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**[Newsletter] The Smartest Coach in the Room**

1 message

**Alex at PN** <info@email.precisionnutrition.com>

Thu, Jan 27, 2022 at 3:00 AM

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*Breaking news: The Smartest Coach in the Room is moving... to Saturdays! (Because Saturdays are the best day, but hey, you can still read it on Wednesdays if you prefer.) So look for your next issue on Saturday, February 5th. (Did some amazing friend forward this to you? [Subscribe here.](#))*

## Why Telling People What to Do Doesn't Work

In the health and fitness industry, there's countless of examples of this scenario:

Coach: "Do this thing. It's good for you."

Client: "Okay."

The client goes off and then... doesn't do it. The client *doesn't* eat more vegetables, drink less pop, or go to bed earlier.

Why not? (The advice was good, right?)

The short answer:

## **No one wants to be a minion.**

The above describes what's called a **coach-centric** approach. Goals and sessions are directed by the coach's agenda, and the client is meant to follow along like an obedient puppy.

Most grown-ups don't make great obedient puppies.



## **A client-centric approach gets buy-in—and results.**

In a client-centric approach, the *client* runs the show.

However, clients will likely still look to you for *some* direction, especially at the start. “I have this goal,” they’ll say. “But where do I begin?”

As a trusted guide, you can give suggestions. But to keep the reins in the client's hands, try this simple strategy.

After suggesting a new habit to a client, ask them:

**“On a scale of 0 (no way) to 10 (a trained poodle could do it), how confident are you that you can follow through?”**

If they say “9” or “10,” it's go time.

But anything less? Time to go deeper.

When clients are especially hesitant or non-committal, the following questions can uncover what's holding them back—and what'll move them

forward.



## **“What obstacles are in your way?”**

Identifying obstacles limiting your client may make previously hidden solutions and priorities more obvious.



## **“What would happen if you *did* make the change, despite your reservations?”**

Picturing the benefits can help a client decide that even though the change might be challenging, it could also be worth it. (Or not—that’s okay too.)



## **“Instead of making a huge change you don’t feel ready for, how could you do just a bit better in this area today?”**

This gives your client the opportunity to tell you what feels reasonable and sane to them at this moment in their life. Work from there.

When you use resistance as an opportunity to help clients better understand themselves—and what they REALLY want—clients feel a greater sense of control, autonomy, confidence, and commitment.

Research shows those feelings are linked to sustaining positive change. No puppy wrangling required.

For more on this approach, plus loads more insightful questions to get clients unstuck, read: [“Why Won’t Clients Just Do What I Say?!?” How to Fix Every Coach’s #1 Frustration](#)

### **Smartest Thing We’ve Heard This Week**

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“Even if you’re not coping well, you are coping. Or at least trying to. That’s kind of awesome. Whatever you’re doing—as silly, crazy, or dysfunctional as it might seem—it’s a sign that your body and brain are trying to help you feel better.”

—Krista Scott-Dixon, PhD, PN's director of curriculum

## SUPER COACH SECRETS

# What do your cravings REALLY mean?

Ever seen those charts that list common cravings and what they mean?

(Raise your hand if you overdosed on magnesium after reading your hankering for chocolate meant you were mineral deficient.)

This is not the same chart.

But according to [Jennifer Broxterman](#), MS, RD, and PN adviser, strong cravings for food often *do* mean something:

Usually, when we turn to food or alcohol, we're simply trying to solve a problem.

"Many people use food and alcohol for comfort and to manage hard emotions," says Broxterman.

Except, food and alcohol are rarely satisfying long term solutions for most problems.

## Approach your cravings with kindness and curiosity.

Broxterman suggests when you experience a strong urge to eat or drink, explore the underbelly of that urge. Ask yourself:

"What's going on that's making me feel this way? What UNMET NEED is driving this desire to stress eat?"

For example, even though you might be feeling like a row of Oreos would solve everything, maybe:

👉 It's been a long and stressful day, and you just need to take a shower, climb into bed, and get some sleep.

👉 You're bored and lonely, and would benefit more from calling a

friend or cuddling with a pet to feel some connection.

👉 Your anxiety is reeling, and a brisk walk outside would help burn off some nervous energy.

## Match the feeling to the need.

Use this [handy chart](#) Broxterman created to match the feeling-behind-the-craving to what you're REALLY hungry for.



