



PYT Weekly Training & Support

Lesson #35 Your Reticular Activation System

by Jim Katsoulis

Alright, welcome to this week's lesson. So often, what people tell you when you want to change a behavior, you want to eat better, and you want to exercise more is to put yourself around people who are already doing that. Read books that are giving you that message, watch videos, listen to audios, and surround yourself with that information and those ideas and those beliefs; and it's going to begin to change you.

But what I want to do is I want to give you a little more depth of why that happens, and I think as you understand this idea, it's going to not only help you accelerate it and make it happen quicker, but it's also going to help you to realize that the future for you of being healthy and of having the body you want is one that can happen very, very easily. It can happen automatically.

Cravings can disappear. I want to explain why that happens, and it has something to do a system within you called reticular activation system; and basically, it's an unconscious process that filters out what isn't important to you and filters in and brings into your awareness what is important to you.

An example I often use is the idea of your car. Whenever you're driving your car around and you see another person in your car, your make and model, you notice it. You notice it because it's important to you. You drive this car and you've invested in it, and when you see it, there's something that triggers your awareness.

If you think about all the cars you drive by in a day and you regularly notice this car that [inaudible] **01:29**. So, this is an example of it working in action. But it also works to help you not notice things that don't matter to you.

So, for example, if you're a non-smoker, when you go in a convenience store, you don't notice the cigarettes behind the counter. They just don't even come into your awareness. Now, the interesting thing is that lots of things are like this; lots of things don't come into your awareness even they could be right in front of you.

And so, we want to understand this because when you make these shifts and these changes, when you become a new person, when you change your beliefs and when you start acting in a new way, after a while, what end up happening is your reticular activation system changes. It only can notice a certain amount of things. And so, what happens is it changes what it notices and it deletes the rest.

Now, you know this has happened because chances are that when you were a child growing up, there was some toy that you were obsessed about. I mean, you had to have it, and it was your whole world at that moment.

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But then, what happened as you got older? Your opinions change. What you thought was important changed, and you probably haven't thought of that toy now in a long time. And maybe even if you see it, you won't even think twice about it because it's not important to you anymore. It's just not part of your reality and you're not connected to it.

And so, what happens, though, and this is the magical part, is it just fades out of your awareness. And that's the magical part because what happens when junk food or processed foods or, for some people, meat becomes not part of what they consume anymore? Well, what ends up happening is it just fades from their awareness and they just don't notice it anymore.

And this is what I want you to understand because this is what the future holds for you. This is what happens. This is what true change feels like.

A lot of people make the mistake when they start dieting of thinking that they're always going to have these cravings for ice cream and they're always going to have to fight that. But that's not the way that it happens for people.

Again, there are so many people who have successfully lost the weight and kept it off, and they've done it in a way but they've changed what they accept that they will eat. Sometimes, they literally change their definitions of food.

And so, this happened for me. I did stop eating meat at a certain point. Again, you can lose just as much weight as you want eating meat but it was a decision I made. But as soon as I did that, all of a sudden, when I'd go out to eat and I'd look at the menu, I don't even notice meat dishes. I don't even notice them. I don't look at them and say, "Oh, I don't want that." I don't even notice them.

And you already do this as well because, again, there are certain foods you just don't like and you don't even notice them on the menu. You've, literally and mentally, deleted them out. So, how can we make this happen? How can we use this process? [inaudible] **04:07**

There are a few different ways to do this. The first one (I want to go back to what I was saying at the beginning of the video) is that you want to get yourself around people who are healthy and who are eating and living the way that you want. And it doesn't have to be being around them all the time. You just want to get yourself around them as much as you can because what's going to happen is you're going to hear their reticular activation systems.

So, the problem is that we usually hang out with people who have the same awareness that we have. They like the same types of food. They have the same beliefs about exercising. They have the same exercise routines all the rest of it.

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So, what we want to do is we want to start hearing about what other people are noticing in the world. So, maybe if you start going to a yoga class, for example, and maybe you hear someone mention a coop or that there's a sale on lettuce at the supermarket. You can get three for one or something. And something that little can, all of a sudden, tune your awareness to thinking about that.

So, I'm talking about being around people who are doing these things, reading magazines, listening to audio programs, listening to videos, reading books, doing research, and just putting yourself into that environment and getting these ideas into your mind because on an unconscious level, they start tuning you. They start tuning you to recognize what's out there that may be healthier.

And the other thing is that our reticular activation system seems to have kind of a limited amount of space to store things. I grew up eating a lot of meat, I mean, I'm Greek, and that was just what we ate constantly, and food was the center of everything.

As I became a vegetarian, I didn't retain all those awareness. I wasn't as aware of meat anymore. It seemed like, all of a sudden, there wasn't enough room for it anymore. I couldn't hold on to it. It just got pushed out so I didn't notice anymore.

So, what I'm telling is that if you start becoming aware of healthier foods, healthier behaviors, healthier habits of goings on, at the same time, what tends to happen is the unhealthier ones or the old ideas and beliefs and awareness start to fade and start to get pushed out to the side so that you don't notice it so much anymore.

You may still enjoy ice cream, for example, but you may have this intense belief that you only want to do it occasionally. Anything more than occasional just isn't enjoyable. And one of the things that begin to happen is it begins to trickle down into your awareness system so that you don't notice ice cream all the time, and it's just maybe on special occasion.

And so, this was what happened for me. Again, I used to eat a lot of ice cream growing up. It was always in my freezer. But now it's become something that I do occasionally in the summer and it's an event. Maybe my daughter and my wife will go to a place outside, and it's a whole thing. And I enjoy it, and it's great, but it's not an "all the time" thing.

So, again, the reason I tell you this is I want you to recognize that change is easy, that when you keep with something, when you change the beliefs as well that are the foundation of your behaviors, what happens is that you stop noticing

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the sabotaging foods, the things that you used to crave. And once you stop noticing something, the cravings disappear. There's not that battle anymore.

This is another example of the differences between conscious change of saying “I love ice cream and I'm going to stop myself from eating it” and the idea of “I can take it or leave it” and you don't notice it all the time anymore; and so, you don't have to fight these cravings.

The latter is much, much easier. That's what true, genuine change feels like. Again, you've experienced this in your life. I used the example of when you were a child but you can go through different stages in your life. Maybe when you were in high school, there was something that was really important to you or in college, your first job or a new job.

When you do these things, all of a sudden, your awareness is filled with new things and you become aware of things you didn't notice before. So, this is a common thing. But recognize that the more that you influence yourself with books, audios, other people, classes, and information that is “healthier” in regards to the lifestyle that you want, it works on an unconscious level.

So, that's where I want you to put your attention, not just in “that's it, I'm going to do it; I'm going to willpower and muscle it out.” Let's be more strategical about it. And, instead, dedicate five minutes every day to reading a health book or a nutrition book or an exercise book because it's going to influence you. It's going to change the way that you think and make the changes happen automatically.

So, I'm telling you this because it's a much, much easier and enjoyable way to create the life that you want and to create the changes that you want.

So, get out there and make this a habit. Make it, make it, make it a habit. I can't stress that enough that you have a ritual of committing to a class every week, a yoga class or some form of health class, and committing to reading a book once a day even if it's just five minutes.

Meditating, I would skip because what you're looking to do is to put new ideas in your mind, not just to connect to yourself which is very valuable in itself but, literally, everyday, putting some good knowledge into your brain and into your awareness because it's going to re-tune what you notice out in the world.

And you'll be amazed at the changes that that makes in you. So, do that. And I'll talk to you next week.

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