

NEURO-ASSOCIATIVE CONDITIONING

Neuro-Associative Conditioning or NAC is a science developed by Anthony Robbins from the foundations of Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP. It is a system that describes the process of change in human beings which we will use in this program to help you make a change in the way you eat and exercise to help you lose weight, get fit and healthy.

This system will help you start linking incredible pain to your old behaviours and beliefs that have been jeopardizing all your efforts in the past. It will also help you link the incredible, immediate pleasure to your new, better behaviours. So now you will find pleasure in eating healthy and exercising while not doing it will cause you lots of pain. Are you ready to make a change?

There are six steps that you must go through:

1. DECIDE WHAT YOU REALLY WANT AND WHAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM HAVING IT NOW

We know what we don't want, we know what is causing us pain and what we want to change. But we don't know what we want instead. Unless we decide what it is that we really want to move towards we will be getting more of what we don't want. This is how our brain works. You get what you focus on. Understanding what is stopping you is as important as deciding what you want. Is it the fear that the new life will be more challenging? Is it the fear that you will be different and not understood by your friends and colleagues? Is it just a fear of change and the unknown? Whatever it is, define it and start linking pleasure to the change, not pain. You truly have control over your thoughts, at the beginning the results will not be significant but the more you practice the more you see that you change your thoughts faster and for much longer. So go ahead and work on the step one!

2. GET LEVERAGE: ASSOCIATE MASSIVE PAIN TO NOT CHANGING NOW AND ENORMOUS PLEASURE TO THE EXPERIENCE OF CHANGING NOW!

You have to make sure that your why is much stronger than what. Only if you get the true leverage can you make the change. So ask yourself questions like: "what will it cost me not to change?", "What will I miss out of my life if I don't make a shift?", "What is it already costing me mentally, emotionally, spiritually, financially, physically?". Make the pain of not changing so real, to you, so intense, so immediate that you cannot put off taking that action any longer. If that is not enough then focus on how it affects your loved ones, your children and other people you care about. We do more for others than we'll do for ourselves.

The second step is to find pleasure in that change. "If I change, how will that make me feel about myself?", "What kind of momentum could I create if I change this in my life?", "what other things could I accomplish if I really made this change today?", "How will my family and friends feel?", "How much happier will I be now?"

The key is to get lots of reasons, or strong enough reasons why the change should take place immediately, not someday in the future. If you are not driven to make the change now, then you don't really have leverage.

3. INTERRUPT THE LIMITING PATTERN

Over time we have all developed certain patterns of thinking, focusing on certain things, asking the same questions. But not all of them are empowering. Let's imagine that your boss told you off for something. What happens in your mind afterwards? Do you stop thinking about it and move on? Or do you keep on repeating it in your mind, each time adding more meaning to the situation. Is it not that the small thought suddenly becomes a big issue in your head? What happens next? What do you do to make yourself feel better? Do you get a glass of wine? Do you treat yourself with some junk food? How do you deal with these emotions?

Therefore, knowing what we want, and having a massive leverage is not enough. If we don't learn how to interrupt the limiting patterns, we will be going around in circles. So here is how we do it: "One of the best ways to interrupt someone's pattern is to do things they don't expect, things that are radically different from what they've experienced before.

Think about some ways you can interrupt your own pattern. Take a moment to think up some of the most enjoyable and disruptive ways you can interrupt a pattern of being frustrated, worried or overwhelmed.

Next time you start feeling depressed, jump up, look at the sky and yell in your most idiotic tone of voice, "H-A-L-L-E-L-U-J-A-H! My feet don't stink today!" A stupid, silly move like that will definitely shift your attention, change your state, and it will definitely change the state of everyone around you as they begin to realise that you're no longer depressed – just crazy!

If you overeat on a regular basis and want to stop, I'll give you a technique that will definitely work, if you're willing to commit to it. The next time you find yourself in a restaurant overeating, jump up in the middle of the room, point at your own chair and scream at the top of your lungs "PIG!" I guarantee that if you do this three or four times in a public place, you won't overeat anymore! You'll link too much pain to this behaviour! Just remember: the more outrageous the approach to breaking a pattern, the more effective it will be.

