necessary to successfully obtain a healthier way of life.

Why is this step important?

A large body of research has confirmed the importance of asking these questions prior to attempting change. Most unsuccessful change efforts start with insufficient clarity about what is actually motivating the attempt or of the difficulties that can be reasonably expected. Most resolutions to modify our behavior are little more than knee jerk reactions that lack sufficient planning or honest self-assessment. Clarifying these points is important to ensure that you have enough motivational fuel to propel you all the way through the change process.

What holds you back from attempting change in your health habits?

Each of us has our own reasons why we are reluctant to change. Some include:

- It takes too much effort
- Unhealthy foods taste better
- Eating healthy is too expensive
- It's too complicated to eat right
- An unwillingness to fight with spouse/kids over food
- Persistent emotional eating habits
- Addictive eating patterns, and
- A history of past failures resulting in a lack of confidence

What are the long-term consequences of unhealthy habits?

The flow of information about the consequences of certain health-related habits has dramatically increased in recent years. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent every year looking at the health consequences of various practices around the world. The evidence that our health choices impact our long-term well-being is now overwhelming. Individuals who don't give their body what it needs, or who consume unhealthy food are on a moving walkway headed towards chronic disease. Take a look at some recent findings.

1. Weight gain and obesity

- 68% of Utah men and 51% of Utah women are battling weight
- In a 15 year study of 3,031 adults, those who ate at fast-food restaurants more than twice each week (when compared those who did so less than once a week) had gained an extra ten pounds and had a 200% greater increase in insulin resistance.
- In the famous Framingham study of 9,000 adults, those who drank more than one soft drink daily – whether it's regular or diet – had a 48% increase in metabolic syndrome, a precursor to diabetes and heart disease. They were 31% more likely to have new onset obesity and 30% more likely to have an increased waist circumference.

2. Risk of chronic disease

- In a study of 37,000 American women, the risk of developing acute leukemia was 91% higher for overweight women (BMI of 25-29) and 140% higher for obese women (BMI greater than 30)
- In a review of over 4,000 studies worldwide, the World Health Organization summarized their findings by saying that consuming 8-10 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables per day would reduce the incidence of all cancers worldwide by 70%.
- New research has demonstrated that fat cells do much more than merely store unused energy. Fat is now classified as an endocrine organ, in fact, the largest in the body. Fat releases powerful hormones that travel throughout the body impacting the functioning of several important systems. Excess body fat causes an excess release of hormones, resulting in several important effects on health. These excess hormones interfere with the body's ability to suppress appetite, increase chronic inflammation, cause insulin resistance, damage muscle cells, increase oxidative stress, and hamper the part of the immune system that protects from cancer, (November 2008)
- BYU researchers recently reported on a study demonstrating that changing health-related habits could actually reverse diabetes.
- It is estimated that roughly 2 million American children between the ages of 12 – 19 have a pre-diabetic condition linked to obesity. This puts them at high risk for full-blown diabetes and heart disease. (11/07)
- The EPIC study of 521,483 adults, which is the largest scale, most far-reaching study of the relationship between diet and cancer ever conducted has clarified the links between specific dietary practices and the risk of getting cancer. The findings include:
 - The risk of oral and pharyngeal cancer drops by 9% for every serving of vegetable and fruits consumed per day on average,
 - For every 3.5 ounces of red meat consumed per day on average, the risk of stomach or esophageal cancer increased by 300%.
 - Two indicators of abdominal obesity, waist circumference and waist-to-hip ration, were associated with a 39% increase in colon cancer for obese men a 48% increase in colon cancer for obese women.
 - The EPIC researchers summarized their findings by stating, "Certainly we can say that globally, diets that are high in fruits, vegetable, fiber and fish are associated with greater protection against cancer in general."
- In a study of 62,756 women, those who gained 20-30 pounds after high school were 40% more likely to get breast cancer than women who kept the weight off. Women who gained more than 70 pounds had an 80% greater incidence of breast cancer.

- Increasing the amount of vitamin D3 to optimal levels would avoid 60,000 cases of colorectal cancer and 85,000 cases of breast cancer every year in the United States.

- In a review of the literature, researcher Steven Aldona reported that many chronic diseases are avoidable for those who optimize their health-related habits. These include: 70% of cancer, 70% of strokes, 82% of heart disease, and 92% of diabetes. He concluded by saying that “I can summarize all of this learning in two sentences: Most of the chronic diseases and deaths in the Westernized societies are not caused by genetics or some act of God. They are the direct result of poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use.” Steven Aldona, *The Culprit & the Cure*, 2005

3. The risk of accelerated aging

- It was reported in February, 2008 that 70 year-old men in American who maintained normal weight, didn't smoke and exercised have a 54% chance of living to be 90 years old. Those that didn't exercise, smoked, were over-weight, had high blood pressure and diabetes had a 4% chance of living to be 90.