Although some of these seem obvious, when we're stuck in a strong emotion, it can help to have a visual cue to remind us what to do next. (If you—or your clients—struggle with cravings, we recommend [printing this out](#) and sticking it on the fridge.)

“As you learn to better identify how you're feeling, you can build a toolbox of strategies to help you cope,” says Broxterman.

“Difficult feelings aren't *bad*. Plus, they can be helpful at communicating an unmet need if you're willing to listen.”



## Ask PN

Got questions about nutrition or coaching? Send them our way, and we might feature the answers in upcoming newsletters.

Email Us

### SMART TAKE

## Eat a Varied Diet, Save the Planet

You've heard it:

“EAT THE RAINBOW!”

Of course, we know if you (or your clients) wrinkle your nose at the word “broccoli,” eating ANY vegetable, period, is a victory.



But for seasoned foodies ready to level up, Ryan Andrews, MS, RD, CSCS, PN nutrition adviser, and sustainable food systems advocate,

has a few reasons why eating a colorful, varied diet is good for you—on multiple levels.

## NOM NOM Variety

According to Andrews, when you buy and eat a variety of foods (think: foods outside a standard American wheat, corn, rice, and beef-based diet), it leads to a trifecta of positive outcomes:

- ✅ You're more likely to meet your nutrition needs and reduce your risk of disease (greater variety of foods = greater variety of nutrients) 💪
- ✅ You support **crop diversity** (growing a variety of plant types), which also supports plant pollinators (like bees) and soil health (result: a food system that has a better chance of surviving pest infestations and adverse environmental events) 🐝
- ✅ You support smaller farms (like the ones growing heirloom tomatoes and heritage chickens) helping create a more robust food economy 🧑🌾

## And if that weren't enough...

Connecting your habits to something bigger than you—like the health of the planet—can increase motivation too.

“Think about all the things we do with the greater good in mind: raising children, caring for pets, volunteering. These things take effort—a lot of it—and yet they don't require iron clad willpower,” says Andrews.

“They're inherently motivating, because they're deeply meaningful, and align with our bigger-than-self goals.”

To put these ideas into action, simply build in small changes to your habitual food choices:

- Always choose iceberg or romaine for your salad? Try arugula or endive.
- Instead of beef in your chili, try swapping in ground turkey or even lentils.
- Almond milk guzzler? Try other milk alternatives like those made from oat, pea, or hemp.



Most importantly: Bring curiosity and a sense of adventure to your next trip to the grocery store. Try something you haven't tried before.

It's good for you; it's good for all of us.

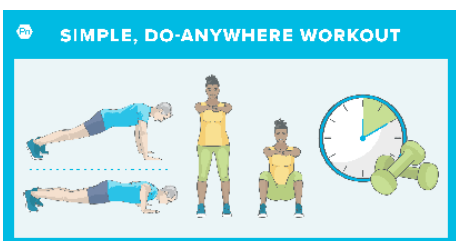
## MORE HELPFUL STUFF



### ARTICLE

## Menopause and Sleep: The Struggle Is Real (So Are These Solutions)

5 practical ways to (freaking \*finally\*) wake refreshed



### INFOGRAPHIC

## How to Stay in Shape When You're Busy

All you need is 10 minutes—and virtually NO equipment

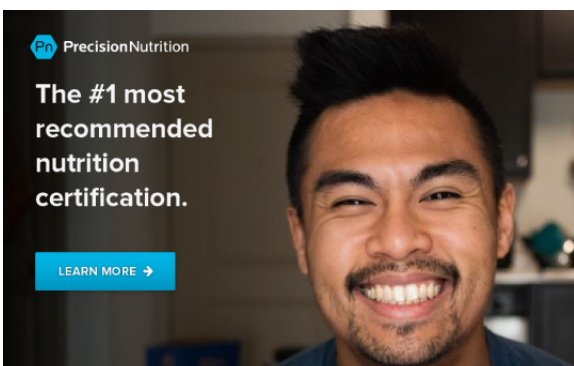


### FREE RESOURCE

## The Secrets of Body Transformation

The most effective strategies to lose fat, build strength, and live a healthier life

## LEARN FROM PN



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## **5-Day Free Course: Nutrition Coaching**

Take care,

Alex

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