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[Teaching & Discussion Guide]

NO SWEAT

**How the Simple Science of Motivation
Can Bring You a Lifetime of Fitness**

A BOOK BY MICHELLE SEGAR, Ph.D

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NEW TRAINING COURSE WITH DR. MICHELLE SEGAR UNDER DEVELOPMENT

MICHELLE SEGAR, PH.D

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How the Simple Science of Motivation
Can Bring You a Lifetime of Fitness

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NO SWEAT



Michelle is creating a new class, to be offered online, to train professionals in fitness, wellness, and health care in how to use her method in their work to enhance motivation and foster the prioritization of self-care and behavioral sustainability.

To learn more about this course when it is ready, please email Michelle@MichelleSegar.com and put “Send Training Info” in the subject line.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this teaching and discussion guide is to help individuals, professionals and students think critically about the material in *No Sweat: How the Simple Science of Motivation Can Bring You a Lifetime of Fitness*. *No Sweat* is being used around the world in academic and professional courses related to medicine, nursing, fitness, psychology, kinesiology, public health, geriatrics, disease management, weight management, PE, life coaching, among other areas that care about creating sustainable behavior change. Book clubs, journal clubs, and clinics are also using this material to guide discussions about the ideas presented in *No Sweat*.

Contained within you'll find many questions listed for each chapter, so I encourage each person and group to focus on the questions that most resonate with your specific teaching and/or discussion goals. I also welcome you to amplify these teachings through developing new interactive activities that link these concepts to current issues, case studies, videos, other research, etc. If you develop new activities that work well for you, I'd love to hear about them so I can include them in future versions of this guide.

Enjoy critically reflecting on and deepening your understanding of the ideas and in *No Sweat*.

Thank you to Katie Aucott, Alex Wood, and Jayme Johnson for their help in bringing this guide to fruition.

Warmly,



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CHAPTER 1: IT'S NOT ABOUT THE SWEAT

Discussion Questions



1. What beliefs did Marcia hold about exercise when she started working with Michelle? Do you related to Marcia's beliefs and past experiences?
2. Why do you think she was so confused by Michelle's suggestions? What would you have thought if you had been in Marcia's shoes and Michelle suggested that you to stop dieting and exercising?
3. In what ways do our societal standards for beauty, health and attractiveness influence and interact with how we approach exercising and being physically active?
4. Michelle suggests that most people understand the messages about better health, weight control, and exercise but we are not motivated by them. What's the difference between understanding something and being motivated by it?
5. What did Michelle learn from her Kinesiology master's degree research that ignited her passionate 21-year career researching and coaching people in sustainable motivation and behavior change?
6. Why is physical activity and exercise *not just about the sweat*?
7. Why does Michelle suggest many of us need new MAPS to health, fitness, and well-being?
8. What purpose do the It's Your Move exercises service in *No Sweat*?
9. What does Julius Kuhl believe that goals need in order to be motivating
10. What was it like to fill out your Personal Projects List (the first It's Your Move" activity), Did you realize anything new? If so, what was it?
11. Do you feel ready to learn new things that might challenge your current beliefs and practices? Why/Why not?

CHAPTER 2: ESCAPING THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF FAILURE

Discussion Questions

1. Think back to the story with Jack. In general, what motivated him to try to change his behavior? Why did Jack keep failing to meet his goals?
2. What do you think motivated Jack to keep trying the same kinds of regimens, even though they weren't working for him?
3. Could you relate to Jack's experiences? If so, in what ways?
4. What are some reasons that people believe they can get in shape with a "magic bullet", without doing any real work?
5. What does the Meaning of behavior refer to?
6. How are our behavioral Meanings created, and how does this apply to exercise?
7. Why is it so important to understand our Meaning of physical activity?
8. What initiates the Vicious Cycle of Failure?
9. How does this influence people's Meaning of exercise?
10. What are common Wrong Whys often found in the Vicious Cycle of Failure?
11. Have you ever had the Wrong Whys or know someone who has? If so, did short-term or long-term motivation and behavior changes occur, in general?
12. Why do people stay stuck in the Vicious Cycle of Failure?
13. What question can you ask people to help them assess the general Meaning of their relationship with being physically active?
14. Why do you think motivations like "losing weight" and "getting healthier" are good motivators for many people who wish to sustain physically active lives?

