

## Maintaining Motivation

### **Thank you for your continued efforts**

Thank you for maintaining your commitment to your health and well being. Your attendance is evidence that you take this process very seriously and genuinely want to change your future. If you have been practicing every day as instructed, you are only less than a month from growing your new habit pathway to the point that it becomes dominant and automatic.

Just think, in only a few more days, you will naturally be giving your body exactly what it needs and the consequences will be delightful. Your body will become be lean; you will have robust health, your immune system will be great, you will be strong, you will be free from chronic disease, you will be aging successfully, and you will love life. Isn't that worth the effort?

At this point, you may be aware that you are really changing. Are you noticing any changes in your thinking? You might be aware that you now have more freedom from:

- o Obsessing about weight
- o Obsessing about food
- o Obsessing about dieting
- o Guilt and struggle

### **What are you experiencing with your cravings?**

You will soon be experiencing fewer cravings. However, the ones that you do have may feel somewhat stronger than in the past. This is normal and will soon pass. Hang in there and keep practicing.

Were you able to identify your Permission Distortions?

In the homework for Session 4, you were taught a strategy to use when facing a self-defeating behavior pattern. It works like this -- You focus your attention on your self-talk and look for the permission distortions you are using to give yourself permission to engage in the self-defeating behavior. You then focus on replacing the Permission Distortion with a self-talk statement that is truer. The process to do this is quite simple. When you identify a Permission Distortion, spend just a couple of minutes going through the following 4 steps:

Step one: Calm yourself down – breath deep – curiously observe you thoughts and feelings

Step two: acknowledge the urge – “Right now I want . . .”

Step three: Identify the distortion and rehearse the truth

Step four: Do it – practice your new habit

### **Will you ever be able to treat yourself without resetting your 21 day counter?**

The answer is yes! Once you have fully established the new habit pathway, an occasional indulgence doesn't reset the old habit. When, as a natural way of living, your enduring health habits are moving you towards a lean healthy body, you will not be battling with frequent cravings. Your thinking will be different. You will have

a firm commitment to give your body what it needs and that will be your natural way of life. At that point, an occasional indulgence doesn't matter much. It's only when you are in the process of forming a new habit that the counter gets reset.

### **What if you weren't perfectly consistent last week?**

If you weren't perfectly consistent with your firm decision last week, forgive yourself. Realize you are human and learn from your mistakes. Use them as the springboard to propel you to greater heights this week. Now is the time for you to analyze what you can do to be successful and take responsibility to correct whatever needs to be corrected. What do you need to do? Decide, to do it!

What will be the focus of this material?

Most people find that they have some difficulty maintaining their motivation for any length of time. You may find your motivation is beginning to wane. It's natural at this point in the process. After all, you've now been involved for a few weeks. To help you with this, this material will focus on keeping your motivation fresh and alive. We will also provide instruction on how your master habits can be the key to building resilience and persistence.

### **Is it normal to have some difficulty maintaining motivation?**

Yes. Most people struggle to maintain their motivation over an extended period of time. Understanding just why you have this difficulty and knowing what strategies help make it easier to keep going until your new habit pathways have become dominant and automatic.

### **How much of a factor is delayed gratification?**

The concept of delayed gratification comes into play because there is frequently a significant delay before you experience the benefits of a lifestyle change program. The wonderful benefits happen slowly, but they do happen. Wouldn't it be nice if within a month of changing your lifestyle, you were at a perfect weight, your body was healthy and strong, and your energy was great? This is obviously not the way that it works. Although you should see some immediate results, it may take quite a while for you to enjoy the full benefits of your efforts. The formula seems to be that you put in lots of effort now, in order to enjoy the wonderful benefits of great health in the future. One thing that helps maintain motivation is to pay attention to each new benefit as it emerges. Acknowledge each with an attitude of gratitude – give thanks to yourself for the goodness.

### **Does memory play a role?**

Absolutely! As your memory fades, the original reasons for making your change become less clear or present. As your recall fades, the consequences you would face if you didn't change and the benefits you will realize when you do change seem more distant and less intrinsically motivating. The loss of recall is real. For example, without looking, can you recall all of the studies I presented to the group that provided uncontestable evidence of the dramatic health consequences of our health-related lifestyles? See how many you can recall.

