



Lepage Associates

Solution-Based Psychological & Psychiatric Services

So You Want a Healthier Lifestyle: Are You Ready to Make a Change? By: Rhonda Karg, Ph.D.

Nearly everyone has at least one health behavior they would like to change: getting regular exercise, eating a healthier diet, losing weight, drinking less alcohol, and quitting smoking, to name a few. So why do most people struggle with taking action and improving their health behaviors? People struggle with taking action to change because they think that *the desire to change equals readiness or motivation to change*. However, making the decision to change an unhealthy behavior almost always involves ambivalence, and on an internal level, considering the pros and cons of changing versus staying the same. That ratio of pros to cons is what tells us if a person's desire equals readiness and motivation. If a person's readiness/motivation to change the behavior is low, the cause could be that the pros of staying the same outweigh the cons of changing. For example, in the case of health behaviors, the immediate rewards of the unhealthy lifestyles (e.g., getting fast food) often outweigh the costs of implementing healthier choices (e.g., preparing a healthy meal). If readiness and motivation are low, you will need to get support and work on changing your perception of pros and cons, and/or doing more exploration of pros and cons to move into action!

Do you have a behavior you want to change? How ready are you to make this change? Answer the following questions in terms of a problem behavior to find out!

PROS AND CONS OF CHANGING

Rate each item as to its importance in deciding to take action. Rate each item as accurately as you can. Fill in the number that most closely reflects the importance of each item:

- 1 = Not important
- 2 = Slightly important
- 3 = Somewhat important
- 4 = Quite important
- 5 = Extremely important

- 1. Some people would think less of me if I change. _____
- 2. I would be healthier if I change. _____
- 3. Changing takes a lot of change. _____
- 4. Some people would feel better about me if I change. _____
- 5. Some people would think less of me if I change. _____
- 6. I would be healthier if I change. _____
- 7. Changing takes a lot of change. _____
- 8. Some people would think less of me if I change. _____

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9. Some people would think less of me if I change. _____
10. I would be healthier if I change. _____
11. Changing takes a lot of change. _____
12. Some people would feel better about me if I change. _____
13. I'm concerned I might fail if I try to change. _____
14. Changing would make me feel better about myself. _____
15. Changing takes a lot of effort and energy. _____
16. I would function better if I change. _____
17. I would have to give up some things I enjoy. _____
18. I would be happier if I change. _____
19. I get some benefits from my current behavior. _____
20. Some people could be better off if I change. _____
21. Some people benefit from my current behavior. _____
22. I would worry less if I changed. _____
23. Some people would be uncomfortable if I change. _____
24. Some people would be happier if I change. _____

SCORING

Add up your scores on the odd-numbered items: PROS _____
 Add up your scores on the even-numbered items: CONS _____

- PROS scores >28 or CONS scores < 17: You are ready to make and implement a plan to change! To help you develop and stick with a plan of action for your new lifestyle, seek information, guidance, and support. You may enjoy brief professional assistance to get you jump started, develop a plan, and stay on track.
- PROS scores 21-28 or CONS scores 17-21: You are starting to prepare for making changes, but aren't yet ready to make a plan or take action. To increase your readiness to change your lifestyle, seek more information, guidance, and support. You may benefit from brief professional assistance to get you jump started, develop a plan, and stay on track.
- PROS scores < 21 or CONS scores > 21: You currently lack strong motivation to change. To be ready for making a plan or take action, the PROS of changing will need to increase by 7 points and the CONS of changing will have to decrease by 4. Seeking professional assistance for helping to increase your motivation to change is highly recommended if you fall in this category.

Your health is extremely important. Make your self-care and your health a high priority! As a single parent myself, I know how difficult it can be to take time out of your busy schedule to engage in self-care. But if you have desire to make the changes, you can shift that into readiness and motivation, and reach your self-care goals!

◇◇Lepage Associates Solution-Based Psychological Services◇◇

Lepage Associates is a family practice serving children, teenagers, and adults; we provide therapy, evaluation, and consultation. Dr. Rhonda Karg specializes in motivational interviewing for health behaviors. If you'd like to find out more about brief interventions or other resources for helping you make lasting changes in your lifestyle, call us for a free consult: **572-0000**.

Please visit our website for more information:

www.lepageassociates.com