

University of New Mexico
Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions
Motivational Interviewing: Professional Training Videotape Series, 1998
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Tape/Part E, Chapter 4, Scene 7 – Importance and confidence scales

Doctor: Before you go, could I spend a couple of minutes chatting to you about your smoking? 'cause I know from the records that you're a smoker.

Patient: Sure, as long as you don't start to lecture me.

Doctor: That's fine.

Patient: I get a lot of people nagging me about my smoking, and you know, I probably should cut back, but, you know, it's something I have a hard time with.

Doctor: I promise I won't. And I don't see it as my job to harangue my patients.

Patient: OK

Doctor: Now what I'd like to do is try to understand exactly how you feel about it. Is that OK?

Patient: Sure.

Doctor: I want to ask you 2 questions. Each one of them, you give me a number. OK?

Patient: OK.

Doctor: The first one, how important is it for you right now, to stop smoking? If 0 is not at all important, and 10 is very important, what number would you give yourself?

Patient: Probably on a scale of naught to 10, I would say about a 6.

Doctor: Right. And second question, how confident are you that if you did stop today, that you'd succeed? If 0 is not at all confident, and 10 is very confident, what number would you give yourself?

Patient: Three.

Doctor: Right. So you're not convinced you'd last.

Patient: I think it's something I'd have a hard time giving up. I'd have a hard time giving up my smoking right now, I think.

Doctor: And you gave yourself a score of 6 for importance.

Patient: Mm hm.

Doctor: There's a part of you that thinks it's a good thing to do. (pauses) Why did you give yourself a score of 6 and not 0?

Patient: Well I definitely think that smoking has some importance to your health, you know, we constantly hear that from ads on the TV and people like yourself.

Doctor: But for you personally?

Patient: Well, I think it's, I don't think it's the most important thing for your health. That's why I didn't give it a 10. But I think it has some importance. But right now I don't really feel confident that I could quit right now.

Doctor: I was going to ask you that. What would have to happen for that importance score to go from 6 to say a 9, before you said, oh yeah, I really want to do this?

Patient: I think that I would have to be convinced that I would feel a lot better, and that I'm going to be healthier, and I would have to feel confident that I could actually quit, you know, if I could actually make some progress, you know, that might help. But you know, I need a bit more convincing, cause you know, my grandfather's 92 and he smokes a pack of cigarettes every day, and you know, he's 92!

Doctor: Mm-hm.

Patient: And he's been smoking for years, so I don't think it's the most important thing, but...

Doctor: So it would take quite a lot for you before you really decided to give up.

Patient: You know, it would save me some money if I quit.

Doctor: Mm-hm.

Patient: That would be a good thing. But it's something I don't have the, I just can't see me doing it.

Doctor: It's something that you will probably do for the rest of your days.

Patient: Well, I know I would like to quit in the future. But it's so hard, you know, everyone smokes. I've tried before, you know, and it's just something I have a difficult time with.

Doctor: And how do you feel about my role, in coming down to the doctor – do you feel I've given you a lecture?

Patient: Ah, not really a lecture, no, you haven't lectured me. I think you made me think a little bit, I guess...