



Planning for Inspiration

Most people are familiar with what it is like to start a campfire. If you ever started a campfire yourself, it unlikely that you just aimlessly grabbed some twigs then lit them on fire impulsively, without much thinking or planning. If someone were to lite a fire that way without firewood it is likely that the newly started fire would soon go out due to lack of fuel. Instead, reasonably speaking, when one wants to start a campfire, first he must gather a good amount of twigs, kindling, sticks and finally logs to not only start the fire but then keep it going strong.



Inspiration is just like that campfire. If we don't plan ahead to keep the fire burning then it can easily go out as quickly as it started. Almost everyone is familiar with this fast burning fire phenomenon. An example would be suddenly getting inspired to lose weight then going to the gym for 2 hours the first few days but quickly stopping when the pain of the workout sets in and the motivation begins to fade. Similarly, the vast majority of people who quit smoking can tell many stories of dozens of quit attempts that fizzled as quickly as they started

Therefore, “**inspiration planning**” is a key process when it comes to building then sustaining motivation for positive change. As important as it is to become inspired at the start of a change attempt, keeping that inspiration “burning” can often be even more important. Below is a checklist with some key aspects of inspiration planning (or planning ahead to sustain insight and motivation on a long term basis.) **Review the following list and check any areas that you feel that you may need to work on. Also, underline at least one area of strength. Discuss this as a group**

Maintaining **Insight** – There are two things to remember when it comes to preserving insight

- Remembering what you have learned from your own experiences and then not forgetting
- Awareness of when you may lie or trick yourself with harmful thoughts such as “I’ll quit tomorrow”

Establishing **External Motivation** – This has three key components

- Remembering consequences in a way that will help you stay on the right path
- Incentives – Staying aware of the rewards and benefits of staying the course and making changes
- Support- Having people around who can help and encourage you, especially in times of struggle

Sustaining **Internal Motivation** – Three key factors that can help energize an internal drive for change are:

- Values – Continuously working toward prioritizing what is important even when the most valued path isn't necessarily the easiest or quickest way to relieve stress, struggle or pain
- Hope – Keeping a sincere desire for a better life, alive as a reality in your heart and mind
- Courage – Having the strength not to give up even when things are fearful, difficult, strenuous or uncomfortable



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