

Structures

Reminders to take action

co-active

CTI trained coach



Structures are a method of helping people remember and take action on what is designated as important. They are devices that remind you of your vision, goals, purpose, ways you want to be or actions you want to take. However, they only work if you notice them. So find a spot to put your structure where you will see it when you need it most.

Whether or not you do what the structure indicates, it will lead to learning. There are many types of structures that work to get people into action. The most effective structures are those you design for yourself. They can be serious, fun, whacky or something that only you understand. Just to give you a sense of the variety of options available, we have listed some of the basic categories, followed by specific structures that have worked well for clients:

Counting

- When you want to pay attention to a certain behavior simply count how many times you do it in any given day. It focuses your attention on noticing. Counting does not require you to do anything other than notice. But noting every time you do something heightens your awareness. You can count the number of times when your Saboteur shows up, when you acknowledge others, cigarettes smoked, the number of calories consumed, the number of sales appointments, the number of times you apologize, and the like.

Coach

- One of the best structures. It is a relationship of accountability and a place where clients stop everything while they look at their lives, at how they are doing, and whether they are headed in the direction they want.

Clocks/Timers/Alarms

- Can be used to remind the client it is time to do something, for example: take a breath, leave for an appointment, acknowledge someone, get ready for bed.

Computers

- Customize your screensaver. The client may want to use affirmations or beautiful scenery to remind them of a compelling goal or vision.
- Use alarms and can be used to remind you to stop working.

Collages

- These are often effective in capturing and deepening a client's vision.

Clothes/Clothing Accessories/Jewelry

- Scarves, ties, suits, shirts, socks, rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, watches all can remind clients to be any number of things: playful, sensual, flirtatious, powerful, forgiving, elegant, warm... there are endless possibilities.
- Wearing socks that don't match for two weeks to remind the client that she or he gets to decide for herself or himself.
- Jewelry that is worn on a daily basis, such as a wedding ring or watch can be moved to a different wrist or finger as a very present reminder of an assignment.

Journals

- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Write successes each evening.

Meetings

- Devise an intentionally fabricated deadline on the day you start a project—such as scheduling a meeting to show a colleague or friend your completed project in two weeks.
- Schedule appointments with one friend a week for two months.
- Throw a dinner party once a month. This can be a structure for cleaning house or keeping up relationships with friends.

Music

- Playing a favorite CD in the morning to set the tone for the day.
- Change the words to a song to be about a goal/plan, and sing it every morning in the shower or car.



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Miscellaneous

- Think about how you could use the other senses.

Money Management

Structures might include computer programs, a monthly budget, regularly scheduled money management discussions with a spouse, or the services of a financial planner or home budget consultant.

Nonsense structures

Some of the best structures come from your intuition and may not seem to make sense at first. One reason these structures work is because they interrupt the ordinary mind-flow and grab your attention.

- Place watermelon seeds on the kitchen window sill
- Carry a flashlight in your briefcase
- Wear mismatched shoes

Objects

- Put keepsakes on your desk to remind you of exciting projects you have. For example a travel brochure for a trip you plan to take.
- Create an archive of old beliefs.
- Fresh flowers can be a structure to bring beauty into your home. Or send an e-mail.
- Find an exercise partner.
- A toy lion by the phone can remind the client to be ferocious in pursuit of a goal.

Obstructions

- Put the car keys in the refrigerator in order to remember to take lunch to work
- Put a chair in front of the door when you come in at night to remind yourself to take along important documents tomorrow.
- Wear a rubber band on your wrist to remember to do something, such as breathe deeply, speak powerfully, sit up straight, turn complaints into requests, or tell someone something positive.

Post Cards

- Address postcards to yourself to remind you of an accomplishment, a dream, a deadline, or a goal.
- Ask a friend to send you a pre-designed postcard once a month to encourage you to . . .

Post-it Notes

- Affirmations or powerful phrases placed on the refrigerator or the bathroom mirror can help you remember something all week.

Time Management

- Calendars or day times
- To-do list

It can be paper, computer based, store-bought or handmade, rigorously designed down to the quarter hour, or just an overview. The key to its effectiveness is how well it fits the client.

Stones/Pebbles

- Two bowls with stones... moving a stone from one to the other can signify lots of things, for example, from worrying to not worrying
- Put a stone, coin, etc., in your pocket to keep something in focus all day.
- Writing your values on stones, and drawing one for the day can help remind clients to more fully honor their values.

Senses - Visual

For clients who are highly visual, any structure that appears in their daily field of vision is likely to work. Any structural device that engages these clients visually is likely to be powerful and effective.

- Sticking notes to their computer, the cabinet above the desk, or the refrigerator door.
- Postcards or pictures cut from magazines are another good structure.
- Repainting a room to change the visual space might be an important new structure for a client.
- Changing a chair position so that the client is forced to look at the world from a different perspective.

Senses - Auditory

- Music or an audiotape of affirmations, and even particular fragrances can be very powerful structures.

Senses - Fragrances

Religious ceremonies and rituals have used fragrance for thousands of years because it's a structure that works. How could you use the structure of smell creatively in your clients' lives?

Voicemail

- Leaving a message on your own voicemail as a reminder of something or to acknowledge your progress or request that a certain task be done.
- Leaving a message your coaches voicemail



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