

newtopia

The Role of Coaching in Creating Personal Accountability for Improved Health and Well-Being

Why Willpower and a Quick-Fix Approach Don't Work



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Missing Link	3
The Role of Coaching in Creating Personal Accountability	4
An Effective Approach to Coaching	5
Best Practice for Creating Personal Accountability for Health Improvement	6
How Small, Sustainable Changes Lead to Success	7
About Newtopia	8
The Bottom Line	8

We are a nation of quick fixes and magic bullets. We want what we want and we want it now. We don't want to wait to save money for items; we are wired for instant gratification. The same can be said when it comes to achieving health improvements. We expect fast results with minimum effort. Weight-loss diets are a great example. Who hasn't heard of or tried the grapefruit diet, Keto, Biggest Loser, the cabbage soup diet, and various cleanses? And that's just the tip of the quick-fix iceberg. These fads are designed to promote fast weight-loss, but most of the weight lost is water. Once a person returns to regular eating habits, the weight quickly returns and often brings added pounds.

While a quick-fix approach may help someone fit into that special dress for their 20-year class reunion, it fails to bring real, lasting health improvements. In fact, studies show that frequent "yo-yo" dieting can actually cause weight gain and poorer overall health, including potential damage to the cardiovascular system.¹ In short, a quick-fix approach to losing weight or improving one's health can lead to a vicious cycle that lasts a lifetime.

The Missing Link

When individuals hit the easy button, what they're really doing is missing out on the benefits of taking it slow, and choosing to forgo personal accountability and, ultimately, success. And without accountability, any efforts to change their lives—whether it's enhancing their health, improving their finances, changing habits, or even learning new skills—will likely fall short. Think of professional athletes. A cross-country runner can't train for a couple of days, then compete in a national competition. Not only is she likely to drop out the race, she's also at high risk of injury. Likewise, a concert pianist can't take months off and expect to maintain the same level of playing as he did previously. It takes ongoing motivation, effort and regular practice.

Personal motivation and accountability is especially critical in achieving and maintaining optimal health. In some ways, the journey is even more complex than other endeavors as each person has a unique physical, mental, and genetic makeup. Someone predisposed to diabetes needs to be diligent about avoiding sugar and simple carbohydrates. Someone without this predisposition may be able to indulge more often without a significant impact. Genetic makeup can also make one more prone to certain cravings and may cause a person to metabolize fat in different

ways. Environment also impacts a person's health status. For example, studies show that unhealthy habits can run in families.² A person who grows up in a household with a supply of chips, cookies, ice cream, and other unhealthy snacks always available is more likely to adopt that lifestyle as they grow older.

These are just a few of the many challenges individuals face as they attempt to become healthier. Maintaining personal motivation and accountability for changing habits is essential to success. But what is the best way to develop personal accountability?

Personal accountability is not to be confused with willpower. Personal accountability is a mindset and learned behavior that improves over time. Willpower is emotion-based and difficult to maintain over the long-term.

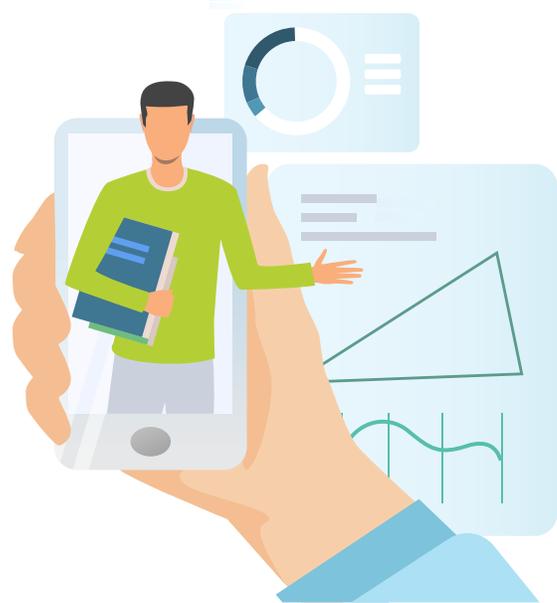
¹ <https://www.ketteringhealth.org/mediaroom/articles/index.cfm?x=579>

² <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/07/160720105251.htm>

The Role of Coaching in Creating Personal Accountability

Well-known motivational speaker Tony Robbins believes that high achievers often embrace coaching and mentorship as part of their strategy to achieve personal growth and accountability.³ He explains that coaches help in many different ways. First, they are unbiased so they speak the truth about a person's situation and opportunities for improvement. Second, a coach can identify an individual's "true potential," which helps them build on their strengths and develop new skills. Third, a coach can help an individual develop an action plan and then provides guidance and encouragement along the journey. While Robbins isn't speaking specifically about health improvement, the same benefits apply.

