

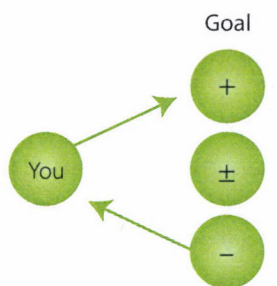


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## Motivation to change

Many participants in weight management programs say “I know what to do to manage my weight,” yet they have a hard time putting their knowledge into action. Such individuals are often puzzled and frustrated when they find themselves struggling to follow their weight management program. Their behavior is saying that they are having difficulty maintaining motivation and commitment to weight control and that they do not understand the process required to increase their motivation.

You may have studied the concept of approach avoidance



Approach-Avoidance Conflict

theory in the **Embracing Change** module. This theory describes simultaneously approaching and backing away from change. Desiring—and at the same time resisting—change is a natural step in the process of behavior change. After all, even the most desirable goals have a price. Achieving a healthy weight may be one of your most longed-for goals, but you may regret that achieving this goal will mean that you can no longer eat whatever you want, nor can you continue to be a couch potato.

## tools for success

- Discover the Five Rs of Motivation for weight management.
- Identify your stage of readiness to manage your weight.
- Calculate your motivation scores to manage your weight.
- Increase your motivation to manage your weight.

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The Facets of Motivation

As you can see from the definition of the word motivation, it is more complex than simply wanting to do something. Multifaceted biological as well as psychological urges direct motivation. A person's motivation to pursue a particular behavior is a reflection of their biological programming and psychological factors, such as their value system and the price they attach to success. Other modules in the OPTIFAST Lifestyle Education Series have addressed the skills needed to deal with biological motivations to overeat. This module concentrates on the psychological aspects of motivation.

The Five Rs of Motivation questions provide an assessment to help you determine how motivated you are to lose weight, and your weight loss efforts.

# mo•ti•va•tion

1. A feeling of interest or enthusiasm that makes somebody want to do something, or something that causes such a feeling.
2. The biological, emotional, cognitive, or social forces that activate and direct behavior.

believed her weight was hindering her relationships with her children. Jane did well in the early phase of the OPTIFAST Program, but found herself struggling once she entered the long-term management phase. The behaviorist

associated with Jane's program met with Jane to help her explore the factors that were making it difficult for her to manage her weight. The behaviorist began by helping Jane identify the factors that had motivated her to join the OPTIFAST Program. Jane stated she valued her children. For this reason, she wished to control her weight. She realized that, if she controlled her weight, she would probably have more energy to engage in activities with her children, that she would feel more comfortable in social situations with her children, and that by reaching and maintaining a healthy weight

The Five Rs Of Weight Management Motivation

1	Relevant	How is weight management relevant in my life?
2	Risks	What are the risks in my life if I do not manage my weight?
3	Rewards	What are the rewards in my life if I manage my weight?
4	Roadblocks	What are the roadblocks to weight management in my life?
5	Remove	How can I remove the roadblocks in order to manage my weight?

Drs. James Miller and Stephen Rollnick have written extensively about the role of motivation in weight loss. They believe people struggle to lose weight despite having good motivation to do so because the value they place on weight loss is in direct conflict with a more strongly held food-related value and/or because they secretly believe the cost of weight loss exceeds the benefits.

Jane's story illustrates each of these points...

Conflicting Values

Jane had been overweight for many years. She entered the OPTIFAST® Program because she

she would increase the chance that she would live long enough to see them well into their adulthoods.

Weight management seemed like an obvious strategy to help Jane fulfill her goals and to behave in a way that was consistent with her child-centered values. Why was she having difficulty maintaining her weight loss? One of the reasons Jane was struggling may have been that she had another value that competed with her child-centered values. In fact, this was the case. While Jane clearly valued her children, she also valued achieving a sense of immediate comfort by eating whenever she felt stressed. Thus, her child-centered value was



in direct conflict with the value she placed on food for stress relief. These values competed for her attention and made it difficult for her to stay motivated to adhere to her weight management routine.

Jane had never looked at her value system in terms of how it affected her approach to weight management. This was one of the reasons that she was stuck. Once she was able to determine the number one value in her life, she could make a commitment to her top priority and figure out how to manage the other values in her life so that they did not interfere with her weight management efforts.

### Cost Benefit Analysis

"What's in it for me?" is a natural reaction and a typical question people have whenever they consider making a lifestyle change. It is important to acknowledge the cost of making the change so that it does not subconsciously undermine your motivation to change. It is even more important, however, to focus on the value of the change in terms of your overall lifestyle.