### **Does the loss of recall impact the emotional component of motivation?**

Yes. As your memory fades, so also does your emotional response. Your vision of what you really want begins to lose motivational power. Unless you refresh your emotional memory, your vision statement may become little more than a set of dried out, emotionless phrases. This is one of the reasons why "Not in the moment" practice becomes so important. If you use visualization to reconnect with important feelings and values, you refresh your emotional memory which helps keep your motivation constant.

Remember, this program is about choices – What do you want, why do you want it, and what you choose to do. After the initial excitement begins to wane, it is important that you choose to keep your commitment to practice. After all, the training is not new anymore. Because it is a training (designed to help you actually change) as opposed to a class (where the objective is to help you do well on a quiz) it is by nature repetitive. Now is the time for you to start motivating yourself. Now is the time to take more responsibility for your own success.  
Master Habits – The key to building resilience and persistence

Your master habits are the powerful conclusions you have drawn about the nature of things. These conclusions were frequently learned long ago, some of them even before you have any memories. They usually operate outside of the range of your conscious awareness. They are transparent to you because they are accepted as the way things are.

These basic assumptions color how you make sense of and give meaning to life situations. They guide your thinking. One master habit colors the emotional meaning of 1000's of different events.  
Which master habits will be addressed in this article

We will focus on the core beliefs you have about your basic nature. These are the ones that have the most impact on your ability to maintain your motivation. They guide fundamental self-talk topics like:

- "I can do it!" vs. "I'm incapable!"
- "I have a choice!" vs. "I am powerless!"
- "I really matter!" vs. "I am worthless!"

### **Are master habits different from other habits**

Master habits are higher order thought habits that are connected to lots of specific habit circuits. They are the ones that get activated in most situations that involve change. They are called master habits because when you change a master habit, you actually change which habits are triggered in response to 1000's of different future events. At their heart, they are merely little bits of brain tissue. They are little neural pathways that are connected to lots of other parts of the brain.

### **So why are master habits important?**

Master habits are manifest as self-talk. They determine the things you say to yourself over and over and over and over again. The content of your self-talk will make a big difference to how difficult it is to maintain your

motivation. The content of your master habits guides the content of your self-talk. Because your master habits are often difficult to access directly, your best clue about the content of your master habit is often revealed by the content of your self-talk. This content also reveals itself by what you automatically say to yourself when startled or distressed.

### **As you observed your self-talk, what did you notice?**

As you observed yourself during this course, did you notice that you have a predictable style of permission distortions? Did you observe the incredible power that your self-talk has over your behavior? They are very powerful – either to help you or hinder you. What did you see? Did your self-talk empower you or did it deflate you?

### **How else do master habits impact the success of your efforts at change?**

Everyone has master habits. They are your natural, automatic ways of thinking. They make a big difference in your life. If you are attempting to make a change that is consistent with a master habit; that change will be easy, automatic, and require less conscious control. On the other hand, if you attempt a change that is inconsistent with a master habit; that change will be difficult, require a new decision, and require lots of conscious control. This is the reason why if you change your thinking; it's easy to change your behavior. If you don't change your thinking, changing your behavior is a struggle. Often, it's your master habits that must change to allow you the freedom to use empowering self-talk.

### **Master Habit #1: "I can do it!" vs. "I'm incapable of pulling it off!"**

This master habit consists of your core conclusions about your inherent capacity to make difficult changes in your life. Do you see yourself as someone who has the basic ability to grow and change? Or, on the other hand, are you someone who just can't pull it off?

When change gets difficult, what do you typically say to yourself? What's your predictable self-talk?

Empowering		Deflating
"I can do this"	or	"I just can't do this"
"If I keep trying, it will work"	or	"It's no use, I'll never make it"
"I'm strong and determined"	or	"I'm weak – I always give up"
"I can and will keep going"	or	"I might as well give up"

Can you see how your self-talk reflects your underlying belief or conclusion you have drawn about your capacity to hang in long enough to acquire a new habit pathway? Is it obvious that the content of your self-talk will either help or hinder your willingness to persevere until you have acquired a new habit pathway?

