



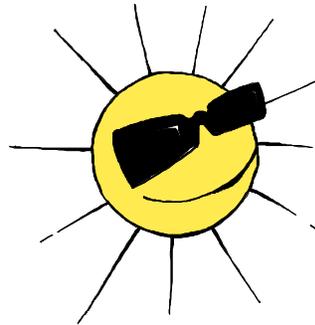
Accept that it's natural for all of us to think "What's in it for me?"

People are motivated by *benefits* and *pleasure*, not knowledge.

This is human nature! You operate the same way. We all do. So take advantage of this fact of life and look for the things that make people interested in doing things differently.

Look for *benefits* that *motivate* people. The iron-deficient child may whine all day. The iron-deficient woman may drag around and want to lie on the couch all day. The child getting a lot of junk food snacks may not want to eat at mealtime. Help people see the benefits of changing

something and they will be much more interested in your help in coming up with a solution.



Has anybody ever looked at a newborn baby and thought "Gee, I really hope he grows up stupid, with rotten teeth and a rotten disposition, and is never able to hold down a job . . .?"

No, every parent looks at their newborn with wonder and a huge sense of responsibility. They want their child to be smart, healthy, and happy. They want a good life for that baby, even if they wonder how on earth they are going to make it possible.

You will have people's attention if you can draw on these natural desires. Train yourself to point out the benefits of changing a behavior.

For example, let's say you are talking with a mother about the fact that her preschooler doesn't eat breakfast. You know that all mothers want their children to do well in school and that this is often a motivator. So you say, "Did you know that children who eat breakfast do better in school? It's a good thing to remember because it won't be all that long 'til Keisha goes to school. Getting her in the habit of regular meals like break-

"Research evidence suggests that what a learner learns in one context is not necessarily applied in another context unless the learner is specifically motivated to do so."

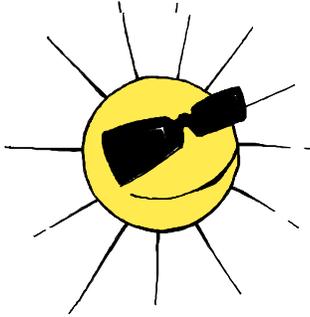
Cheryl Acterberg, Ph.D.
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fast could really help her in the long run."

You've presented a benefit. Something in mom's mind sits up and takes notice. It's the way we're built.

Sometimes people need help identifying what benefits might be, even though the person is dimly aware of them. Sometimes you can actually put into words tangible results that the person has heard in abstract terms but hasn't really put together with her concerns.

For example, a young child is recertified for WIC with a repeat low hemoglobin. Mother heard last visit about iron needs and iron-rich foods. You address the health of her child as a motivator but she doesn't seem especially concerned. So you get more specific: you mention that iron-deficient children often get colds and illnesses more frequently because their resistance is low. This can result in more sleepless



nights, bigger doctor bills, and more medicine. Mom may find these illnesses interfere with her own work schedule or cause other inconveniences. As you mention these things, she starts to relate: her child does seem to be sick a lot. Suddenly she may be more interested.

Perhaps she might also be motivated by finding out that iron-deficient children tend to be irritable and cranky, or that their attention spans may be shorter, which could affect how her child learns . . . or how he minds her!

Pointing out specific health benefits that a mom can relate to is a way to get her attention. People don't always want to change how they feed their children based on a number they don't really understand, like the hemoglobin value. If you give them concrete examples of benefits, they are much more likely to become interested and involved.

Other motivators that you could use!

- Pregnant women may be motivated to cut down on smoking when they hear it makes the baby's heart beat fast within seconds after the first puff. Also, women who smoke get more wrinkles on their faces and look older sooner than women who don't smoke! (It's true!)
- Pregnant teens may be motivated to gain weight better when told that low birth weight babies have more problems and will need more care, time attention, and trips to the doctor.
- Anemic pregnant women may be motivated to eat better and take their iron if they realize that they might not be as irritable or tired when their iron level comes up.
- Mothers of overweight children are sometimes motivated by the thought that if their child slims down, clothes shopping will be easier.
- Mothers may be motivated to wean from the bottle around one year by the thought that it's easier than it is at 18 months or 2 years.

