

Moving Toward and Away

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Our behaviours, actions and choices are driven by what we're moving toward in our life or away from, or in a particular situation the feeling we want to have or don't want to have.

When we speak of our core values combined with the concept of "moving toward", we're looking at what we do most to get, feel or have:

- Love and connection
- Success
- Health
- Growth and learning
- Balance (or the means) in order to have stability (the end result or the 'value')
- And other positive feelings or outcomes

When we speak of our core values combined with the concept of "moving away", we're looking at what we do most to avoid a particular state, feelings or having:

- Rejection (loss of love, connection)
- Depression
- Failure
- Conflict
- Loneliness
- Embarrassment, ridicule, humiliation
- Pity
- And other negative feelings or outcomes

Anthony Robbins and many other expert coaches often write and speak about how both moving toward and moving away are each successful strategies to achieve the things we want.

If we're striving for something, it's an approach motivation, a growth impulse that is propelling us. Generally, this is what comes to mind when we're feeling we're making progress. This is a desire-focused or inspiration strategy.

Alternatively, we may be striving to avoid something, or our avoidance motivation. We want to achieve something different because the consequence of not achieving it is something we're determined to avoid. This is a fear-focused motivation strategy.

Please note that our desire-focused strategies are called **inspiration** strategies and are typically positive. Fear-focused strategies are called **motivation** and although we may achieve a positive outcome, they are usually grounded in negativity.

Both strategies can be successful, however it is typically argued that our inspiration strategies will be far more effective in a shorter amount of time because we're using more positive and optimistic thought processes, and therefore positive and efficient actions to achieve the result we're after.

Motivation or fear-focused strategies are also effective but may take much longer to achieve the desired result because our energies, or balance between positive and negative thought, are split between focusing on what we want and what we're avoiding. This division of energies means we're potentially not using the strength of a singular focus in play, and therefore not putting enough into the process of achievement.

Additionally, having both these negative and positive focus points in our thinking can lead to what's referred to in coaching as a "conflicting intention." A conflicting intention is when we have two goals, one positive and one negative, where any focus on the negative goal could be cancelling out, or negating, the ability to achieve the positive goal.

An example of a conflicting intention is where someone identifies their positive goal as achieving a successful business, while identifying their negative goal as proving themselves to someone else who has criticised them in the past for being a failure, that they are no longer a failure.

In this example, there may be so much focus, stress, emotion, limited thinking and even pain associated with the negative goal of proving someone else wrong, that the necessary positive focus to achieve the goal of running a successful business will be diminished or disappear altogether.

So, when we look at moving toward and away from objectives, one of the benefits of the exercise is to identify if there are any moving away from items which require their own special focus or strategy to prevent them from having a negative effect on our positive moving toward items and strategies.

In some cases, we need to eliminate the moving away from items to make room for the moving toward items.

The exercises below have been designed to assist in identifying moving toward and moving away from feelings, values and outcomes based on our perceptions and ideas today. Each section also includes a series of questions for consideration about what we've identified in the exercise and our potential strategic options.

Feelings

List moving toward and away from feelings in the spaces below. These are the feelings that you want to feel consistently, and those you would like to rarely feel or eliminate if possible.

Moving Toward Feelings	Moving Away From Feelings
Examples: Love, Generosity, Connectedness, Success	Examples: Fear, Guilt, Anger, Failure

Questions for Consideration and Exploration:

- Rank Moving Toward feelings in priority order, putting a 1 next to the feeling which is most important to feel on a consistent or even daily basis. Put a 2 next the second most important, and so on.
- Carrying on from the above question once completed, how do you believe this priority ranking, say the top three or five feelings, will affect how you make decisions moving forward?
- Rate each of the Moving Toward and the Moving Away From feelings on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = never and 10 = all the time, in terms of how much you feel these feelings in your life today. For example, if you feel "guilty" most of the time, you may be marking that as an eight or a nine. If you feel "successful" about half the time, you might mark that as a five.
- Carrying on from the above question once completed, which Moving Away From feelings have the highest scores, or are those you are feeling quite often? Explore each of these top "fears" and develop some strategies for resolving them. Please consider speaking with your coach or another more appropriate helping professional to work through these items.
- Carrying on from the same rating question, which Moving Toward feelings have the highest occurrence scores? These are your strength feelings that are quite likely successful strategies for you. What specifically about these feelings is working for you when making decisions and achieving goals? How can you further develop these strengths?
- Carrying on from the same rating question, which Moving Toward feelings have the lowest occurrence scores? These may be strengths which require further development. What strategies could you put in place to use these positive feelings more? In some cases, it could be as simple as making a choice to focus on that feeling for the day and to use it as the foundation for choices and behaviours that day. By focusing your thinking and efforts in this way, you may then experience positive outcomes related to this shift and therefore utilising your strengths more effectively.

