

unify consulting group

“Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.”

-Jim Rohn

A Message From Our Founder



When is this snow going to go already?!?!

Ok, so I complain a lot about the weather and how

much I need it to be warm and sunny. It is a bad habit I have and if I am not careful it can tend to shadow how I see the rest of the world. I have to be mindful of what it is that I am choosing to focus on and how that can shape my world. I thought it would be interesting for us to do our quarterly newsletter on the idea of habits and why when we know what we “should” do that we don’t end up making the changes we feel we really want.

We all have habits and routines that we engage in daily and for the most part we do this to make life easier. We eat the same meals, go to the same grocery store, dry cleaner and hair dresser

because often times we don’t have to think about it. We spend a lot of our days making decisions, thinking through problems and putting out fires that when it comes to the day to day chores we likely don’t have any energy left over to make more conscious decisions that lead to change.

Thus, habits are functional and they give us something in return. We call this secondary gain. While there is a conscious awareness that the habit we are engaging in may not lead us to where we want to be in our lives, we can’t seem to break out of it. This is not because we are weak or stupid or lazy but rather that we don’t have the energy it takes to sometimes make the harder choice.

So what does this mean? It means that we have to be mindful of what we are doing and the impact it is having on us. We have to reserve the energy to make the hard choices. I hope that this

newsletter will provide some practical steps towards making some changes to the habits you want to let go of!

Unhealthy Habits

Your life today is basically a sum of your habits. How happy or unhappy you are? How successful or unsuccessful you are? How in shape or out of shape you are? These are all a result of your habits.

Everyone in the world has them — bad habits that we wish we didn't have but feel pessimistic about changing. Whether it's not getting enough sleep, lack of exercise, making poor food choices, or overindulging in alcohol—we know these things are not healthy for us.

Maybe you know you really have to spend less time on Facebook or playing online games. Perhaps you've tried multiple times to quit smoking. Or maybe even the very thought of getting more exercise makes you feel too tired to start. Whatever habit you're trying to break, somehow you haven't found the key to success.

Living a healthier lifestyle doesn't always come down to sheer will power and motivation, it can be as simple as forming new habits.

It's easy to get caught up in the desire to make massive changes in your life. Every year you make grandiose New Year's resolutions. You hear about incredible weight loss transformations and think that we need to lose 30 pounds in the next 4 weeks. We just watched our favorite athletes this past Winter Olympics and wish that we could run faster, jump higher and be stronger tomorrow. We want to earn more, do more, and be more ... right now.

Most unhealthy habits are in reaction to stress: excessive work (or disliking your job), personal loss, worry, avoidance of the tough stuff. These kinds of stresses can have a paralyzing effect on us. Change becomes more difficult than ever and we compensate for the stress by exercising behaviors that, though they are unhealthy, serve a clear purpose for us, whether physical, emotional, or psychological.

Why do we persist and most importantly, how can we stop?

Tips on Changing Habits

First of all, love yourself into change. Simple enough concept, right? Have some compassion for yourself and notice that your unhealthy behavior is probably a warning sign that something in your life is off-kilter. Love yourself enough to make some changes. Don't

wait until you hit “rock bottom” to where you have no choice but to make the change. You know the habits I’m talking about.

2. Identify the habit(s) you ultimately want to change. This means bringing what is usually unconscious (or at least ignored) to your awareness. Make a list of things you’d like to change, and then pick one.

All bad habits have function. Mindless eating can be a way to comfort yourself when you are feeling down and out. Cruising the Internet for hours might be a way you avoid interacting with your partner, kids or chores that need to be done around the house. Smoking (in addition to being just plain addictive) may be a way to take time out to pause and think. Drinking too much may be the only way that makes you comfortable in social situations. If you want to break the habit, you have to come to grips with whatever function the bad habit is serving. Once you determine the underlying cause of the habit, you can now start to change the habit.

3. Choose something to replace the unhealthy habit with. Just willing yourself to change isn’t enough because it does not address the underlying benefit of the behavior you want to

replace. What can you do instead of having a cigarette when you’ve taken a break to just pause and think? Perhaps you can chew on some gum or snack on some sugar free gummy bears. Any healthy alternative to satiate the oral fixation that cigarettes provide. This is a key step. When you do something different to replace an unhealthy habit, acknowledge to yourself that you are doing it differently. You need to bring whatever it is that is subconscious to the conscious mind so that you can emphasize your ability to change. It can be as simple as saying to yourself, “Look at that. I made a better choice.”

4. Take baby steps. If you want to start a new habit and begin a happier and healthier lifestyle, then this is the one suggestion that I cannot emphasize enough: start small. In the words of popular Zen author Leo Babauta, “make it so easy that you can't say no.”