One of the key distinctions to interrupting a pattern is that you must do it in the moment the pattern is recurring."¹

Now write down your most common patterns and ideas how you can interrupt them. But be outrageous. It must be something that will cause you lots of pain (i.e. makes you feel ashamed when you do it) so you don't have to do it more than a few times to break that pattern. C'mon, do it now. It has to be done otherwise you will continue to struggle and the change you want so badly will only be temporary! Start writing and really try to have fun with it!

4. CREATE A NEW, EMPOWERING ALTERNATIVE

Your old habits, your old patterns were helping you feel a certain way, giving you some sort of pleasure, even though they had some side effects. To make a long-lasting change you have to now find a new pattern or create a new habit that will make you feel the same way without these side effects. If you fail to do it, your brain and nervous system will get you back to your old ways.

Let's say you've stopped smoking, what would you do to replace it? Most people don't think about it and start replacing smoking with eating more food. That is an unconscious replacement that creates a new problem. Therefore, you have to take control and consciously create a new habit, don't let your brain do it for you. If you don't know what that could be ask someone who is already doing it.

If you 'eat your emotions', when things go bad, you could go for a walk and breathe deeply to feel better. You could do some exercises or stretches. You could go to the gym. Or even start drawing, knitting, doing puzzles, anything that will make you feel better, change your focus and keep you away from eating too much.

PS. If you exercise you will get two benefits in one! But choose something that will mean pleasure to you. And condition it until it becomes automatic. You cannot just do it once to make it work. You have to be consistent.

Take few minutes now and think what you would like your new pattern to be for the old behaviour you are trying to change.

¹ Anthony Robbins, "Awaken the giant within"

5. CONDITION THE NEW PATTERN UNTIL IT IS CONSISTENT

“Any pattern or behaviour that is continually reinforced will become an automatic and conditioned response. Anything we fail to reinforce will eventually dissipate.”²

We do not only have to condition the new behaviour, but we need to make sure that every time we achieve a milestone we positively reinforce it. You have to reward yourself for all the small improvements and changes you are making so the nervous system will find the change pleasurable. Having a good food day is something you need to acknowledge. Fulfilling your weekly training schedule need to be reinforced. Congratulate yourself that you got up earlier this morning and did the training before going to work. Have a massive, long, loud laugh when you manage to get to bed earlier and feel full of energy the next morning. Rehearse your new habits with a tremendous intensity and really celebrate when you achieve each step with emotional intensity. Losing 1lb when you have 20lb to lose needs to be positively reinforced otherwise you will only focus on the effort it takes to shred it rather than on the first step of getting you where you want to be! EVERY TIME YOU PRODUCE THE BEHAVIOUR YOU WANT YOU REWARD YOURSELF!

Just remember that reinforcement is responding to the behaviour immediately after it occurs, while punishment and reward may occur long afterward. We must train our brains to do the things that are effective, not intellectually but neurologically.

If you don't reward yourself, you will not create new and strong neurological pathways and will fail to achieve long lasting results. Very often we underestimate our efforts, expecting more from ourselves and continuously being disappointed with our progress. This does not work at all. You have to start seeing your achievements and acknowledge them. This is the only way to make a change in our nervous system. Failing to do that will make you fail to become who you want to be.

6. TEST IT!

One of the ways to test it is to imagine what used to frustrate you or caused any negative emotions and then behaviours. Does it still make you feel frustrated or has it generated your new feeling or behaviour. Really put yourself into the situation and make it very real. Then test your response. So if you got upset at work, what would normally cause you to binge, do you still feel like going for food or rather for a run? If you did not manage to make a change, you will have to analyse each of the 5 steps, starting from step number 1, and really analyse if you made the changes that were required. It may take some time and effort but it is the only way to make the long lasting change.

When you start it is hard but the more you practice the easier it becomes. So keep on working on it. This system works but you have to work here too! Have fun with it and be excited about the whole process and the incredible change that it will help you make!

Would you like to look different and make a change but you are scared of making that commitment? Are you worried that if you try again you may fail again? Is it why you keep on telling yourself that you are FINE?

To make a change, to keep on getting up every morning to exercise, to eat healthy every day, even if you don't feel like it, you must decide what kind of person you don't want to be anymore. You have to decide what you have had enough of and never agree to get back to it! Do it with passion, use all the energy you have to make that decision. You will become your new you, someone who you have the potential to be.

² Anthony Robbins, “Awaken the giant within”