

Motivation: How to get it and keep it

What is motivation? Incentive, drive, stimulus, a catalyst to do or create something.

Motivation to change behavior and maintain the change is:

- * Being willing to make sacrifices necessary for change
- * The acceptance of the belief that if there is "no pain" then there is "no gain"
- * A commitment to rid yourself of problem behaviors, both now and in the future
- * The rational perspective that it takes time, energy, effort, hard work, internal strength, and drive to change and sustain the change
- * The inner voice of patience, self-love, and nurturing that allows you to recognize the necessary changes that need to be made
- * A call to respond to the challenge of life
- * Willingness to initiate recovery lifestyle activities
- * Enjoying the changes made and wanting to sustain them
- * Being unwilling to return to an unhealthy lifestyle
- * Accepting relapse in the pursuit of recovery and picking yourself up to start again

How to maintain healthy self-motivation

In order to have healthy self-motivation, you need to:

- * Love yourself enough to believe you deserve to accomplish change in your life
- * Set realistic goals
- * Visualize successful change
- * Be committed to personal health and self-satisfaction to attain and sustain change
- * Devote energy, effort, sustained vigilance and personal sacrifice
- * Accept personal responsibility for problem behavior
- * Believe that only through personal efforts can a problem behavior be changed
- * Reinforce your success, no matter how small

- * Be able to break a large goal into small increments, which are obtainable, reasonable and measurable, and to reward yourself for the attainment of these sub-goals without regret over the remaining steps still needing to be accomplished or satisfied
- * Accept that change of old habits is a lifelong process
- * Realize that the efforts to change do not end once initial cessation of old behaviors is attained
- * Believe that a work-oriented recovery lifestyle model is a lifelong process
- * Sustain the change in problem behaviors
- * Commit to a lifelong contract of behavior change

Irrational thinking (not making any sense) will cause a lack of motivation, if you think:

- * If I am unable to achieve my goal quickly and without much effort, it isn't worth pursuing.
- * Everybody else is wanting me to change; this is enough to keep me going.
 - * The only thing I need to do is lose weight, stop smoking, stop drinking, stop gambling, stop using my credit card, stop using crack, etc., in order to change my life.
- * There is no reason for me to change my entire life in order to change my problem behaviors.
- * It should be easy to change my behaviors.
- * The professionals who talk about lifestyle change don't know what they're talking about.
- * My problem behavior is not addictive; I 'm in control at all times. What's all the fuss?
- * Change should be simple and easy; so why am I having so much trouble? There must be something wrong with me.
- * My friends are all wrong in wanting me to change. I must be nothing to them unless I change.
- * It's just too much effort it to change; therefore, I will only work on getting the change then leave keeping it for time to take care of.
- * I should enjoy the adventure of change; it should come easy and be pleasant.
- * If someone makes fun of or criticizes my efforts, I'll get angry enough to give up.
- * For me to be successful it is important for everyone to understand me and my need to change.
- * When my family and friends don't make accommodations for my changed lifestyle, I should give up. I can't stand to change alone.
- * People should realize how hard it is for me to change; they should be more sympathetic.
- * Unless everyone supports me, I'll never be able to change.
- * I must have warmth, understanding, and caring from others in order to change.
- * Why are they making this so difficult? Are they using scare tactics to make me change?
- * This "change thing" is beginning to look like a plot by the professionals and my friends. They're never satisfied.

Negative consequences of a lack of motivation

If you **lack** motivation to change, or to stay after the effort to change, a new lifestyle is not possible.

Excuses used for your lack of personal motivation include:

- * You blame others when efforts to change or maintain change are unsuccessful.
- * You may have stress, depression, or confusion as to why your efforts to change or maintain change are unsuccessful
- * You deny that the change is stagnated
- * You blame others for your inability to succeed.
- * You blame a lack of money, effort, energy, persistence, or time to attain or maintain change
- * You do not realize how hard it is to change, to get it, and to keep it.
- * You become discouraged with the length of time change takes, and the need for a lifelong commitment to maintain change
- * You have not accepted personal responsibility for yourself
- * You depend on others to provide prodding, coaching, and nagging to attain and sustain change.

Problems of depending on others for support when you lack of self-motivation:

If you lack personal motivation, and you depend entirely on others to attain or sustain a change, you could:

- * Resent the prodding, encouragement, and support of others
- * Resist sacrificing for change
- * Begin to think, "Why should I be doing all the suffering?"
- * Become jealous of people in your support system because they are not taking measures to change their own lifestyle
- * Begin to feel obligated to change just to satisfy others
- * Feel anger at others, thinking, "They want this more than I do."
- * Feel guilty if you don't accomplish the change others wanted for you
- * Blame others for wanting this change
- * Believe that personal self-esteem is dependent on making change and maintaining it
- * Begin to distort the motives, desires, and best wishes of the others
- * Feel a sense of coercion, force or ultimatum which inhibits your ability to participate in the process of change
- * Begin to feel worthless for not changing fast enough, for having relapses or for not sticking to the time frame or the guidelines