Putting It All Together

Becoming the person you need to be was the topic of the previous lesson. It was a logical conclusion to the topic of having your best year ever. You'll have to change yourself in some meaningful way to have a significantly different year than you've been living.

You now have all the parts necessary to create a comprehensive plan. Let's use an example of someone that wants to lose 50 pounds in the next 12 months in a healthy manner. We'll consider everything we've discussed up to this point.

Mark is single, 35 years of age, 250 lbs., and 6 feet tall.

Review the Past

- Mark was a healthy weight until he graduated from college. He then gained a few pounds each year until reaching his present condition.
- He has a history of making poor food choices. In his younger days, these poor choices didn't affect his weight.
- Mark eats when he's bored or stressed. It's his primary coping mechanism. As a result, he keeps a lot of unhealthy comfort food in the house.
- Mark doesn't mind exercise, but getting out of the house is a problem for him. He has good intentions, but can't seem to make it out the door for the drive to the gym.
- Mark views himself and the "funny, chubby guy that everyone likes."
- Mark knows he's an all-or-nothing kind of guy. There's no middle ground. His past attempts at diet and exercise have been extreme, leaving him extremely hungry, sore, and ultimately injured. These attempts have failed spectacularly.

Gathering Resources

Mark doesn't have everything he needs right out of the gate. ***The world is full of resources, many of them free.*** Ensure that you have the resources you need to

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be successful.

1. **What does Mark need to learn?** Mark remembers the food pyramid from high school, but her realizes that was a while ago. He knows he needs to update his knowledge regarding healthy food choices.

    - He also needs to brush up on his knowledge regarding getting into shape. He was a high-school athlete, but he's not sure how to get into shape from his current starting point.

    - Mark knows he needs to learn how to control his impulses regarding his eating habits. He believes that finding other ways to deal with his boredom and stress will make sticking to a healthy eating plan much easier.

2. **Mark finds his resources.** Mark searches Amazon.com for a few books regarding health, weight loss, exercise, and self-discipline. He chooses a few Kindle books for each topic. Kindle books are less expensive and easy to return if he doesn't like a book.

    - He also finds a few blogs that seem to mirror his situation. The authors started in the same place as Mark and have managed to create the results that Mark desires.

    - Mark has a friend that would also like to lose weight. They've agreed to hold each other accountable and exercise together.

3. **Find a mentor.** Mark contacts the blog authors and asks if any of them would like to serve as his mentor. One of them responded positively. Mark also knows a coworker that successful lost a lot of weight several years ago.

4. **Time and other resources.** Fortunately, Mark has plenty of time to adopt an exercise plan. He has all the basic resources he needs, but lacks financial resources. A gym membership and fancy food probably aren't options.

Related Habits

Mark has several bad habits that stand in his way:

1. **Mark has poor coping skills.** He doesn't do drugs or drink, but he uses food as an emotional crutch.

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2. **Mark eats a large percentage of his calories after dinner while watching TV.**

3. **Mark drinks high calorie beverages.** This is one habit that really makes it difficult to lose weight. Non-calorie drinks take up the same amount of physical space. It's easy to drink a lot of calories.

4. **Mark has little self-discipline.** Even the smallest of obstacles can derail Mark's efforts.

Eliminating these bad habits will be half the battle. ***In fact, Mark can probably come close to reaching his goal just by eliminating these habits.*** Deal with your bad habits.

Mark needs to develop a few new habits:

1. **Coping skills.** Mark develops a few ideas for dealing with his anxiety and boredom. When he's faced with emotional eating, Mark has decided to:

    - Meditate for 15 minutes.
    - If that doesn't work, he will then take a 15-minute walk.
    - Mark will then call a friend or his accountability partner.
    - Mark also decides to take up a hobby to occupy his mind and his time while he's home alone.

2. **Mark has decided not to eat after dinner.** He knows this will be challenging, but his new coping skills will help. He's also decided to add fiber to his evening meal to keep himself feeling full. A few glasses of water will help, too.

3. **Mark is replacing his high-calorie drinks with water or other non-caloric drinks.** He knows this will make a huge difference. He realizes that he might not have to cut his food intake very much if he can eliminate calories from his beverages.

4. **Mark finds a couple of books to address his self-discipline issues.** He decides to do one thing each day that he doesn't feel like doing. He knows he needs to learn how to ignore his negative feelings and take action any way. The books have a detailed program for increasing his self-discipline and Mark schedules this activity into his life.

5. **Mark knows he needs to make exercise a daily habit.** Exercise will help with his hunger and speed his progress.

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6. **Better food choices.** Mark decides to implement a new decision process at meal times. He will now ask himself a series of questions:

    - Am I actually hungry? If not, he will use his new coping strategies.
    - Will this food take me further or closer to my weight-loss goal?
    - Mark will also avoid purchasing any unhealthy foods. He knows that if it's in the house, it will eventually be eaten.

7. **He will review his goal and his progress each day.** Mark revisits his goal in the morning and the evening. He also weighs himself each day. He knows that his weight can fluctuate from day to day, so he takes the average weight for the week to track his progress.

It's okay to start slowly. A few smaller changes can provide sufficient results in the early stages.

Potential Obstacles

Mark identifies his potential obstacles:

1. **Mark's mom.** Mark lives close to his mom, whom has always encouraged him to eat. His mom thinks men should be well-fed and look that way. He knows that she will start nagging him as soon as he loses 10 lbs.

    - Mark knows he needs to grow up and stop worrying about his mother's opinion. He pays for one hour of counseling and receives several tips for dealing with her effectively while preserving the relationship.

2. **His finances.** Mark doesn't have a lot of money to spend on losing weight, but realizes that he will be spending less money on food and beverages. He's confident he can overcome this obstacle without any problems.

3. **His friends.** Mark's friends love to go out and eat. Cheeseburger, chicken wings, and other traditional pub food. His friends will give him some good-natured ribbing and tempt him with his favorite foods.

    - Mark knows that his friends eat first, and then spend time talking. He decides to eat at home, show up late, and then order a diet soda. He can still spend time with his friends socializing while avoiding temptation.

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Personal Attributes

Mark creates a list of personal attributes that will facilitate reaching his goal:

1. **Patience.** Losing 50 lbs. will take time. To reach his goal in a year, he must average one pound of weight loss per week.

2. **Persistence.** While the work won't be too difficult, the changes won't be enjoyable in the beginning. Persistence will be an important quality.

3. **Having an emphasis on health, diet, and exercise.** People that are lean, fit, and healthy emphasize these things. When making decisions, these items are always in the back of their minds.

Overall Plan

Mark knows that losing one pound each week should be easy, especially for someone of his weight. Only small changes are required to meet his one-pound per week goal. He doesn't need to make any drastic changes.

For example, cutting out a couple of sugared drinks each day and taking a leisurely 15-minute walk each night would be sufficient to lose a pound each week for the next several weeks. When those changes stop working, it's time to add another change or two. ***Small habit changes can be enough to make continuous progress.*** Avoid believing that painful change is required.

With enough patience and persistence, even large goals can be achieved comfortably.

Now you have a complete picture of how to apply the information in this module. The final lesson is the Summary and Reflection lesson.

Get Started on the Information in This Lesson:

Please download, print, and complete the "Live the Best Year of Your Life Worksheet" from your Additional Resources box.

This worksheet will help you plan an exciting, successful year and start living it!

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