Motivation, Part 2

If staying motivated were as easy as identifying goals and rewarding ourselves for reaching them, success would be easy. Unfortunately, sometimes we sabotage our success by listening to our own negative thoughts that remind us of our prior mistakes and failures. Because research shows that our mind believes what we tell it, we need to be aware of negative thoughts and turn them into positive ones. In other words, we can change our way of thinking!

Here’s how it works. Say, for example, we think: “I will never reach my goal weight.” Who here has had that thought at one time? Well, you can turn it into a positive affirmation, such as: “It will take time, but I will make healthy choices each day to help me reach my goal weight. I’m worth the effort.”

Let’s try out this technique.

Turn the Negative into Something Positive

(Have members sit in a circle. Shuffle and redistribute the index cards that they filled out at the beginning of the meeting.)

Let’s go around the circle. Read aloud your card and change that negative thought into a positive affirmation.

A Penny for Your Thoughts

Now that you’re beginning to recognize negative thoughts, let’s keep practicing the first step of awareness for homework. Over the next week, every time you have a negative thought about yourself, put one penny in a clear jar. This visual will help put into perspective just how many negative thoughts about yourself you have over the course of a week. You may even want to write each negative thought you have in a journal. Then ask yourself: “Since I would not say these hurtful things to someone else, why do I talk to myself this way?”

Listening carefully to what your mind is telling you and replacing negative thoughts with positive ones will help you stay motivated and on track to achieving your goals. So choose to say nice, positive, and encouraging words to yourself. When we think positively, set SMART goals, monitor our progress, and recognize our achievements, we can succeed in living healthier, more fulfilling lives.