### **Master Habit # 2: "I have a choice!" vs. "I am powerless!"**

This master habit consists of your core conclusions about the degree you actually have agency in your life. Do

you see yourself as someone who actually has a choice that matters, or, are you someone who lets circumstances determine what happens to you?

When facing cravings, urges, or emotional distress, what do you typically say to yourself? What's your predictable self-talk?

Empowering

"I have a choice. What do I want?"

"What happens is really up to me!"

"This craving will pass"

Deflating

or "I have to do it, but I don't want to!"

or "Too busy, tired, or stressed to do it!"

or "I can't have what I want. What I want is more important"

### **This sounds almost like adopting the role of a victim**

It's easy to slip into the role of victim. However, some people seem to live there. They live life as if they are continually forced by circumstance beyond their control to accept what they don't want. Their self-talk absolves them of the responsibility for what they do. They are always too busy, too tired, too stressed. The source of their stress always seems to be caused by someone else. They feel powerless much of the time.

Others have a master habit of accepting the responsibility for their lives. They anticipate success because they believe that they have all that is necessary for them to achieve what they want. When they face difficulties, they assess what needs to change and then patiently go through the steps to get it.

### **Master Habit # 3: I really matter vs. I'm worthless**

This master habit consists of your core conclusions about what gives you value or worth as a person. Do you see yourself as someone who really matters – are you worthwhile, whole and complete? Or, do you feel worthless, shameful, flawed or incomplete?

When change seems difficult or distressing, what do you typically say to yourself?

What's your predictable self-talk?

Empowering

"I deserve the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

"I'm attractive enough! I'm OK"

"This is important because ..."

"I'm OK already."

Disempowering

or "I don't deserve it anyway!"

or "I'm fat and ugly. I'm embarrassed to be noticed!"

or "What difference does it make happens to me really matters!"

or "It's hopeless."

### **How do you make sense out of your worth?**

What makes a human being matter? Is there something about being a person that gives value apart from looks, possessions, social status, credentials, or accomplishments? What is it that gives a person worth or value? Do

they have to do something first? Is there something they must add to themselves in order to be OK? At a deep, emotional level, your answers to these fundamental questions might be different than you might suppose. For example, if you are religious, you might espouse the belief that you are a creation of a loving God and that at your core; you are loved and accepted by Him. At the same time, whenever you make a mistake, you might feel like you are a mistake; that you are shameful or unworthy of love. In other words, at an emotional level, your master habit operates as though your worth is contingent upon what you are doing.

Another example. You might be a non-religious person who believes that humans are at the top of the evolutionary chain; having developed the capacity to love, choose, and act compassionately. You might espouse a belief that human life really matters and that the key to happiness is to make a difference in the lives of others who are less fortunate. At the same time, you might see yourself as fat, ugly and unattractive. At an emotional level, your master habit operates as though your worth is contingent upon being viewed as fit and attractive. Emotionally, you treat yourself with less compassion than you might otherwise think.

Is there more to you than how well you have done in the past? Suppose that you have lost your home in the recent financial downturn. Are you a failure, a good for nothing “no account”? Have your opinions or feelings stopped mattering? Or, have you a wonderful person who has suffered a setback?

Is there more to you than a lean, trim fit body? Does your worth as a human being get lost in direct proportion to the extra energy stored in your fat cells? Is a person with cellulite a less worthwhile type than one who has none? On an intellectual, cognitive level, these questions seem abjectly silly. On a deep emotional level, your master habits may be shouting disempowering self-talk at you.

### **So how do you modify your master habit and the self-talk they engender?**

Your self-talk changes when you clear the distortions from the content of your master habits. This is made possible when you get brutally honest with yourself. Observing your self-talk tells you about the content of your master habits. Addressing the content of your master habits requires that you evaluate, at a deep emotional level, what you really believe to be truth. Superficial thinking doesn't do too much in this regard.

Deciding what you really believe is quite different than merely attempting to stop deflating self-talk. Replacing a distorted master habit with something that has greater truth is more powerful than trying to fill your consciousness with insincere positive mental attitude platitudes. Embracing the truth sets you free.