Activities to do before Discussion

Accept that it's natural for all of us to think, "What's in it for Me?"

The focus of these activities is to help you become aware of how much you currently tap into the normal human inclination to look for benefits and become motivated by them. Can you take more advantage of this human trait? Can you help people identify benefits from eating a more healthful diet or establishing better food habits?

But first, let's talk about you! You are motivated by benefits, just like the rest of the human race. What benefits do you get from doing a good job? Perhaps you should think about small benefits--rewards--for doing your job well and really connecting with people.

1. REWARD YOURSELF!

Did you just have an excellent session with someone? Reward yourself in some little, immediate way. How about these rewards?

- Consciously stretch and move briskly as you get your next client.
- Look out the window for a few seconds to rest your eyes.
- No window? Look at a picture of a loved one or a beautiful scene.
- Take a moment to experience the pleasure of your accomplishment. Enjoy!
- Tense all your muscles and then relax completely for 5 seconds.
- Have a sip of water and enjoy that sip fully.
- Take a deep breath and let it out slowly.
- Roll your neck side to side for a few seconds.



What would be some similar little rewards for you? You deserve little rewards and we're not talking about more than a few seconds. What would make you feel good? Make a list of 5 little ways you would like to reward yourself . . . and then do them! Put the list up over your desk.

2. *For one week, focus on what motivates participants.* Copy this page and then cut out the sign below and put it on your calendar or desk, so you remember. Keep a list for one week of the things you think motivate people to make dietary changes. Answer the question "What motivates people to make changes?" with 4 different examples from your clinics, write them on the Activity Worksheet, and share these ideas with your co-workers.

What motivates people to make changes?

Activities to do before Discussion

3. *Rate yourself on how well you integrate motivators into your discussions before you start your week of focusing on motivators.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

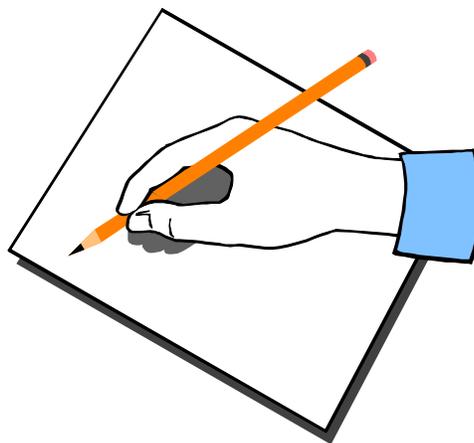
4. *People are mostly motivated by benefits and pleasure.* Analyze your overall clinic situation. Are the staff who see the participant before you promoting nutrition education as a benefit? Are they telling people how much they'll enjoy talking with you, how much you can help? How can you encourage a positive approach to nutrition education?

5. *Are there some other benefits people could get from coming to clinic, that you're not now offering? Or some additional pleasure? Here are some ideas, just to get you thinking!*

- A coupon exchange box--add some or take some
- Food demonstration and tastings on a regular basis
- Parenting materials, videos, group discussions
- Vegetable gardening information from Cooperative Extension

Thinking about and doing these activities will prepare you for discussion. Don't view them as just another thing you must do! Look at them as ways you can use what you know about human nature and make it work for you with increased effectiveness as a result.

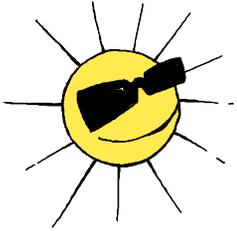
Complete the Activity Worksheet as you practice these activities.



Activity Worksheet
Bright Ideas - Unit 2

Name _____

Date _____



**Accept that it's natural for all of us to think,
"What's in it for me?"**

1. I rewarded myself in these little ways after I did a great job with clients:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How has it helped to take time to reward yourself in even little ways?

2. These are 4 examples of how I have motivated WIC clients to make dietary changes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

3. Rate yourself on how well you integrate motivators into your discussions after concentrating on this for a week. How do you rate yourself now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. What new benefits can people get from coming to clinic that you didn't offer before?

I will continue using the following approaches to help clients become interested and involved:

Discuss these ideas with your supervisor or in a staff discussion group. These Activity Worksheets and a discussion are to be done for completion of the module.