

I decided to use the Intrinsic Coaching™ approach to enhance a tobacco cessation class. At first, I was fearful because my biggest fear is not knowing what questions to ask. But I remembered to intentionally view everybody as capable, creative, and complete, discover the questions from them, and I started really listening for, and really focusing on, helping people set goals as opposed to focusing on myself as the problem solver. It was a wonderful class. In fact, I haven't had that much enjoyment teaching class in a long time. I found I talked much less, which was good. I didn't cover all the information I typically cover but, because I allowed the intrinsic to inform my expertise, we covered what was important and the rest wasn't really necessary.

No more
being tired
of
talking.

I can see that with this approach, each class will be different because people are different and their goals are going to be different, even when everyone is gathered around the subject of smoking cessation. And so every time I sit down with somebody or teach a class, the questions are going to be different and so what I share will be different, too.

I was astounded by how much these participants were engaged in focusing on problems and, now that I coach, I can really see the limitations of approaching change in that way. One point we always get to in the class is how to deal with slips and a lot of smokers don't feel confident about dealing with them. They smoke a cigarette and they automatically think they're back to their old behavior of smoking. I started to ask questions about, "What if you could get through a slip? What would it look like? What would the steps look like in terms of getting through a slip?" And they started to really think about it. I guess they started to think, "Well gee...this could be possible. I didn't even think that this could be possible." It was just neat to see that they had started to think about this in a totally different way, a solution and goal focused way instead of a problem focused way.

And then I got very excited about teaching again. I was much more energized after the class, during the class, and I was just so much more excited about the intervention that we offer here and I'm happy I don't have to fear listening to myself again. And I'm feeling very excited about what my participants have to say and how they start to work through the process and I'm real excited about the possibilities ahead. I realized that I was just so tired of hearing myself talk in class and it was so exciting to hear the students talk instead.

So I'm looking forward to teaching more classes and using the Intrinsic Coaching™ approach with them again. And, by following the intrinsic instead of leading with my expertise, my expertise came up so much easier. It was very evident what they needed and so I provided my expertise in chunks and then turned it back to them and asked them, "What do you think about this? How does this apply to you? What can you take away from our discussion?" And then, based on what they said, I would add some more expertise, and so it went back and forth. It was a different kind of flow, a different kind of dynamic going on, and a real powerful one that I was really happy about. - Terri Holley, CHES, Public Health Educator, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD



Intrinsic Coach™