CREATING NEW HABITS

In the new year we often start off with good intentions and resolutions, but breaking existing habits and replacing them with healthier, or more positive ones, is difficult.

Here are some tips to help if you are wanting to make positive changes:

* PLAN AHEAD – think about what you want to achieve and work backwards from there. Give yourself actions or steps that will get you to your ultimate goal, think about realistic time-frames and factor in some flexibility.
* MAKE THE CHANGES SMALL – ticking off small steps and improving at a gradual rate is more achievable, and much more likely to result in sustained change in the long-term.
* GOOD ENOUGH – don’t be too harsh on yourself if you don’t always stick to your plan. Remember that sometimes life gets in the way, so with the best intentions things don’t always work out. Practicing something once a week is still better than not doing it at all. Practice doesn’t have to be perfect; it just has to be good enough.
* SHARE YOUR GOALS – if you tell others about the changes you are making, their support and encouragement can help on the days you struggle – and there will be days that you struggle.
* CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT – old habits are often impacted by environmental factors, like having a vape-break after lunch for example. Changing the timing of your daily activities or going to a different setting can really help.
* LINK NEW HABITS TO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE – linking a new habit to an existing part of your routine, makes it more likely to stick. For example, “I will study for 30 minutes straight after lunch every day”, or “I’ll go for a run after I finish work every Wednesday evening”. Consistency is great for creating new habits.
* CELEBRATE EVERYTHING – small achievements are an important part of the bigger picture, so celebrate everything, however small, every step of the way.
* KEEP RECORDS – success breeds success. Looking at a consistent record of, for example, steady weight loss, tends to keep us focused as we don’t want to break that record. As long as we remain realistic and allow ourselves the occasional day-off, that is.
* FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOU – we’re all individual, and different things work for different people. Listen to others, read up on the topic, and try a variety of techniques. You will find the thing that works best for you.

Before you know it, your new habit will become part of your routine.