15. Read the study *Rebranding Exercise: Closing the Gap Between People's Values and Behavior*. What are the implications from this study's counter-intuitive findings about how we might better frame and approach exercise, as a society?
16. In general, human beings are hard-wired for immediate gratification. How does this influence people's daily choices, especially as they relate to being physically active?
17. How can people escape the Vicious Cycle of Failure?
18. In what ways does seeing physical activity or another healthy behavior as a "chore" or a "gift" influence our feelings and motivation?
19. What did the study about brain activity indicate about willpower/self-control? What are the implications for adopting healthy behaviors like exercise?
20. In your own life, have you experienced the depleting effects of using willpower on your subsequent self-control and decision making? What life areas were these in? Knowing what you know now, what might you do differently?

Summary Questions



1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about Meaning, and how it relates to motivation and exercise?
4. What did you learn about the "Vicious Cycle of Failure", and how to break the cycle?
5. In what other behaviors or life areas do the Wrong Whys undermine motivation and behavior in your life?
6. What single question can help people identify their core meaning of exercise?

Activities

1. Think back to Jack's story at the beginning of the chapter. Do you feel any similarities to Jack? Has your experience mirrored his in terms of his efforts to exercise? In what ways?
2. Think about people you know who exercise regularly and those who don't. Do they have different Meanings or Whys? If so, what are they? If not, what other things might differentiate their physical activity participation?
3. Role play: Two people (you and a friend)
 - a. Friend: comes to you saying they are trying—unsuccessfully—to exercise because their doctor told them to, and they figured that they needed to drop a couple of pounds.
 - b. You: Ask them certain questions to diagnose what might be going on. Then using that information explain to your friend the reasons why they might be having difficulty with their motivation. If that friend told you that they just need to try harder and have more willpower, what would you tell them? How could you guide them to a more effective way to be motivated to exercise?
4. Diagram out your own Vicious Cycle of Failure. Fill in your own Wrong Whys, and the meanings they've led you to have about being physically active.

CHAPTER 3: MOTIVATION FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Discussion Questions



1. What was Tanya's Meaning for exercise? How was her Meaning different from her husband's, and how did that make Tanya feel?
2. What beliefs led Tanya to feel that she could never see exercise the way her husband did?
3. How does our past experience with exercise influence our current Meaning of it?
4. The phrase "downward spiral" was used to describe Tanya's history with exercise. What did she mean, and how did this affect her Meaning for exercise?
5. Describe the "Self-Determination Theory."
6. What is feeling "autonomous" like?
7. What is feeling "controlled" like?
8. What is the difference between "controlled" and "autonomous" feelings toward a behavior? Give an example.
9. In general, does "controlled" or "autonomous" motivation lead to long-term behavior?
10. What did the systematic review by Teixeira and colleagues find about the different impact of having autonomous vs. controlled regulations on physical activity participation?
11. What beliefs did Charles have about physical activity that led him to hire a personal trainer, even though he dreaded his workouts every week?
12. Why was Charles resistant to the idea of viewing his workout as a gift, instead of a chore?

13. What did he ultimately end up deciding to do about the hill, and what were the results?
14. Read the study called *Midlife Women's Physical Activity Goals: Influences on the Socio-Cultural Influences and Effects on Behavioral Regulation*. Then answer:
- In what ways does culture influence the reasons people decide to become more physically active as well as how they feel about those reasons?
 - Ultimately, how does our socialization to being physically active influence what it means to us and our ultimate success in sustaining an active lifestyle?
15. What were the results of the "Work or Fun" study? What are the implications from this study for framing our Why for being physically active? How could you use the results of the study to inform your own approach to being physically active or another behavior?
16. What makes the Why so important for making a change in behavior?
17. *No Sweat* discusses the Why as determining the quality of our fuel, our drive. Why is this? What is the significance of this concept when it comes to exercise?
18. What happened to the women in the study who were told to walk either for "exercise" or "fun?" How does this compare to your experience with walking or being active?
19. When it comes to someone's motivation to exercise, does research suggest it's better to have more reasons, or fewer? Why is this the case? How did this play out in the example with the US Military cadets? With the kids and nutrition study?