- Medicare recently released data showing that those Americans who exercise regularly postpone disability by more than 12 years

4. The risk of depression, dementia, or Alzheimer's disease

- Utah has the highest rate of depression of any state. (D.N. 11/29/07)

- 10.1% of all the adults and adolescents in Utah experienced a depressive episode in the last 12 months.

- One study recently reported that exercising three times per week was on par with antidepressants in reducing the symptoms of depression.

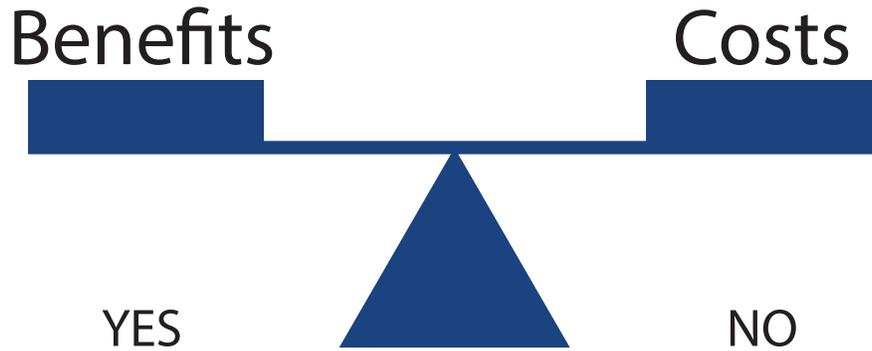
- In a 27 year long study of 10,276 American women, overweight women were 55% more likely to develop dementia than were non-overweight women. Obese women were 200% more likely to develop dementia.

- A large study in Sweden recently reported that the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease increases 36% with every one-point increase in BMI.

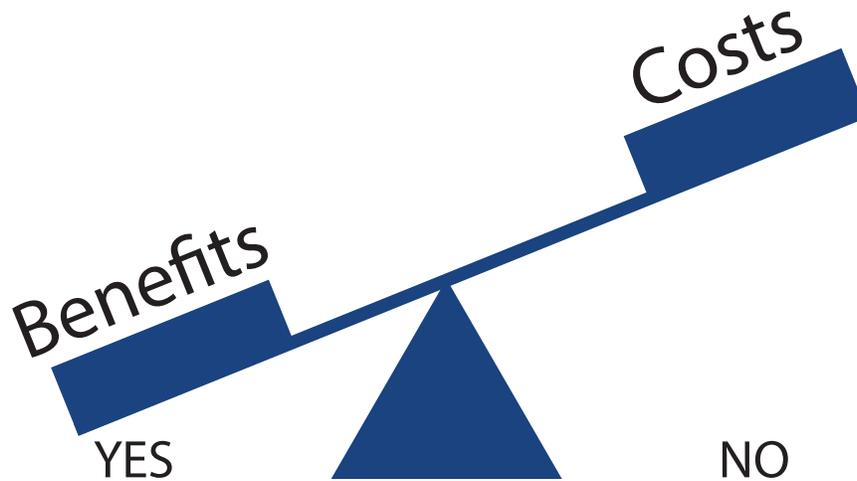
So, how do we go about making the decision to change our health habits?

EMPLOYEE
Blomquist Hale
ASSISTANCE

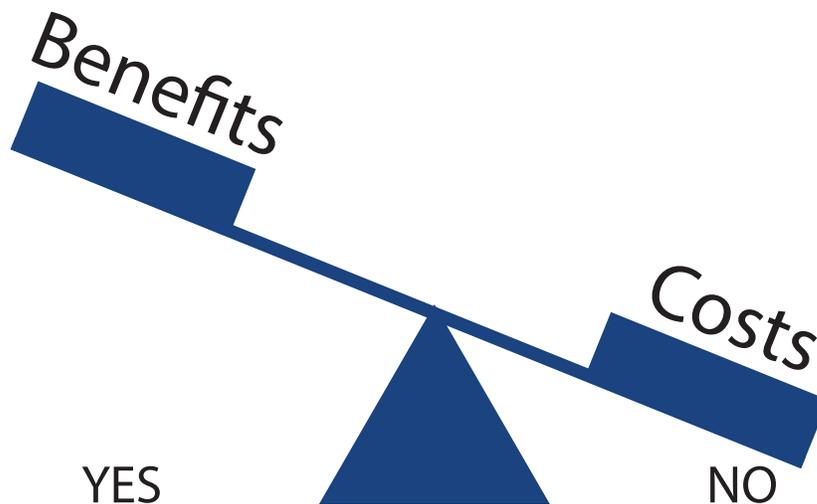
Research on the process of change has demonstrated that when faced with the decision to make a change in an enduring health habit, we largely base our decision on our perception of the benefits and the costs involved.