Once you have identified the habit you want to change. Ask yourself, “How can I make this new behavior so easy to do so that I can’t say no?” Additionally, congratulate yourself after achieving your new habit.

Do ten pushups. “Good work!”

Eat a healthy meal. “Victory!”

Only watched one episode of your favorite Netflix show. “Success!”

Give yourself some credit and enjoy each success.

Related note: Only go after habits that are important to you. It's tough to find a reward when you're changing habits based on what other people say are important.

5. Write the habits you want to change and your successes down. There's merit to commit a promise to paper that makes that promise more real. Researchers have found that just writing out a goal and keeping it handy to look at every day (or as many times as day as you need to) can help you stay on track.

6. Get yourself a friend who wants to change the same habit. There's a reason that many recovery programs include group meetings, individual sponsors or therapists. Being accountable to others is a powerful incentive to sustain the change. By both giving and receiving support, you can maintain focus on the goal.

7. Accept that you will sometimes falter. Everyone does. Habits just don't change overnight. Love yourself each time you do and remind yourself that you are human.

8. You have to realize that it will take time. Habits usually take several weeks or months to change. You have to reinforce that bundle of nerves in your brain to change your default settings.

I hope some of these tips provide you with the incentive to change those bad habits into healthy ones.

Unify Consulting Group can get you in touch with a therapist or a nutritionist if you would like to learn more tools and strategies to remove your bad habits and replace them with healthy ones.

From Our Nutritionist



“I believe individuals and families can be empowered with nutrition education, coaching and tools they need to achieve optimum health.” ~ Jaime McNichol

Spicy Salmon 'Sushi' Bowl

This recipe is a great take out make over. Skip the white rice and replace with brown rice or cauliflower rice for a grain free option. Wild salmon, sesame and avocados are great sources of healthy fats that support our metabolism, immunity and cardiovascular and brain health.



Ingredients (Serves 4):

Salmon

- Juice and zest of one lime
- 2 Tbsp. sriracha sauce
- 2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp. gluten free tamari or coconut aminos
- 1 Tbsp. freshly grated ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 4 oz. wild salmon fillets

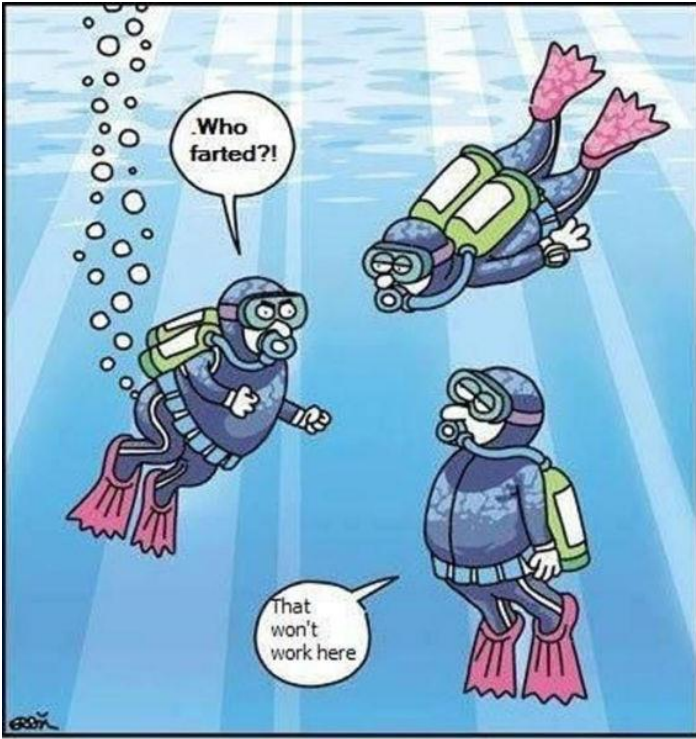
Bowl

- 2 cups of steamed brown rice or cauliflower rice
- 4 small sheets of nori, cut into strips (Sea snacks work great!)
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled into ribbons
- 4 radishes, sliced
- 2 avocados, diced
- 4 Tbsp. sesame seeds

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees
2. In a bowl, combine the lime juice, zest, sriracha, maple syrup, coconut aminos, ginger, and garlic
3. Add the salmon to a 9x13 baking dish, pouring half of the sriracha mixture over top, reserving the remaining
4. Bake the salmon for 15-20 minutes until cooked and flakes easily with a fork
5. Meanwhile, prepare the cucumber, carrot, radishes and avocado
6. Add rice to bowl and top with cooked salmon, nori, avocado, cucumber, carrot, radish, sesame seeds and remaining sriracha sauce. Enjoy!

On The Lighter Side of Life



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