Summary Questions

1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about how your past has shaped your current Meaning for exercise, and/or other behaviors?
4. In what other behaviors or areas of your life does the choice between framing something as “work or fun” affect how you approach a task, how you feel while you are doing it, and how you feel afterwards?
5. What questions can help people identify their Why for exercise?

Activities

1. Think about how your past experiences with exercise have shaped its current Meaning for you. Diagram out those past experiences, and write down how they affected the trajectory of your relationship with exercise. How does this compare or contrast to Tanya’s description of her past relationship with exercise (remember the “downward spiral” mentioned earlier)?
2. Role play: Two people (you and a friend)
 - a. Friend: Comes to you saying they are trying—unsuccessfully—to exercise because they hate exercising, and it always seems like such a hassle.

- b. You: Ask them certain questions to diagnose what might be going on. Determine what relationship your friend has had with exercise in the past, and how that has affected their current Meaning for exercise. Determine whether exercise is a gift or a chore for them, and ask them how they could go about re-framing exercise as a gift instead of a chore. If they told you that doing exercise because it feels good would seem like “cheating,” how would you respond to them? What kind of ideas could you offer them to help change their relationship with being active from a chore into a gift?
3. Design an experiment to evaluate the effects of framing an activity as work or fun. Evaluate the differing effects from perceiving the same behavior either as “fun” or “work.”

CHAPTER 4: EXERCISING EXERCISE

Discussion Questions

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1. Think back to the story of Sandy at the beginning of the chapter. Why didn't she walk even though she liked it? What beliefs led to her feel like some kinds of exercise "counted" while others didn't?
2. What was Sandy's Wrong Why?
3. How did the "body-shapers" and "non-body-shapers" differ in their *experience* of exercise, activity *choice*, and *how much* they ultimately exercised? What does this suggest about our reasons for being active, our exercise choices, and our motivation?
4. Think about the *Journal of Consumer Research* study focusing on what drives decision making. What drives our decisions the closer we are in time to the outcomes of our choices? How does this translate to exercise? Give an example.
5. What are some of the implications from this chapter about advising people about becoming more physically active so they stay motivated over time?
6. Consider Malia's story, who exercises intensely for three weeks, then loses motivation for the rest of the year. What beliefs led Malia to reject the idea of undertaking smaller amounts of exercise, even though she only sustains high-intensity exercise for a fraction of the year?
7. In contrast to Malia's story, Gina Kolata is extremely enthusiastic about her high-intensity workouts and sustains a physically active life. How does Ekkekakis's research help us understand the differences in feelings and outcomes between Malia and Gina?
8. What helped Arianna, who associated exercise with punishment, break free from her negative Meaning of physical activity?

9. How do you feel about “exercising exercise”? If you completed the activity in the book, what was that process like for you? How do you think it could help a person struggling to stay motivated?

Summary Questions

1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about key factors that affect the long-term sustainability of exercise?
4. In what other behaviors or areas of your life do you think it could be helpful to “exercise” your past Meaning by making a list and tearing it up?
5. What questions can help people identify the types of exercise that feel best to do and/or are most enjoyable—and sustainable—for them?

Activities

1. Answer the prompt that was used for one of the studies found earlier in this chapter: “Imagine that you are being physically active right now. Take a minute or two and go over the experience in your mind.”
 - a. Look back at what you wrote down. Did your answers reflect the body-shapers (exercising to get in shape, feeling uncomfortable, feeling sweaty, etc.) or the non-body-shapers (feels good to be outside, feels good to be moving)?