It's almost like we have an old fashioned scale in our head weighing the importance of each side of the equation.



If the perceived benefits outweigh the costs, the answer is yes and we begin to try to change.



On the other hand, if the perceived costs are greater than the anticipated benefits, the answer is no and we decide not to attempt to change.

Is it really that obvious or simple?

Not really. If human beings were computers and made decisions in an entirely logical fashion, the analogy might fit pretty close. In a computer program, the decision would be based exclusively on the cost/benefit ratio or upon programmed conditional if/then choices. Obviously we are not computers, so things get more confusing. For example, much of what goes into our decision-making process is not logical or obvious. Human beings frequently make decisions based upon underlying emotions, automatic habits that are flying under the radar of awareness, unstable and rapidly changing motivations, memories that are fading or changing, or physical desires and cravings that don't make any sense. There is more than cold logic to our decisions. Sometimes these powerful undercurrents carry a lot more weight in our choices than we want to admit. It's not always very obvious, even to ourselves. This is a big reason why we rarely succeed with our new year's resolutions. We fail to realistically address the emotional components associated with our food and beverage choices.

What kind of emotional attachments impact our food choices?

We all form attachments between what we eat or drink and special settings. For example, a friend of mine eats a hot dog every time he goes to a baseball game because it reminds him of eating a hot dog as a kid at the ball park with his dad. Let's face it, food (and drink) frequently represent more than just fuel for the body. Eating becomes the way we celebrate holidays or special events, the way we connect with family and friends, the salve we put on loneliness, sadness, or feelings of despair and worthlessness. Some people binge-eat when they are mad at themselves as a form of self punishment. In some cases, people who suffer from the fear of intimacy will eat themselves into obesity as a sad way of protecting themselves from relationships with others. Their insecurity and fear of rejection drives them to provide others with an obvious reason to stay away. We sometimes eat when we are stressed, depressed, or anxious because we are trying to comfort ourselves or attempting to compensate for the distress of our lives.

Is this why the first step is honest evaluation?

Yes. Making the decision to modify our food habits involves much more than our knowledge of the long-term health consequences of unhealthy choices. This is a central reason why the first step in the Powerful Mind – Powerful Nutrition change process is honest evaluation. Superficial reasoning just isn't sufficient to clarify the real issues. Brutal honesty with ourselves is the only way to uncover and address the powerful emotional attachments that might otherwise thwart our efforts to improve our lives. It's important to acknowledge or emotional attachments to unhealthy practices. This level of clarity empowers us to see the challenge accurately. All by itself, this is not enough, but it is the first step of a process that is sufficient to create successful change.

Another reason why honest evaluation is so important

When people attempt to change an enduring habit, they rarely go directly from the status quo (the present hab-

it) to the desired level of behavior. Instead, they first go through a phase of change characterized by inconsistent choices. This phase requires a level of motivation sufficient to endure ups and downs without giving up. Ups and downs are normal. It's OK. Don't be too hard on yourself when you slip up. It's not necessary for you to beat yourself up or to give way to discouragement. Step one --Honest Evaluation, will put you in a position to maintain your new habit long enough for it to become your automatic, natural way of life. Unfortunately, the lack of honest evaluation makes it unnecessarily difficult to achieve this desired habit.

What strategies make it unnecessarily hard to change?

There are several common practices that make change unnecessarily hard. Many of them can be summarized by the term coercive motivation. Coercive motivation is where our primary motivation is based upon avoiding something we don't want. We try to coerce ourselves into changing because of fear and guilt. We use shadowy, murky reasoning that obscures the emotional component of change. Sadly, these flawed coercive strategies are extremely common. We'll list several.