According to the American Psychological Association, "Having someone with whom to share your struggles and successes makes the work easier and the mission less intimidating."⁴



Coaching for sustainable habit change starts with small changes and continues over numerous months, even years. One challenge individuals face when trying to lose weight is the propensity to regain the weight over time, along with additional pounds. However, research shows that if that weight loss can be sustained for two or more years, the individual has markedly increased odds of keeping the weight off. Effective coaching programs can help by keeping individuals motivated and on track by focusing on sustainable changes over time.

³ <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/stories/coaching/accountability-coaching-results/>

⁴ <https://www.apa.org/topics/lifestyle-changes>

⁵ <https://academic.oup.com/ajcn/article/82/1/222S/4863393>

An Effective Approach to Coaching

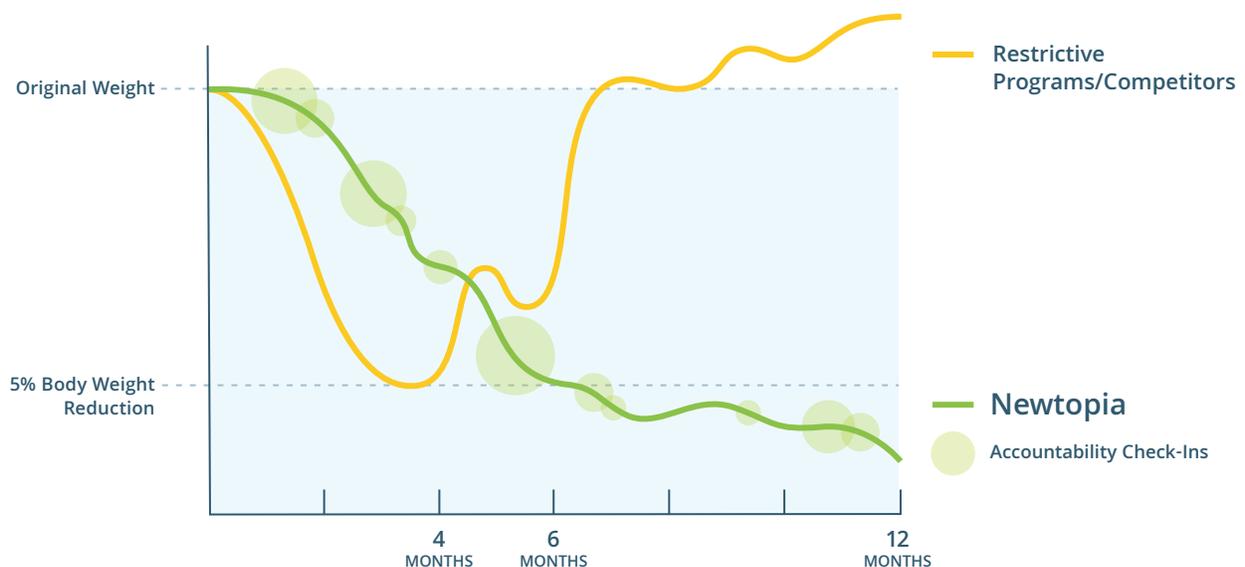
Many people confuse coaching with teaching. And while teaching may be a part of it, coaching goes much farther. Teachers typically present a pre-established curriculum for individuals to follow. This is especially the case for some health and wellness programs offered by employers to their employees. Everyone is given the same information in hopes that something will resonate with the employee and facilitate action and change. But this type of one-size-fits-all approach doesn't take into account each person's unique personality, genetics, and health goals. BJ Fogg, an industry expert on behavior change and author of *Tiny Habits*, describes a poorly designed approach such as this.⁶

Poorly Designed Approach to Behavior Change

1. Presents information and hopes that it leads to attitude change and then behavior change.
2. Gives people a big goal and then focuses on increasing motivation or sustaining willpower.
3. Moves people through psychological stages until they are ready to change
4. Assumes all behaviors are the result of choices.
5. Makes persuasion techniques, such as scarcity or reciprocity, the starting point of the solution.

Some health and wellness programs try to encourage personal accountability through team challenges, group discussions, and educational webinars. But these cannot match the effectiveness of a dedicated coach—one that's been matched to the individual based on personality and preferences.

Restriction vs Accountability in Weight Loss Success



⁶ <https://www.foggmethod.com>

Best Practice for Creating Personal Accountability for Health Improvement

The best health and wellness programs are those that include personal accountability as an essential component on the path to disease prevention and habit change. This includes the proven elements listed below.

