

Positive Effect Leadership Structured Coaching Program Lesson 1, Assignment 1: Power of Choice and Behavior Change

When we want to improve or get better at something, we are changing the way we behave. Maybe we are adding a new behavior. Eliminating a behavior is a behavior change, too. Doing things differently can be a challenge, but there are some things that can help us.

1. Power of Choice

The power of choice is one of my favorite topics because it has the potential to dramatically change people's lives. Many of us, myself included, have a tendency to fall into a victim mentality. We say, "Oh, I have to do this" and "I have to do that." In reality, most of the things that we do are choices.

The key is to make choices intentionally. We must decide where we want to go, what we want to accomplish, and who we want to be. Using those decisions as a guide, we intentionally choose actions, attitudes, and perspectives that will move us closer to those goals.

2. Absolute Yes List

It's useful to have guidelines to help us make intentional choices. I use something called an Absolute Yes List that I read about in *Take Time for Your Life* by Cheryl Richardson. It's a yardstick that you hold up next to each choice to help you decide what would be the best decision. There are a series of exercises in this lesson that will help you create your Absolute Yes List.

3. Your Big Why

It's important to know why your priorities and goals are important to you. In other words, it's important to know your Big Why.

Our Big Why is the underlying heart reason for wanting to do something. You find it by asking yourself over and over why you want to accomplish or do something until you find a reason that feels truly motivating.

If you keep asking "Why?" and never get to a reason that feels like a desire, mark it off your list. It's a "should" goal and you probably won't achieve it anyway because it doesn't have meaning for you. There's a worksheet in this lesson that will help you find your Big Why.

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Additional Ways to Support Behavior Change:

1. Use Willpower Wisely

We only have so much willpower each day. Any of us that have tried to diet know that our weakest time is in the evening. It's because we have used up our willpower by then. So how do we incorporate a new behavior into our lives? We apply some willpower for a while and turn those actions into habits.

For example, let's say that I want to exercise three times a week. If I don't have set times to exercise, I battle with myself everyday about when and what time. Often I end up not exercising at all! Instead, if I write down set times to exercise in my calendar and stick with them, I will incorporate the times into my schedule and life. After about a month, exercise is a habit and I don't have to use any more willpower on it. Then I can move on to another new behavior.

2. Write It Down

You increase your chances of achieving a goal if you write it down. You can increase your chances even more by putting the goal where you will see it often. No one knows exactly why it works, but it does so write it down!

3. Tell Others

Share your goals with others. Let the people around you know what you are trying to accomplish and you will make it more likely that you will achieve your goals. Accountability is a powerful motivator.

During our coaching sessions this month, we will individualize ways for you to get motivated and move forward in your professional development.