



Building Inner Strength

Introduction:

It won't come as a surprise to anyone reading this to hear that building inner strength won't happen just by doing one activity, the same way someone can't get into shape after just one workout. Nevertheless, when someone wants to learn to get in shape and build physical strength they can consult a personal trainer to point them in the right direction to guide their path toward getting in shape. In a similar manner, this activity is focused on discussing some ideas for getting on the right path to start building the the inner strength needed to make progress with managing challenging substance use and mental health issues.

Getting Started

Think about and discuss the following. What does it mean to you?

- *“Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy.”*
- Dale Carnegie

Moving Forward Gradually - If you were trying to gain physical strength in an area of weakness you would start working out with a small amount of weight and add more as you feel stronger. What really matters the most is that you get to the gym and start taking some action. Action builds confidence and courage as the above saying says. On the other hand, sitting around and just waiting for something to change doesn't do much at all:





Exercise – The following exercise is about looking at ways to build inner strength even if only through moving forward little by little. There are two parts to this exercise

Part I – Self Analysis - The following is a list of things to start working on in order to build inner strength.

Check all that apply:

- _____ **Improve Focus** – Sometimes we can't get moving forward because of a lack of focus and determination. Learning to pick one area to concentrate on is sometimes all it takes to get moving forward

- _____ **Positive Risk Taking** – One can often build inner strength by learning to do things outside of “the comfort zone”. Is there a way to try a new challenge to get moving forward?

- _____ **Draw Strength from Others** - Teaming up with or gaining support from someone else can be the boost needed in order to get moving. Think about where to find someone who can help.

- _____ **Learning to Say No** – Could part of the problem be that assertiveness or refusal skills are needed? Starting to say “no” can be such a difference-maker when saying no has been an area of weakness

- _____ **Self-Discipline and Structure** – Is it possible that the idea of coming up with a good plan and then sticking to it can be what is needed to get things going?

- _____ **Spirituality** – People that don't have faith in something greater than themselves might not want to look into this but people who do believe in something can draw strength from their spiritual beliefs

- _____ **Increase Urgency** – Quite often people are at their best when their back is against the wall. Is there a way to stop waiting for tomorrow and instead get moving forward today?

- _____ **Drop the Dead Weight** – Is there someone or something holding you back or dragging you backward that it is time to leave behind so you can start making real progress?

- _____ **Use What You're Good At** – Is there an area in your life now or in your past where you showed ability and motivation? Can you draw from your experiences to increase your strength now?

- _____ **Baby Steps** – If bigger changes are overwhelming what small steps forward can you think of in order to get started moving in the right direction?

Discuss your plan with others. Try to elaborate on your ideas and be specific with regard to what you think that you can do in relation to the areas above that you identified.



Part II – Feedback – Taking turns, one by one, each person in the group should take a few minutes to gather feedback from their group members with regard to what others think will be helpful with building inner strength. Take some notes below based on group feedback and advice for you:

DISCUSS – What stood out to you with regard to ideas that your group gave you in order to build inner strength for positive change?



Conclusion - Now that you are done with self-analysis and you got some constructive group feedback, what are you going to do? (Be specific: what's your plan, even if it's just something small enough just to get started?)