- b. What do your answers tell you about your Meaning for exercise?
2. Go to the [LiveWell Colorado](#) website to review their campaign.
 - a. Discuss the pros and cons of their approach to promoting behavior change based on the research presented.
3. Role play: Two people (you and a friend)
 - a. Friend: Comes to you saying they are trying—unsuccessfully—to exercise because they try really hard for their New Year’s Resolutions, but they’re always so miserable that they quit after a month or two.
 - b. You: Ask them certain questions to diagnose what might be going on. Determine what your friend’s Meaning is for exercise, and how they feel physically during the process of exercising. Try to work together to come up with a list of physical activities that they enjoy, and see how they find ways to work those activities into their daily life. Make sure to explore *why* they enjoy those particular activities.
4. What type of experiment could you design to evaluate the effects of exercising exercise as a starting point for an individual to change their Meaning of exercise?
5. Write down the types of physical activities that you “count” as valid physical activity, worth doing. Save this list because we’ll revisit this list after the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: COUNT EVERYTHING AND CHOOSE TO MOVE

Discussion Questions

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1. Think back to the story of Toni, who chose to skip the remaining section of her workout class after she missed the first ten minutes. What beliefs led her to make this decision?
2. What does recent research tell us about what “counts” as physical activity that can help us better incorporate it into our busy lives? How does it compare/contrast with past beliefs about exercise?
3. What is the misunderstood ten-minute rule? What was it based on and what are the implications of this?
4. What does recent research tell us about the effects of sitting (as well as other sedentary behaviors) on our health?
5. What do these findings, together, suggest regarding our perceptions about what type of movement is worth doing? How can we leverage these findings to help people feel motivated to become more physically active?
6. Because of cultural messages, people who are tired often think they are “lazy” because they don’t have energy to exercise. What effect does calling ourselves “lazy” have on our motivation to exercise?
7. What is the medical model of exercise, and why doesn’t it work for the majority of people?
8. What does it mean to “count everything”? What does it NOT mean?

9. What does the food industry understand about human behavior? What strategies do they use to motivate people to buy food, and how does that compare/contrast with the traditional strategies used to date to promote physical activity?
10. In what ways does having an “everything counts” mindset impact our Meaning of, and likelihood of fitting in more physical activity?
11. Think back to the list of OTM’s (Opportunities to Move.) What was your favorite activity? Which ones could help you fit more physical activity into your life?
12. What additional strategies for fitting movement in can you think of that weren’t discussed in this chapter?

Summary Questions



1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about what “counts” as exercise?
4. In what other behaviors or areas of your life do you think it could be helpful to “count everything”?
5. What questions can help people identify what types of OTM’s are most enjoyable—and sustainable—for them?

Activities

1. Look back at what you wrote down from the last question in the last chapter guide about which activities “count” as valid physical activity. Compare this list with the list of OTM’s found in this chapter. Is there any overlap? What does this say about your definition of what counts?
 - a. Look back to the list of OTM’s in the chapter. Circle those that you don’t already do that would actually be feasible and enjoyable to fit into your daily life. Make a note next to each one about how you could go about incorporating the activity in your daily life.
2. Go to the *Exercise Is Medicine* website
 - a. Discuss the pros and cons of this frame for promoting exercise for different populations (e.g., clinicians, patients, kids, etc.).
3. Role play: Two people (you and a friend)
 - a. Friend: Comes to you saying they are trying—unsuccessfully—to exercise because they can’t ever find enough time to exercise.
 - b. You: Ask them certain questions to diagnose what might be going on. Determine what your friend considers to be exercise that “counts.” Discuss what you know about the research supporting an “everything counts” mentality that you learned about in this chapter. Together, look through the OTM list of physical activities that they enjoy, and see which activities could fit into their daily life.
4. Brainstorm new messages to motivate people to seek out and count any and all movement they do. (How would these messages be different for distinct populations?) How might you rewrite the physical activity guidelines to better foster people’s motivation and ability to sustain more physically active lives based on the ideas presented in this chapter?