1. The "should" or "ought to" coercive strategy. If you use this type of reasoning, you acknowledge that the current habit is causing problems, but that's about as far as you go. Your lack of honest evaluation doesn't take you all the way to a clear understanding of what you really want instead. Rather, you are left knowing you really "should" or "ought to" make a change, but at the same time you are left with unresolved feelings of reluctance. Unresolved reluctance saps your motivation until it is insufficient to maintain the momentum necessary for successful change.
2. The "have to" coercive strategy. This type of reasoning amplifies the urgency to do something. You say to yourself, "I've got to or I absolutely have to make the change. Otherwise something bad will happen." The entire focus is on what you want to avoid. Concurrently, the truth is that you really don't want to make the change, but feel you have no alternative. Hence, you are double-minded and unstable in your efforts. It becomes easy to give up as soon as things get difficult.
3. The coerced avoidance strategy. When you use this type of reasoning, you force yourself to avoid something you really want, but have decided that you "can't have". This approach works only as long as your motivation runs high. Unfortunately, avoidance is a weak change strategy. For example, you may avoid purchasing goodies for our desk drawer, but your coerced avoidance may not be sufficient to keep you from bingeing on the cookies someone else brought to a meeting. People who rely on coerced avoidance as their primary motivation for change frequently end up bingeing as soon as their motivation wanes. They quickly run out of motivational fuel, long before they have established a new, automatic habit to replace the old one. This is partly due to the fact that avoidance is fundamentally different from practice, and practice is necessary to establish a new habit.
4. The coerced substitution strategy. This type of reasoning results when there is inadequate honest evaluation and you still really want the old food but feel forced into settling for a substitute that seems genuinely undesirable. Settling for something is inherently different than deciding that it is an opportunity to achieve something that you really want more. Settling for something undesirable because you feel forced is a recipe for failure. If your evaluation only takes you that far, it isn't far enough to fuel your motivation for successful change.

5. The “fear of forever” strategy. This line of thinking usually runs something like this, “If I commit to change my health habits, I won’t have a choice in the future.” It’s almost as if the decision to change a health habit will commit you long past the time you want to be committed. You are afraid you will be stuck. If you think this way, you don’t realize that a choice can only be made in the present. The future is actually made up as a string of endless “Nows” -- “Now 1”, “Now 2”, “Now 3”, “Now 4” and so on.

So what can you do to change your future choices? What you can do is to change your priorities, your values, the way you see things. You can change the way you think and that will invariably change your future choices. You can establish new, automatic habits of action so that healthy choices feel natural and make sense to you. Yet you will always have a choice. What you choose is up to you.

6. The “I’m not enough” strategy. If you have this habit of thought, you generally delay making change until you are forced by circumstances to do so. However, you also have a persistent habit of reminding yourself that you don’t have what it takes to pull it off. You somehow aren’t smart enough, or strong enough, or capable enough, or persistent enough, so on and so on. In short, you aren’t enough. You aren’t complete and whole. You are flawed and incomplete. When something goes wrong, it isn’t that you made a mistake, it’s that you are a mistake. Not surprisingly, you tend to give up easily.

The central problem with coercive motivation

Our natural response to being coerced is to resist. It doesn’t seem to matter if the person coercing you is your boss, your spouse, or yourself. When you feel forced against your will or manipulated by circumstance to do something you really don’t want to do, you resist. It’s the way you were built. Emotionally you fight against coercion. It becomes a struggle of wills. You are forced to rely on steel-jawed will power to maintain your motivation and keep going. You use up your motivation “efforting” against yourself until you finally “throw in the towel.” Coercive change is a battle, a struggle, a royal pain in the proverbial neck. It’s no fun.

Coercive motivation strategies make change unnecessarily hard because of two fundamental truths:

- You give power to what you fight against, and
- What you resist persists.

Constructive Motivation – a much easier way

The alternative to coercive motivation (where you are trying to avoid something) is called constructive motivation. With this approach, you become highly motivated by what you want to achieve, rather than by what you want to avoid. Rather than exclusively focusing on the bad consequences of your present health habit (what you really don’t want), focus attention on what you really do want instead. Identify all the wonderful results that can be yours simply by modifying a few persistent habits. Let your mind explore the possibilities. Remember, clarity equals power. Don’t settle for murky, cloudy thinking on this point. What do you really want? Be brutally honest with yourself. For this to be maximally effective, keep the following points in mind:

- Look to the big picture, not just the present moment. Some people have a habit of giving up what they want most and settle for what would feel good right now.

• Look beyond the action to the consequences of the action. Don't confuse the appetites, passions, and desires (that you have trained yourself to experience) with the long term consequence of enduring habits. What do you want it to be like in your future? What do you really, really want that is important enough to motivation you to change your daily health choices?

