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Health Behaviors

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I enjoyed this behavior change project more so than I have with previous behavior change programs I have done in the past for other courses. I felt as though I took it more serious and really tackled a behavior that is integral to the person I am. Throughout my behavior change, the process of change I used the most by far was reward. I knew going into the project how much of an impact personal rewards influence my confidence levels, and little congratulations to myself in my head during a normal conversation go a long way for me. Every single time I was trying to actively have an unstructured conversation with someone, I would give myself a mental pat on the back for even giving the effort, even if the interaction did not go the way I planned. I do not feel the need for large and expensive rewards, it is the little things that matter to me when it comes to my self-confidence. I am a person who overthinks every little aspect of a situation and wants it all to be perfect in every way. This critical view on life is part of the reason I lack confidence, when one aspect is out of line it will throw me off. The positive mental rewards help me realize that even though it did not go exactly as I planned, everything is still okay.

Another process of change I used at the beginning of my change was environmental control. I specifically planned on making a list to follow every day that required me to have a reminder to have an unstructured conversation. This is what I did at the beginning of the change, and it worked for the first week while the whole idea was still knew to me. However, after I grew slightly more comfortable with the idea of talking in more situation, I did not like the sense of an added stressor that I had to complete the list every day. I stopped setting the reminder on my phone to have an unstructured conversation, and this immediately helped me relax in my life. I did better allowing the conversations come naturally instead of worrying if they would come or not. This process of change was still helpful to me when I was most nervous about initiating and holding conversations with someone new.

The process of change I used the least was countering, and I used counter thinking in situations I was going into with apprehension. I thought I would need to substitute unhappy thoughts in my head for positive thoughts, but I found through this change that I rarely have negative thoughts during a conversation. The rewards I give myself after a conversation are enough mental satisfaction and I did not feel the need for counter thinking. I can see how it would be effective if I did not respond so well to reward, and I still use it to a small degree. All of the processes of change contributed to my overall change and I can understand how each could be very beneficial to an individual depending on their personality.

I noticed significant progression in my behavior throughout this project, but I do not feel as if I have moved out of the action stage. I am satisfied with my accomplishments so far and did not expect to be out of the action stage after this little amount of time. This is a change of an aspect of my personality that I have had since I was a young child, it will take time to build enough confidence for it to be natural to be the center of attention. I am confident in my ability to perform this change and I just have to keep pushing it until I succeed. I still lack the composure and become too nervous in some social situations to be able to say I have reached the maintenance stage.

The coaching experience was much more enjoyable than I expected it to be. I enjoyed being a client and having the opportunity to talk about how I truly feel about myself. I have never opened up to someone I was not extremely close with and it was surprising how comfortable I was talking to my coaches without being embarrassed. I liked how we all actually tried our best to help the client achieve their goals, giving an extra effort to have good physical openness and accept one another. The part of coaching I did not like was not being able to give any advice at all to the client. I know that it is important not to impress your opinion as superior, but I feel like there are many situations when the client would benefit from hearing what the coach would do in their shoes. As long as the coach is careful not to cross the line from advice to demands, I believe they should be able to give their input on matters that arise in a coaching session. As effective that coaching is, I do not seeing myself using the skills directly in my future. I hope to become a physical therapist one day, and there will be some opportunities for me to use these skills in certain situations such as making sure a patient stays motivated to keep attempting sessions. However, the majority of patients will have already made the step into the action stage and made the decision to change. I do not see myself using these coaching skills on an everyday basis, but they will be beneficial to my overall quality in working with patients.

This project was a great experience for me and I feel as though I learned a lot of important lessons from it. I did take it quite serious from the beginning because I truly believe that in order to reach my overlaying life goals, I need to begin with this social aspect of my personality. I learned that I was better at unstructured conversations once I stopped taking them too seriously. I started to let myself react naturally to what was happening around me and just reply truthfully and calmly. I realized that nobody is perfect, so I do not need to worry if every little thing does not go according to plan. I know that I should not be sweating the little things and I just need to relax and let life come to me.