### Acknowledge the Cost

Motivation to lose weight involves a personal awareness of the costs of successful weight management. In Jane's case, she tended to find immediate stress relief through inappropriate eating. For her, the cost of weight management was that she would not be able to use food to relieve stress. Since overeating was inconsistent with her commitment to weight control and her child-centered values, it was crucial that Jane find other ways to deal with stress. Doing so allowed her to maintain motivation to follow her weight management plan and to live according to her value system.

### Focus on the Value

Identifying the rewards of weight management is another important aspect of motivation. People make changes when they feel that the payoffs are worth the investment. It is important to identify the benefits of weight management as you see them and to keep these benefits in view. Write the benefits of managing your weight on an index card, or on your screen saver, or on Post-it® Notes, and place them wherever you will see them, especially during times

when you find yourself wanting to eat when you are not hungry. For example, put a motivational Post-it Note on your fridge, or food cabinet. Keep an index card in your pocket or purse. Review it whenever you feel tempted to eat when you aren't hungry.

"A picture really can be worth a thousand words. I tend to be a stress eater. I found that I ignored the motivational notes after awhile, so I used pictures instead. I have always wanted to hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon so I hung different pictures of the Grand Canyon, people hiking down it and views at sunset and sunrise on my refrigerator, my bulletin board at work, and my bathroom mirror. Looking at those every day reminded me of what I would be able to do at a healthier weight."

– Karen

Our values and our cost benefits analysis together create our beliefs, which in turn form our motivation. Faulty beliefs can keep you from reaching your goal. It is important for your beliefs to be realistic and plausible.

## "your beliefs

determine the limits of your motivation."

- Jason Michael Gracia, motivational coach and founder of [www.motivation123.com](http://www.motivation123.com).

Ron had been diagnosed with early stage heart disease. His doctor urged him to begin an exercise program at the local gym to reduce his risk of having a heart attack. Ron feared having a heart attack and wanted to get into shape as his doctor suggested, but he kept failing to do so because he believed that exercise was painful, as in the old adage "No pain, no gain." He saw the cost of getting into shape as enduring pain. Since that pain of exercise would be immediate as opposed to the possibility of suffering a painful heart attack in the future, Ron's irrational belief blocked his motivation. Fortunately for Ron, when he described this Catch-22 to his physician during his next checkup, his doctor made arrangements for him to start a fitness program through the cardiac rehabilitation program at the local hospital. Exercise physiologists familiar with the psychological barriers to activity were able to motivate him to move.

## Motivation + Readiness = Action

In order to change, people need to be ready to take action. Dr. James Prochaska developed the Transtheoretical Model, or Stages of Change Model, to help people understand and move through the process of change. Readiness to change is critical for action. People often move back and forth through stages of readiness to change before they commit to make a lifestyle change. Change rarely occurs in a straight line.



Most people who have made significant lifestyle changes report they moved forward, then backward, and eventually forward again. This see-saw action continues even after change has begun.

## Stages of Readiness for Weight Control

1	Precontemplation	Downplay or denial
2	Contemplation	Ambivalence
3	Preparation	Motivated
4	Action	Doing it
5	Maintenance	Living it

(Adapted from Dr. Prochaska's *Transtheoretical Model of Change*)

### Precontemplation: Downplay or Denial

Feels Like:

- Does not recognize there is a problem.
- Does not see the problem as serious.
- May be defensive when other people pressure them to change.
- Unwilling to change unhealthy behavior.
- Unwilling to discuss behavior change with others.
- Avoids becoming informed about the impact of unhealthy behavior.
- Avoids taking responsibility for the consequences of unhealthy behavior.
- The cons of changing outweigh the benefits of changing unhealthy behavior.

Sounds Like:

- "I'm not really interested in making any changes. I'll be fine. I'm only here because my doctor told me to come."
- "Why should I do this?"

Next Steps:

- Increase awareness of the impact of your unhealthy behavior.

- Identify strategies that allow you to avoid changing your behavior.
- Seek support from others by asking them to identify how they think that you avoid behavior change.
- Ask others to give you honest, nonjudgmental feedback about the impact of your behavior without pushing you to change your behavior.

### Contemplation: Ambivalence

Feels Like:

- Aware of the need to change.
- Thinking about change.
- More open to receiving information about the behavior they're considering changing.
- A pull exists between the wish to change and an unwillingness to change.
- Difficulty tolerating the uncertainty that comes with change.
- Waiting for the perfect opportunity.
- Wishing that life would change without having to make changes oneself.

Sounds Like:

- "I know I should be exercising but life is so hectic; I'm not sure how I can fit it in."
- "My cholesterol is high and I have a family history of heart disease. Maybe I better look into doing something to lose weight."

