



## Changing Motivation

It's not your job or your fault. We can't make other people change. What we can do is learn to provide an environment that lets them be less reactive to what we're doing (such as yelling or judging) and more concerned with their own behavior and its consequences. You can't make someone want to change, but you can help them realize that they want to change and help reduce their need to defend their current behavior, which can get them stuck there. You'll be able to do this if you stay connected. You won't if you detach.

Good News: No matter how stuck things seem to be, motivation can change. You don't have to be a therapist to encourage your loved one's motivation in a positive direction.

## The Things That Can Change Motivation

In practical terms, how can you positively impact another person's motivation to change? Here's what enhances people's motivation to do something, and *keep* doing it, according to evidence:

- Feeling acknowledged, understood, and accepted as you are (not contingent on doing something or not doing something)
- Getting information without pressure
- Having options
- Having reasons that make sense for a particular choice
- Having a sense of competence about how to change/steps to take
- Getting encouraging feedback for positive change

Conversely, here's what tends to crush our motivation to do something:

- Feeling misunderstood and judged
- Other people pushing you to do it
- Having only one option
- If you're the person engaging in the behavior, not having reasons to stop that make sense for you

- Not believing you can do it
- Getting yelled at, criticized, or shunned by others

Material adapted from *Beyond Addiction: How Science and Kindness Help People Change*, 2014, Jeffrey Foote, PHD, Carrie Wilkens, PHD, and Nicole Kosanke, PHD, with Stephanie Higgs. pp. 57-58