A One-Size-Fits-One Approach

1. Designed around each person's unique needs, personality, and preferences
2. Focuses on creating small habit changes that last
3. Sets realistic goals that are achievable
4. Personalized to the person's lifestyle
5. Includes a dedicated coach to help with motivation and accountability
6. Focuses on being healthier, not just losing weight

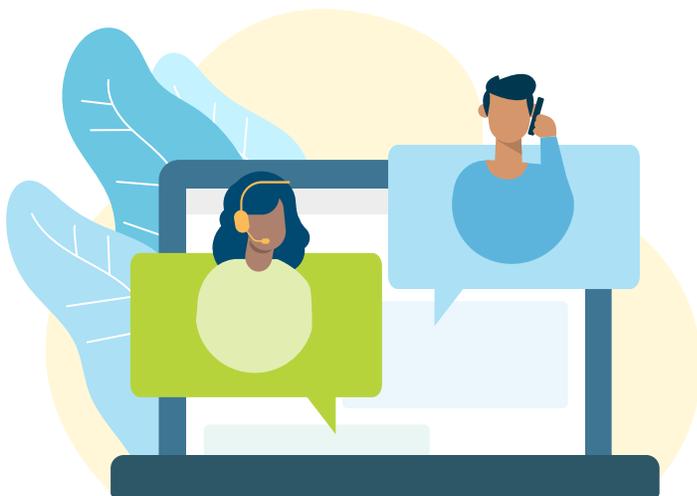


How Small, Sustainable Changes Lead to Success

Tracey, an employee at a large national retailer, was offered the chance to participate in a health and well-being program—Newtopia—from her employer. She joined the program with the sole goal of losing weight. “I was looking for a magic bullet, whatever that might turn out to be,” she said. “However, I have lost weight, not with a magic bullet, but with a carefully executed plan to change the way I live, which has been the most successful plan I’ve ever tried.” Tracey explains that it was her Inspirator (Newtopia’s term for a coach), Ren, who provided support and encouraged accountability. “Ren helped me to not berate myself if I made an error, but rather to just go back to my clean healthy eating, which has ended the self-abuse of my previous failures.” According to Tracey, having a dedicated coach has made all the difference. “She believed in me when initially I didn’t believe in myself!”

While Tracey initially embraced the Newtopia program in order to lose weight, she has also developed habits that have led to other health improvements. “I have developed the habit of exercising nearly every day and I’m always thinking about ways to increase my movement,” she said. Another benefit has been improved sleep habits. “I have a set bedtime that I follow now and have learned to embrace my rest and sleep time.” Tracey also says she now regularly consumes at least 12 cups of water a day, sometimes more.

Tracey says that along with losing weight, she has also improved her biometrics. “I was about to go on another medication for my diabetes, but didn’t need to due to the work I’ve done with Ren.” Tracey sees this as a huge accomplishment, one that has pleased her physician as well.



“

This has been one of the best experiences of my life. I feel as though a lifetime of programming related to food, exercise and diet was changed over time with Ren's assistance. I looked forward to our calls, and Ren knew just when we needed to increase the call frequency as I went through rough patches.

“

Newtopia has empowered me to make healthier choices and to eat as a fuel, not to support my emotions or just because it tastes good. I have developed an awareness of how food can actually affect my moods and make me sluggish or depressed. I now eat to overall feel energetic.

About Newtopia

Newtopia is a tech-enabled disease prevention company focused on healthy habit change. Newtopia's platform leverages genetic, social and behavioral insights to create individualized prevention programs with a focus on type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and weight. With a person-centered approach that combines virtual care, digital tools, connected devices and actionable data science, Newtopia delivers sustainable clinical and financial outcomes

According to Jeff Ruby, founder and CEO of Newtopia, "Traditional programs are based on a one-size-fits-all approach where every participant is given the same information in a limited number of formats. They're designed like a lesson plan or class you'd have in school, not around the individual."

Newtopia differs in that it puts the participant in the driver's seat. It provides personalized "one-size-fits-one" programs curated to each participant's unique needs and preferences, which are determined based on behavioral, genetic, and social determinant data. Participants are paired with an "Inspirator," a world-class expert trained in the fields of nutrition, exercise, genetics, and behavioral science. Inspirators are chosen based on each participant's psychosocial profile. Participants also receive a custom-built app that connects them to their Inspirator, activity tracker, and a smart scale—all provided by Newtopia.

Engagement Built Around the Patient, Not the Program



The Bottom Line

It's normal for employees to jump on board when a new health and well-being program is offered, but participation often falls off after a few months. Part of this could be due to "quick fix" expectations. Or they may just get bored and lose motivation. The bottom line is that any program is likely to fail without the participant's ability to develop and embrace personal accountability. Leveraging dedicated coaches like Newtopia's Inspirators can help.