

Contracting Exercise

- Decide on a personal change you want to make.
- Write it down using whatever words you bring to mind.
- If your phrase contains any negative words such as **'reduce'**; **'stop'**; **'less'**; **'not'**; **'lose'**; **'avoid'**; **'must'** or **'control'**; re-phrase it to contain only positive words like **'can'**; **will'** and **'will do'**.
- Check for words like **'should'** and **'ought'**. These words sometimes mean we're doing what we think is good for us, rather than what we want. If this is the case, we might not be fully behind the change.
- If your phrase contains qualifiers such as **'might'** or **'try'**, or if it depends on someone else doing something, change it to remove qualifiers and dependencies on anything or anyone other than yourself.
- Your re-phrased statement will say what positive you are going to use to replace the negative.
- Could an average eight year old understand your statement? If not, re-phrase it.
- Check whether your desired change is possible for you – does it require additional skills, support or attributes to be brought to bear on the problem?
- It's not possible to make another person change, so you can only contract for a change you want for yourself.
- How will you and other people know when your desired change has been achieved?

- What will you and other people be able to **see** and **hear** you doing differently? What will you be doing that you're not doing now, or what will you have stopped doing that you are doing now?
- If your goal concerns the way you relate to other people, specify which people, by name.
- Imagine a scene in which you're clearly aware that you've made the change you wanted from all the details of:
 - ✓ What you can **see**
 - ✓ What you can **hear**
 - ✓ What you can **feel** (sensations and emotions)
 - ✓ What you can **taste** and **smell**
 - ✓ What **people** are around (name them)
 - ✓ Where you are (name the place - how far away is it?)
 - ✓ What time is it? (What time of year, what is the time of day or night?)
- On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means 'not at all' and 10 means 'completely'; where do you place yourself now in terms of achieving this change?
- What **needs to happen** or **what do you need to do** to move up just 1 or ½ point?
- Is the desired change safe for you?

Check: complete the following sentence:

What happens to people who do (the change you've identified) is that they ... (Write down five 'front of your mind answers')

1

2

3

4

5

- So what's in this for you?
 - Are you doing this to please someone?
 - To gain someone's approval?
 - To rebel against someone?
 - This 'someone' may be from your past or your present!
- What will this change cost you to achieve?
- So do you still **really** want it?
- How might you sabotage your efforts?
- How will you avoid sabotaging your efforts?

- Write 5 things you will do to achieve your contract goal... be specific, state actions.

1

2

3

4

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- Which of these will you do today? Tell someone about them and ask them for the support you want.
- How will this person know when you have done this?
- If none are actionable within the next 24 hours, identify something you will do to take you closer to your goal before the day is out.
- Identify those you will do in the coming week.
- Identify those people who will support you in this change.

Thanks to: Stewart, I. & Joines, V. (1987) TA Today. Lifespace Publications.