

Helping Your Clients Make a Long Term Change - Part 1

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"Change is the only constant." - Anon

This is the first article in a series written to help you affect a long-term lasting change with your clients that will make your fitness training 10 times more effective.

Here's the situation: you just acquired a new client who is seeking a global change in lifestyle. You have all the tools this person needs to make it happen, but they just can't seem to get over the hump.

The most likely reason for their inability to follow through is the lack of understanding in the science of making a change. Little do they realize there are some pretty important steps that must be taken, and it is your job as a true professional to help them understand. In helping your clients understand and implement the information in this article, you are empowering them in every aspect of their lives.

To understand how to change, we must first understand how change comes about. Every decision we make is solely influenced by how we link pain and pleasure. All our current behaviors are learned and, of course, will be changed in the same way. All change happens in an instant. We must believe that. Change must be reinforced, and it must also be conditioned so that it becomes lasting. By this, it is simply meant that we must decide to change and constantly and religiously adhere to the new set of standards we have now set for ourselves. For example, when a new piano is purchased it must be tuned, but everyone knows that, right? Did you know that the strings also have to be tuned every week for some time after the initial tuning? They do. The reason for this is that after one tuning session, the strings will want to go back to their original state if they are not tuned (conditioned) over and over (reinforced) until they stay tuned, and even at this point, they are tuned regularly to remain in the new desired state (new behavior).

To make a long-term lasting change, like permanent weight loss, we must believe we can change now. If we can create any problem in a moment, and we can, then we can definitely create any solution in a moment as well. We are responsible for our own change, and no one in the world can help us unless the need to change is strong. If we should go to the gym, if we should eat supportively and if we should change our lifestyles, we won't. The reason is we don't have enough leverage on ourselves. We don't have enough pain linked to our old lifestyle or enough pleasure linked to our desired behavior. For example, when we are in school, how many times have we had papers to write that we should have finished in the two weeks that the teacher gave us to complete them? Now, how many times were we able to complete the whole paper the night before it was due? You see, we had more pleasure linked to other things in our lives and pain linked to doing the paper. In the night before, our links changed. Our should became a must, and we suddenly in that moment linked pain to not completing the paper. With a simple shift in pain and pleasure, we can change any behavior we desire to anything we want, in a moment.

Now that we have a better understanding of what change is and how simple it is, there are three simple beliefs we must have to affect long term lasting change:

1. We must believe something *must* change.
2. We must believe *we* must change it; we have to be the source of our own change.
3. We must believe we *can* change it.

The operative word is "believe," which is synonymous with being convinced, understanding and accepting.

Once we believe that change is simple, something must change and we must be the source, we will be well on our way to a healthy lifestyle, free from unnecessary health problems and excess weight.

The first step to change is deciding what you really want and pinpointing what is preventing you from having it. Don't be afraid at this point to pull out a pen and paper and make a list. When listing the things you do want, be careful not to focus on the things you don't.

Most people list a lot of things they don't want when asked what they want. You have to remember that you will automatically move toward what you focus on and those things should never be negative. In your list of must haves, don't be shy. If you must have it, you will. From this simple list, you will also discover what is preventing you from changing your behaviors now. Some of the things that may be preventing you from obtaining your new behaviors may be things you very much enjoy. You must also realize that they must change if they are preventing you from having what you want. For example, if your desired item is to lose unwanted weight and the thing preventing you from having it is the fact that you go out twice a week for beer and wings with the guys, that behavior must be eliminated if you are going to achieve your desired change. I am not by any means saying you should never have fun. I am simply

saying that if a desired change is an absolute must have, the pleasure that is associated with the limiting behavior has to be changed. Pain must be associated to this behavior, as it is preventing you from the pleasure of your desired outcome – CHANGE!

DESIRED BEHAVIOR (CHANGE)	PREVENTING ME FROM HAVING IT

Use the above table with your clients. Educate them and help them fill it out. The information provided will identify the obstacles preventing the goal they desire. You have the tools for fitness and nutrition, but those are but a few of the tools needed to help your client change their lifestyle. Remember how important the mind is and train it as you would a muscle.

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