PSA In Good Health

If you are like most people, you have this sense in the back of your mind that you need to make a change...maybe it's a change to your diet (you want to lose those five pounds you gained over the last ten years), you want to quit smoking (you have breathing problems and they are getting worse), you want to become more compliant with your doctor's treatment plan, or you just aren't happy! But usually, it seems easier to continue your bad habits than to change.

There are two vital factors required in order to implement significant changes in your life. First, there's desire and motivation—that feeling in the back of your mind (and sometimes in your active thoughts) that you need to change. Second, there's resistance to change—the ingrained habits in your life that make you want to stick with what you're doing now because it's convenient, easy, or safe.

The key to making change happen in your life is to increase your motivation enough so that it overcomes the resistance. When this happens, you find yourself ready for change. Below are five steps that help raise your desire and lower your resistance to change.

Make detailed pictures of your future both with and without the changes you have in mind.

Surround yourself with change.

Finally, take a real first action.

These pictures can be in your mind or on paper...picture boards work great! What will your life be like five or ten years from now if you commit to this change? What will your life be like in the future if you don't change? The more details you add to the pictures, the more you will prefer the changed version of you.

Even if you're not committed to changing just yet, make the effort to clear out the time in your life you would need to make this change. The fact that you are thinking about change means that something is out of balance in your life, and freeing up time to take on some kind of change is really worthwhile. When you find yourself in a situation where you know you have time and energy free to commit to a change, it becomes much easier to make that commitment.

Seek input from trusted resources in the areas of your life you want to change. Read blogs, trusted online information, magazine articles...anything you can find. Make it a point to hang out with friends who are interested in the same change. As you surround yourself with the change, it becomes much easier and more natural.

A partner is simply someone who holds you accountable for the change. Choose a very small number of people who you think will actively help you make the change...maybe they are in the process of making the same change! Talk this change over with that person. Talk about the benefits you perceive and the challenges you see. Sincerely ask for their help, both as a sounding board and as a cheerleader.

Commit to doing one thing today that's oriented toward the change you want to see. Maybe it's simply choosing not to visit the vending machine or taking one less smoke break.

FIND THE MOTIVATION TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Your health plan provider is ready to help. They have disease management and coaching programs free of charge that are a great resource. To access these resources, call the member/customer service phone number on the back of your ID card.

Whatever your desired change is, take action! You'll find it feels good to do something positive for yourself that moves you in the direction of the change that you want to achieve.