- When you consider both of these ranking and comparison exercises, have you identified any direct conflicts between the two sides? For example, have you identified both “love” and “feeling rejected” as being in conflict with each other? If so, these are items which may benefit from discussion with your coach or another more appropriate professional to address the conflict. This may be particularly important if there is a significant unresolved issue or pain associated with the Moving Away from feeling.

Please keep in mind however that humans typically do more to avoid pain than we do to gain pleasure, as this is part of our survival mechanism.

However, when we’re more aware of this information and how we’re either inspired or motivated, we can make conscious choices to not only changing our thinking from focusing on the negative and fear to focusing on the positive and desired outcomes, but also changing the associated behaviours and habits.

What changes in thinking could you be making? And if you made these changes in thinking, what changes in behaviours might also be made? And what might the outcomes of these changes be for you?

Values

Similar to the previous exercise on “feelings”, it may be worthwhile to focus a moment on specific values. Please note that some of your values titles may appear the same as your feelings. That’s OK as our values are often developed from our feelings.

To make this exercise a bit clearer and to serve its intended outcome better, try to list your values as single words which represent the things you hold most important in life, and which are the basis for the decisions you make. Likewise, list the “anti-values” or the things you avoid most in life and which you also make decisions on because that particular anti-value is something you don’t want in your life.

Questions for Consideration and Exploration:

- In your experience, how often do you believe you are making decisions based on your values versus your anti-values, and vice versa?

- If you are making more decisions based on the anti-values you're moving away from, what difference do you feel you'd experience if you shifted to focusing on your moving toward values?

Outcomes

This final list is about identifying the types of outcomes you experience when you're focused on moving toward feelings and values and when focused on moving away from feelings and values. Although you may have explored much of this in the previous two exercises, it may serve a purpose to list the outcomes in one place to highlight the cause and affect of your positive or negative focus.

Outcomes when focused on Moving Toward feelings and values	Outcomes when focused on Moving Away From feelings and values
Examples: I feel respected, people trust me more, I achieve the goals I set for myself	Examples: I give up on what's important to me, I get caught up in unproductive gossip, I hurt others feelings

Questions for Consideration and Exploration:

- Now that you have a much clearer picture of cause and effect in your life based on your choice of moving toward or moving away from focus, what changes do you want to make?
- For those changes, detail the benefits of the change.
- For those changes, detail what's likely to occur if you're not successful in changing.
- Finally, for each change, develop a strategy or action plan, including individual tasks where appropriate to create the change in real life versus just in your head. Document the plan, and consider working with your coach or someone else to keep you accountable to the plan.

It may be beneficial to keep a journal related to this exercise and your ongoing development. The questions presented in this document have the potential to be quite intense and may bring up a lot of past experiences and current feelings, some positive and others not. Journaling may be a successful strategy to work through these feelings for some people.

Additionally, journaling may be an ideal way of tracking your continued progress in the development of a new focus, including documenting the outcomes from various new choices and actions.

There may be times where you attempt something, but you don't get the outcome you were after. In these cases, your journal can serve as the place where you document and explore what you've learnt from the experience and can develop strategies to try again with some modifications to the original plan.

Finally, your journal can be one of the ways in which you celebrate the achievements of your newly focused approaches.

Congratulations for your achievements, progress, milestones and new insights and outcomes as a result of the effort you've put into this exercise!

Acknowledgements and Further Reading

This coaching resource document was created by the askacoach.com team, drawing on specific coaching skills, models and knowledge from our individual and collective experiences.

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