



Making Changes for a Healthier You

After practicing in health care for a few short years, I saw that knowledge often does not translate into sustainable improvements in lifestyle choices, especially in weight management. In this edition of For Your Health, I'd like to offer a perspective that is honest and hopefully helpful for those of you who feel stuck in the camp of "I Know What to Do But I'm Not Doing It."

Step 1: Get in touch with your life values and commit to them. Take some time to reflect upon what you value for living your life and list them by priority. Do you see yourself as being active and strong? Do you place a high value on having well prepared food in sufficient quantity? Do you value making the world a better place? Do you value risk taking or playing it safe? Do you value feeling confident about your appearance? When you become aware of your highest life values and prioritize them, you can use this to maintain motivation when changes are difficult because the changes will be worth their cost. You will have a willingness to choose an action that is uncomfortable (eating less for example) because the action lines up with a personal and heart felt high value. Take your time with this step because it is the driving force for successful change!

Step 2: Once you recognize your highest life values, use the following visual as a guide. Picture yourself as an adult, driving your own bus. You, as the driver, get to decide which road to take and you're the one steering your bus in the direction of your life values. Other people and situations are passengers on your life bus and they have their influences on you, but you still have the responsibility, as the driver, to head in your desired direction.

Step 3: Replace thoughts that begin with "only if" to ones that include "even if." Instead of thinking "I'll make this improvement only if such and such occurs," try the thought "I'll make this improvement even if such and such does or does not occur."

Step 4: Make conscious decisions by practicing a "stop, think" strategy that lines up with your highest life values. Your inner conflict over what you should be doing vs. what you are doing will be lessened. Recommit to values regularly and use sticky notes or journaling or inspirational sayings to remind you of the direction you are driving your life bus.

There will be details to work out in implementing changes and help is often needed along the way, however your personal motivation to keep moving forward will be strengthened because the destination is so inviting when it fits your highest life values.

As always, I welcome your comments and perspectives. That helps me do a better job (a personal very high value)!

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