Next Steps:

- Change your perspective (e.g., watch a movie that pertains to the effects of overweight, read food labels, notice consequences of overweight—such as shortness of breath and low endurance, think about the long-term consequences of overweight).
- Choose reasonable goals (e.g., setting a manageable goal weight range and understanding the calories that you will need to consume and expend in order to maintain that weight).
- Identify events that trigger you to weaken your commitment to weight control (e.g., stress).

- Identify your values and note the discrepancy between unhealthy weight-related behaviors and your values.
- Make a decision for your own reasons, not for someone else's, about whether or not you are committed to weight control.

### Preparation: Motivated

#### Feels Like:

- Intends to take action within 30 days.
- The "research" phase: people are gathering information about how to change.
- Has taken some behavioral steps in this direction.
- Experimenting with small pieces of the behavior change.

#### Sounds Like:

- "I know I need to do something about this. This is serious but I'm not sure what I can do."
- "I really want to eat healthier but I just don't have time to cook during the week."

#### Next Steps:

- Talk to your doctor about your desire to lose weight and ask for his/her support. Discuss a reasonable weight goal and make sure you're cleared to start an exercise program.
- Tell your friends and family about your desire to get healthier and ask for their support and encouragement.
- Take a tour of your kitchen and remove the problematic foods that "call to you." If you don't like the idea of discarding them, consider donating them to a food shelf.
- Start gathering information about getting more active: visit the neighborhood fitness club for a tour, call about that dance class you've been thinking about joining, look through the seed catalogs to start a vegetable garden.
- Dust off your home exercise equipment and get it ready for use!

### Action: Doing It

#### Feels Like:

- Now you have the belief that you can change.
- Implementing specific action plans.
- Making definitive changes in certain behaviors.
- Open to receiving help and getting support from others.
- Has changed behavior for less than 6 months.

#### Sounds Like:

- "I'm now eating a healthy breakfast every day."
- "I'm bringing my lunch to work 3-4 times a week."
- "I'm going for a walk at lunch with a co-worker twice a week."

#### Next Steps:

- Purchase the food items and supplies that will support your success with the program. Make a commitment not to bring home your favorite snack foods which are hard to resist.
- Put meaningful pictures up on your bathroom mirror and bulletin board to help you stay motivated (see page 3).
- Put your program class schedule on your calendar and plan to attend weekly.
- Commit to continuing your weight management program, even during the rough times. Remember that this is a journey and although you may make a few detours along the way, you can get right back on track.

### Maintenance: Living It

#### Feels Like:

- Maintaining the new behavior for at least 6 months.
- Using new skills and behaviors to anticipate challenges and deal with life to avoid relapsing to old behaviors.

#### Sounds Like:

- "I can't believe how much better I feel! I've lost 40 pounds since I started eating healthier and exercising. In fact, I miss walking if I miss a few days!"
- "People at work are amazed that I bring my lunch every day and don't want to run out for fast food like I used to."



Next Steps:

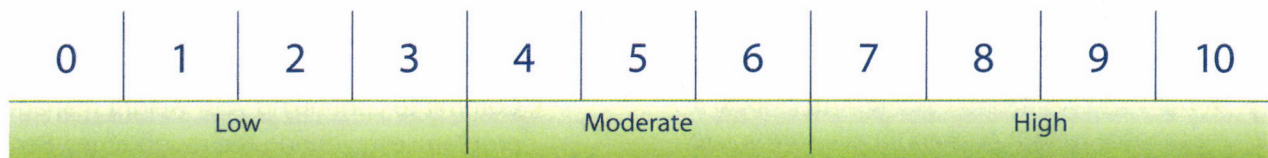
- Regularly attend the weight maintenance phase of the program.
- Continue planning your meals, your exercise and problem-solving your challenging situations. When you get stuck, discuss these situations with your clinic staff and fellow classmates for suggestions and encouragement.
- Periodically review your blood work, food records and weight loss graph to remind yourself how far you've come!

The stages of readiness can be helpful to long-term weight management and lapses. Have you experienced any lapses during treatment? Lapses are a normal and common part of changing behavior. The important lesson is to not give up simply because you have had a setback. Each step that you take in the process of change is valuable and informative. Even a step backward, if you analyze and learn from it, can help move you toward the point where you can maintain your commitment to weight control without a struggle.

Weight management needs to be important to you in order for you to have the motivation to manage your weight effectively. You can examine how important weight management is to you by calculating your importance quotient using the Motivation Scale Assessment below.

### Motivation Scale Assessing the Importance of Weight Management in Your Life

Circle the number that reflects how important weight control is to you:



Score Interpretation and Guide:

(0-3) You believe that weight management is of LIMITED importance.

Now write down what it would take for weight management to become more important in your life.

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(4-6) You believe that weight management is MODERATELY important.

Write the reasons that your score is not lower: Now identify what it would take for weight management to become more important in your life.

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