Constructive motivation needs to ring true

Constructive motivation needs to be genuine to have power. It needs to be grounded in reality, not unrealistic expectations or false hopes based upon positive mental attitude distortions. You might really want to be an NBA star, but if you are 5 foot 4 inches tall and fifty years old, it's all just a pipe dream. You can think positive thoughts continuously, but it won't improve your chances of being selected in the first round of the next NBA draft. What might be possible in your future instead is that you really want to be in great shape and able to play an invigorating game of pickup basketball with your kids. You might really want to be in great health when you retire so you can take your grandkids camping and show them how to fish. You might really want to strengthen your endurance so you can go mountain biking in beautiful places with your good friends.

The bible has a saying that puts it plainly, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free!" While there is great power in truth, there isn't in rah, rah based, unrealistic expectations. Get in touch with what you really want, that rings true, and it will set you free from coercive motivational strategies.

What motivates you?

During session two, you were given the opportunity to identify which reasons were personally motivating you. You were asked to rate each reason from 1 to 5 based upon how motivating you found it to be. The truth is that there are many possible reasons people want to change. Some are large, big picture reasons, and some are quite small and personal. Some reasons are extrinsic—based on the way they are seen by others, and some are more intrinsic—based on factors that don't involve anyone else's point of view. Some reasons create more enduring motivation; some create less-enduring motivation. The bottom line is that your reasons are your reasons. Listen to yourself. If you want to strengthen your motivation, honestly evaluate additional long-term consequences of healthy habits. Options discussed in the training included:

- o I want to be thinner, sexier or more attractive.
- o I want to improve and maintain great health and vitality this year.
- o I want to be happier and better able to maintain my motivation.
- o I want to increase my feelings of self control and be the master of my own life.
- o I want to increase my daily energy, stamina, and physical strength.
- o I want to improve the health and well-being of those whom I live with and love.

- o I want to reduce the likelihood of facing chronic or disabling diseases.
- o I want to live longer and be healthy and active as I grow older.

Of these reasons, which one or two are your highest priorities? Which ones are genuinely motivating to you?

It's important to be real and acknowledge your desires

When you ignore or minimize your true feelings, you tend to lose power. All of us have emotions we would rather not deal with. We all have cravings, urges, appetites, desires, and passions that we wish were not part of our life. You are a human being. That means you have some messy stuff going on inside somewhere. If you force yourself to ignore it, you are using a coercive strategy on yourself and setting up an unnecessary battle. A constructive strategy would be to acknowledge your counter-productive feeling, urges, and desires; and at the same time, acknowledge your power to choose. When you acknowledge to yourself that you desire something unhealthy, you stop fighting against it. You give yourself permission to honestly evaluate your options and to choose what you really want most. If your vision of what you really want long-term is clear, it's not difficult to choose the healthy option. The healthy option really becomes your preference. When faced with an unwanted urge, try saying the following sentences to yourself:

I want to _____ because I have trained myself to feel that way.

I want to _____ and I have a choice

Right now I want to _____ and it leads to _____. What I really want instead is _____.

Make your motivation powerful - your vision statement

In this week's homework, you were asked to develop an image or scenario that could be used as a tool throughout the Powerful Brain Healthy Body training program. You were asked to give yourself permission to let your imagination be free, unshackled by voices of self-doubt and disbelief; to let yourself be fully open to what you might really want. In this exercise, you were to assume for a moment that by magic a powerful change had occurred in your life, leaving you with a robust, healthy lifestyle. As a natural way of life, your daily food and exercise choices caused your body to be healthy, energetic, thin, and disease resistant. As you gazed into a crystal ball and saw what your life was like in this new future, you were asked to identify what part of what you saw pleased you the most? What did you see yourself doing that would be delightful? What part of what you saw was personally moving and deeply important?

You were asked to write a short paragraph that graphically described a brief vignette that is compelling to you. Your vignette was to symbolize something wonderful that is empowered by your robust, healthy lifestyle. Your description was to be infused with color and emotion.

What you wrote is called your vision statement and it will be used throughout the rest of the training. You will use it as an important part of the change process as you practice new habits. Please review what you have

created to ensure that it is realistic, that it is highly important to you, and that it is described in vivid color and detail. Please type up a copy of the final version of your vision statement and bring it with you to the training next week.

Famous Quotes

"Whether you think that you can or you can't, you're usually right"

Henry Ford

"If I have a belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning."

Mahatma Gandhi

"Self confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings"

Samuel Johnson

"Nothing can be done without hope and confidence"

Helen Keller

"They are able who think they are able."