

SKILL: PLAN, PRIORITIZE, AND PREPARE

YOU CAN'T DO A BEHAVIOR UNLESS YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF DO A BEHAVIOR. IN OTHER WORDS, UNLESS YOU PLAN, PREPARE, AND FACILITATE TAKING ACTION, YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING – OR YOU CAN'T DO IT FOR VERY LONG.

FOR INSTANCE, YOU CAN'T EAT LEAN PROTEIN IF YOU HAVEN'T SHOPPED FOR AND PREPARED IT; YOU CAN'T SHOP FOR AND PREPARE IT IF THOSE ACTIVITIES AREN'T PRIORITIES YOU PURPOSELY MAKE TIME FOR.

WE CALL THIS THE “HOW BEFORE WHAT” APPROACH – AS IN, MAKE SURE YOU KNOW HOW EXACTLY, YOU'LL HELP YOURSELF DO THINGS CONSISTENTLY BEFORE YOU WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT WHAT, PRECISELY, THE ACTION IS.

(YOU DON'T HAVE TO START HERE, OF COURSE, BUT WE'VE FOUND THIS SET-UP TO HELP WITH A LOT OF FUTURE NUTRITION AND HEALTH HABITS.

CORE PRACTICE: MAKE TIME

WHY THIS PRACTICE?

FEELING “BUSY” AND RUSHED IS THE NORM IN THE 21ST CENTURY. THE WORLD IS FULL OF PEOPLE AND THINGS THAT ARE HAPPY TO DISTRACT US, GRAB OUR ATTENTION, PRESSURE US, AND PUSH US TO FOLLOW THEIR AGENDA.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN SOCIALIZED TO BE “PLEASERS”, “HELPERS”, AND / OR “CAREGIVERS” MAY FIND IT HARD TO TAKE TIME FOR THEMSELVES OR IDENTIFY AND ADVOCATE FOR THEIR OWN NEEDS – ESPECIALLY IF THEY BECOME PARENTS OR OTHER TYPES OF CAREGIVERS.

SAMPLE TASKS & ACTIONS

PRACTICE, PLANNING, PRIORITIZATION, AND PREPARATION

PRACTICE BASIC PLANNING, PRIORITIZATION, AND PREPARATION TECHNIQUES, SUCH AS:

- ✓ USING A CALENDAR AND AUTOMATED REMINDERS TO BOOK WORKOUTS, SCHEDULE GROCERY SHOPPING, AND OTHER “APPOINTMENTS WITH YOURSELF”
- ✓ LOOKING AHEAD TO YOUR UPCOMING WEEK AND ANTICIPATING POTENTIAL OBSTACLES AND SETBACKS

- ✓ DECIDING IN ADVANCE WHAT YOUR DAILY OR WEEKLY PRIORITIES WILL BE AND MAKING SURE GOOD NUTRITION AND HEALTHY BEHAVIORS ARE ON THAT LIST.

ADOPT A WEEKLY RITUAL / DAILY RITUAL

- ✓ SET ASIDE A LITTLE TIME REGULARLY TO PREPARE FOR THE NEAR FUTURE. THIS CAN INCLUDE ACTIONS LIKE:
 - DOING SMALL MEAL PREP TASKS (I.E. PACKING A LUNCH, CHOPPING VEGETABLES TO HAVE HANDY)
 - DOING LARGER MEAL PREP TASKS (I.E. BATCH COOKING)
 - PACKING WORKOUT CLOTHES THE NIGHT BEFORE
 - ARRANGING CHILD CARE SO YOU CAN GO TO THE GYM
 - AND SO ON. THIS “RITUAL” COULD BE 5 MINUTES EVERY MORNING OR EVENING, 30 MINUTES EVERY FEW DAYS, AN HOUR OR TWO ON WEEKENDS, ETC.

CORE PRACTICE: TAKE A SMALL ACTION MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR GOALS

WHY THIS PRACTICE?

MANY CLIENTS FEEL “STUCK” – WHETHER THAT’S IN STALE, UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOR PATTERNS, OR IN A STATE OF PUZZLEMENT ABOUT HOW TO “FIX THINGS”, OR IN A NEGATIVE AND MALADAPTIVE THINKING, OR OVERWHELMED BY ALL THE POSSIBLE OPTIONS.

TAKING ACTION HELPS US GET “UN-STUCK”, IMMEDIATELY. IT’S A DECLARATION OF OUR INTENT; A VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE FUTURE WE WANT FOR OURSELVES. TAKING A SMALL ACTION DOESN’T REQUIRE US TO CHANGE OUR MINDSET, OUR MOTIVATION, OUR SENSE OF SELF, OR HOW WE ARE FEELING ABOUT THINGS... ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY *WILL* CHANGE OUR PERSPECTIVE, DRIVE, IDENTITY, AND EMOTIONS AS WE DO IT OVER AND OVER. WE DON’T *ACTUALLY* HAVE TO LOVE, APPRECIATE, OR CARE DEEPLY FOR OUR BODY FOR US TO *ACT AS IF WE DO*.

ACTION COMES BEFORE MOTIVATION. ONCE ACTION IS TAKEN, MOTIVATION WILL FOLLOW.

PLUS, TAKING A SMALL ACTION IS MANAGEABLE. IF A 5-MINUTE ACTION IS TOO MUCH, IT CAN BE 1-MINUTE ACTION, OR A 10-SECOND ACTION (SUCH AS DRINKING A GLASS OF WATER, TAKING A SINGLE FLIGHT OF STAIRS, OR SWALLOWING A VITAMIN PILL).

SAMPLE TASKS & ACTIONS

- ✓ TAKE A 5-MINUTE ACTION

WITH MY 1-ON-1 COACHING CLIENTS, I SUGGEST THAT CLIENTS BRAINSTORM A FEW POSSIBLE SMALL ACTIONS OR HABITS THAT MIGHT MOVE THEM IN THE DIRECTION OF THEIR GOALS OF FEELING AND FUNCTIONING BETTER OR SERVE AS A “DECLARATION” OF THEIR INTENT TO CHANGE.

A 5-MINUTE ACTION MIGHT BE:

- BOOK A PHYSIOTHERAPY APPOINTMENT
- TAKE A VITAMIN
- GO TO BED 5 MINUTES EARLIER
- FLOSS
- MEDITATE FOR 5 MINUTES
- TAKE A 5-MINUTE WALK
- TAKE AN EXTRA 5 MINUTES FOR FOAM ROLLING OR STRETCHING

✓ **USE THE 4-CIRCLE EXERCISE**

THE 4-CIRCLE EXERCISE CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR END GOAL, THEN DISTILL IT INTO A SMALL ACTION YOU ARE READY, WILLING, AND ABLE TO DO TODAY.