Remember, a master habit is merely a habit. You can change any habit using the process you have been taught in this training. Remember, it only takes 21 days to grow a habit pathway to become dominant and automatic. Remember:

1. Step one: Honest Evaluation
2. Step two: Make a firm decision
3. Step three: Practice for 21 days

Using empowering self-talk makes behavior change much easier. It creates resilience, the ability to persist in the face of challenges. Deflating self-talk makes it easy to give up and stop trying.

### **Your future is not determined by what has happened in the past!**

Your future is not determined by your past. If in the past, you have failed to persist – don't be afraid. Each day will bring new opportunities to choose. You don't have to repeat past mistakes. If your new dominant habit was to prioritize giving your body what it needs, this won't be too difficult. The good news is that you are free to choose your future. It is completely up to you.

If you reset your 21 day practice counter and are still in the middle of the process of growing your new habit pathway to be dominant and automatic, go easy on yourself. It's OK.

### **Please don't define yourself by your shortcomings**

Resist the temptation to define yourself by your shortcomings. That doesn't help – it moves you back into the "should," "ought to," or "have to" mode. That's how you set yourself up to be a powerless victim. It's sad that so many people base their "I am . . ." self-talk statements upon their short-comings rather than their strengths. Altogether too many of us tell ourselves that "I am so weak, I am a failure, or I am such a mistake."

### **There is so much more to you than just your mistakes**

You are not your short-comings from the past! When you make a mistake, you are not a mistake. Unfortunately, there is much about the American culture that influences you to believe some pretty distorted things about your nature and your worth. The unfortunate consequence is that you end up giving yourself massages that are deflating. This makes it hard to keep on track.

### **Remember all the good stuff**

You have gifts and abilities that, if recognized, can provide hope and create confidence. Several week ago, We asked you to consider the following attributes:

- Your clear mind
- Your emotional intelligence – the ability to connect with your feelings
- Your trust in the power of your humanity
- Your common sense
- Your genuine desire to achieve something better
- Your willingness to take things one step at a time
- Your humility – willingness to be taught
- Your immense capacity to love
- Your supportive, nurturing relationships
- Your stubborn determination once you become committed
- Success in some other part of your life

### **Resist over-simplifying who you are...You are not:**

- your fat (or the position of your cheekbones)
- your stuff (possessions, status, income)

- your screw-ups (or even your successes)

There is so much more to you than these over-simplifications. You are a human being, not a human doing. You matter profoundly. If you don't yet get that, then it's time to make a change in your thinking. Throw out the distortions and replace them with truth. You can succeed. You do have a choice, you are not powerless; you are powerful. You have the right to want something better. Maybe it's time to declare yourself more truthfully. It's time to make a firm decision to get more truthful in what you actually believe about yourself.

### **You already have what it takes to be successful**

You already have everything that you need to be successful at this important undertaking. It's all within you right now. You don't need anything else beyond a willingness to keep your feet on the path. No one needs to fail! You can do this!

You are at the beginning of a wonderful journey. You need not run faster than you are able. If you are struggling, then you are probably not following the steps we laid out for you. When you do, you will quickly find that your thinking is changing and the struggle is going away.

### **How you view the change process does make a difference**

Approach this like it was a great adventure, a quest for something good, something important to you. You are not just denying yourself access to unhealthy foods. Instead, you are choosing something much, much better. You are choosing a whole banquet of good stuff. Things like:

- Walks on a sunny day
- Doing fun and enjoyable things with those you love
- Filling your life with goodness and joy in all sorts of ways
- Adding delicious fruits & vegetables to make your meals healthy
- Adding the daily exercise your body needs to be healthy and strong. You are basking in a halo of well-being because your brain is generating endorphins.
- And so much more

### **Join the low risk group**

When, as your natural way of living, you give your body what it needs every day, you join a new group. Rather than remaining with the 'normal' American lifestyle group, you migrate into the group with those who have adopted healthy habits as their way of life. Being in that group is really nice. Why? Because that group has dramatically fewer incidents of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, or other chronic debilitating and life shortening illnesses. While there is no guarantee that you won't someday suffer from one of these conditions, at least you are significantly lowering the odds of suffering these misfortunes.