

## COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

When it comes to living a healthy lifestyle everyone knows what they should be doing: Exercise regularly, get enough sleep, reduce stress, stop smoking and adapt healthy eating habits. But if everyone knows this, why doesn't everyone do it?

The simple reason is that change is a difficult process. Sometimes short term change is repeatedly accomplished only to return to old habits. Permanent and lasting change is a lifelong commitment. Unless you are ready and willing to modify behaviors – eat healthier and exercise regularly, no fad diet or quick fix program will ultimately give you the long term results you desire. That is why evaluating your readiness to change is a key step in any successful lifestyle change program.

The new Medical Weight Loss Program at City Centre Fitness, modeled after successful life change programs being used in many prestigious facilities in the U.S., uses a medically based process of determining an individual's readiness to change and then creates a personalized program to assist with modifying behaviors and introduce strategies based on each participant's stage of readiness.

In change, as in many aspects of life, timing is everything. Different processes can be applied to problems at different stages. People progress through the same stages of change whether they are overcoming problems of substance abuse, depression or weight control. It is an on-going process and not accomplished overnight.

The first strategy for change is commitment. Some people call this "willpower" but that is really only one part of it. Believing in our will and acting upon it is very powerful. People who are not successful in their weight loss efforts often say "I have no willpower" People need to work on strengthening and encouraging their will. It requires focus and long term dedication but there also could be a number of stumbling blocks in the way. These roadblocks have to be determined and understood and then an action plan will be more successful.

No one can make another person lose weight. Medical doctors, dieticians, personal trainers, counselors and other professionals have been assembled to assist participants in the City Centre Program but the first step is for the participant to evaluate their own level of commitment. Participants must ask themselves Questions such as; What are the distractions you have that could effect your commitment? What level of support can you expect from family and friends? Are you motivated to make long-term lifestyle changes that require exercising more? Are you willing to change your eating habits? What emotional issues are you dealing with? What time restraints do you have? No one is expected to be 100% ready to change. Obstacles that could hold a participant back must be discussed and strategies to help resolve these have to be introduced.

Analyzing the emotional and tactical issues pertaining to commitment is the first strategy for weight loss success and continues throughout the program and after. The next issue we will address is physical readiness.