

Welcome back. My name is April and today we are going to be talking about motivation to make physical activity and diet changes. Now this is one area that people tell me is the toughest for them, is they come in, they want to make the changes and they say, you know, I'm highly motivated one day and another day, I feel like giving up. So where does this motivation come from? So we are going to be talking about that today. And I think to get started, what I'd like to do is actually go to some of the Veterans who have lost a significant amount of weight because they have been through it and see what they have to say about motivation and what helps them to continue to be motivated and to stick with making their lifestyle changes.

"I really wanted to lose the weight. I just was so unhappy with where I was and when I started MOVE, I weighed 267 pounds and when the chance came along to get into MOVE, I knew right from the first meeting that this was for me and this was what I wanted and that was my motivation. I was sick and tired of being too heavy."

"It just seemed like I was always tired. I think that extra weight that I had on was the main part of it. Plus, I didn't, you know I looked in the mirror and I didn't feel good about myself. I didn't look good."

"I used to smoke and I decided one day that I was going to pick a date and that's when I was going to do it cold turkey and I did. It was right in my mind. I established it in my mind that I was going to do that. The same thing with this. I established in my mind that I have to do this and not for anybody else, but for me."

"I had back surgery about three or four years ago and I just want to preserve my back now so that's one more incentive to keeping the weight off and taking some more weight off."

"My success has to some degree motivated my wife. She has seen that I've dropped close to 60 pounds. She is starting to take notice."

"A lot of it is goal setting that we achieve over here. I've always been a goal-orientated person. I've had no problems setting and maintaining goals. Sometimes it's hard achieving them."

"I'm thinking about going to physical therapy now in the VA here and they've got a sign down there that says something about physical activity will extend your life, years to your life and it will add life to your years and I kind of took that to heart."

"I find out as you grow older, I think the person becomes more aware of your physical condition and it becomes part of the motivation factor for me. I want quality life while I'm here. I don't know what I'm going to get for quantity but I'd like to have quality."

So there are many reasons why people want to make these changes as they get started, as you can tell from those clips, but one thing that you want to think about is

what are your personal reasons for wanting to make these changes. They need to be pretty strong reasons to keep you motivated and you really have to want to do this for yourself. Now a lot of people actually get started in a weight management program because maybe their doctor recommended it or their spouse or a friend or a child or a grandchild, but the motivation really does need to come from you. That's called external motivation. That will get you going for a while but you need to be doing this for yourself.

So what I want to look at now is actually what is your level of motivation at this point and what this is often called is the stages of readiness, so we are going to kind of look at this, what we call a readiness ruler. What I want you to think about is, on a scale of 1 to 12, with 1 being I'm really not ready and 12 being I'm doing it, I'm ready, I'm there. I want you to answer these questions. So on a scale of 1 to 12, how ready are you to make some diet changes? On that same scale, how ready are you to increase your physical activity? Now these are some pretty important questions but also, you want to think about on this scale of 1 to 12, how important are these changes to you personally? And then the last question is, on that same scale of 1 to 12, how confident are you that you can make these changes? Now typically when I do this exercise in class, a lot of people will be pretty high on it's important to me and I'm ready to do it but the confidence level is kind of low, so that is typical if you're getting that result. Now what I'd like to do is go through what some of those scores might mean. Okay, so if your scores were at a 1 to 4, that typically means that you're not really ready to make this change at this point and what they call this is precontemplation. So what might be helpful for you is to view the handout, "So you're not ready yet" and that might give you some different tips for how to move you through those stages of readiness. Now if your score was at a 5 through an 8, that means you're unsure, you're thinking about it and we call this contemplation. The handout that might help you at this stage is called, "So you're thinking about it" so look for that handout on the website. Now if your score was at a 9 to a 12, that means that you're ready. You're in the preparation stage or you're doing it already so look at the handout, "Getting ready to lose some weight" and if you've already started to make some changes, you're in the action stage so you could look at the handout, "Yes, now you're doing it."

Now I want you to pull out the handout, "So you're thinking about it." On this handout, there's an exercise that asks you to think about the positives of some of these changes that you're wanting to make. Now it's really good to think about the positive things that are going to happen because that can help you get motivated. Now it's really important too to think about the negatives and there are some negatives; there are some things that you're going to have to give up, some things that you're going to have to plan for and you want to think about those too to make sure that you're really prepared to make these changes. Now I've done this exercise with some of our Veterans and they've been thinking about it and I want to go to a clip of the Veterans and what they had to say about some of the positives that they noticed and some of the negatives that they felt toward making these changes.

“In general, healthier foods maybe cost a little more in the grocery store but I think if you don’t eat as much, you’re offsetting that by the fact that you don’t have to buy as much food.”

“There’s different parts of the year that are tougher, Christmas and New Year’s and family stuff, that is a little tougher but after that, you have to get back on it and if you do, just keep maintaining.”

“I think that the positives are so obvious, you know the feeling good, the good health, you know to be able to do things with your grandkids and feel better and a lot better sex life when you lose weight, that’s for sure. Nobody talks about that very much but I think that’s there too.”

“Just here in the past week or so, I had some dizziness and I actually had to go in and see the doctor about it here at the VA and they went through their tests and everything like that and the bittersweet news was, well the bad news is you’re dizzy. The good news is, you know it’s because you’ve lost so much weight. So they had to adjust my medications. They’ve taken away two blood pressure pills, they took away my potassium citrate and they cut another pill in half, so they’ve taken away quite a few meds because they were given to me and prescribed based on over 300 pounds. Well today, I’m considerably less than that, I’m at around 245.”

“One thing I could add is I sleep a lot better and I don’t snore and I had a big snoring problem before I lost that weight and you know, according to my wife, I don’t snore.”

“If we’re going to maintain any kind of lifestyle going into retirement, at my age, to stay as active as I want to be, I have to continue through this program. And it’s not necessarily a have to, I want to, because the benefits I get are just amazing.”

So as you work on your lifestyle goals, you will notice that your motivation is going to be high at some points and low at others. Don’t get discouraged. If you find that your motivation is lagging, feel free to go through this exercise. A lot of people say that it really helps them to get back on track to think about the reasons why they’re doing this in the first place and sometimes, when you look at the positives and negatives, and you look at how great the benefits are going to be comparing to, you know some of the things they have to give up, which are usually not that big, then a lot of times, your motivation will come back. Also think about what you can do that motivates you. You know, is it you have not been doing rewards for yourself or is it weight loss that motivates you. Make sure that it’s the right motivation too that is getting you going. This process is all very worthwhile so just remember that if you’re struggling because the weight’s not coming off that everything that you’re doing with diet, everything that you’re doing with physical activity is having really great benefits so stick with it. It really is worth it.

Now your assignment for this week is to keep your food and physical activity record just like you always do. Make sure you’re writing down everything that you eat and drink as

you do it to help you stay motivated and on track. Now your goals can really motivate you so make sure that you're setting those goals every week because as you attain those, you're going to continue to feel motivated. The other thing that I want to make sure you do is please do the exercise that we went through in this program, listing the positives and the negatives to making these lifestyle changes. I think it will really help you see where your motivation is at. I want to congratulate you on completing another week of making your healthy lifestyle changes and I hope to see you next week.