CHAPTER 6: FROM A CHORE TO A GIFT

Free Resource

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Get a free *It's Your Move!*™ Game color poster for your home, office, and/or clinic. Go to the resource section at <http://michellesegar.com/books/no-sweat> to print out a free poster for yourself and/or others. (There are two sizes of the color poster; a smaller 8 1/2 x 11 for home and a larger one for health clinics, employers, and fitness centers (11 X 17). There is also a B&W handout (8 1/2 x 11).

Discussion Questions

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1. In this chapter, Laila feels like she should get back into shape but can't think of any types of physical activity that she likes doing. What eventually helped Laila change her relationship with being physically active?
2. What did Laila ultimately end up choosing as her physical activity, and why did she choose it?
3. Marla, who resisted her physical therapy exercises, experienced the "gap between intentions and behavior." What does this gap refer to? Can you think of a time you have experienced this gap, either with exercise or some other part of your life?

4. What happened to help Marla shift her views on the exercises? How did this change her behavior?
5. What's the difference between The Wrong Whys and Right Whys? How can you identify a "right" or "wrong" Why for yourself?
6. Why aren't The Right Whys the same for everyone? Which Right Why did you select from "Your Physical Activity Gift List" in the It's Your Move table, and why did you choose that one?
7. Why isn't "to be healthy" a Right Why for many people?
8. What is "delay discounting"? How does it impact our choices and behavior?
9. Why was Dan Ariely unmotivated to keep taking his shots? How did he solve this problem so that he was motivated to do it? What is the technical term for the strategy he used?
10. What initiates The Successful Cycle of Motivation, and what are its downstream effects?
11. If you want to convert a behavior like physical activity from a "chore" into a "gift" what do you want to focus on first?
12. Explain how the neuroscience of reward works. What are the implications from this science about motivating a behavior like physical activity? How does this tie back to the research about exercise intensity and feelings by Ekkekakis?
13. Read the Custers and Arts article "*Positive Affect as Implicit Motivator: On the Nonconscious Operation of Behavioral Goals.*" What are the implications of this research on physical activity and other types of self-care behavior?
14. What did one study suggest about the intensity of physical activity and differences in mental health benefits between men and women? In what ways do your personal experiences with being physically active align with these study findings or not?
15. What is the primary criterion for advising people to pick physical activities that they will stay motivated to sustain?

16. After reading the section on OTM's (i.e., Opportunities to Move) did you realize that you were doing some that you have had never given yourself credit for? Does "counting" OTM's as valid physical activity change anything, and if so, what?
17. Many people don't consider walking to be exercise. Why do you think this is? How do you think it influences what activities they choose to do for exercise and physical activity? Before reading *No Sweat*, did you believe that walking "counted" as exercise? If so, did learning about this change anything for you and if so what?
18. Why might walking be a good way for many people to be physically active?

Summary Questions



1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about framing exercise as a "gift" rather than a "chore"?
4. In what other areas of your life could you increase your motivation by choosing to think about a behavior as a "gift"?

Activities



1. Think about ways you could add more walking to your daily life.
2. Treasure Hunt: Revisit the It's Your Move™ game board. Consider your typical daily schedule and give yourself points for the OTM's you take and identify when you might be able to fit more walking into your schedule? Write down a list of your

possible options and when they occur. Are there any other people you enjoy spending time with that would make walking a way to spend quality time to connect and/or a fun way to spend time?

3. Diagram your own Successful Cycle of Motivation. Fill in your own Right Whys, and the experiences and meaning they've led you (or would lead you) to have about being physically active.
4. Role Play: With you and a Friend
 - a. A friend comes to you asking how to fit more exercise into their day. How can you teach them about OTM's? Explore the possibilities for enjoying more OTM's in their daily schedules.

CHAPTER 7: PERMISSION TO PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

Discussion Questions



1. What realization did Mina have that surprised and angered her?
2. Why do people prioritize other things above their self-care? What is the paradox of this consistent choice?
3. What have we learned through our socialization about how to prioritize our own self-care? What beliefs have we learned to have about self-care?
4. What does Permission represent?
5. In what ways does not giving ourselves Permission to prioritize our self-care influence our behavioral choices every day? In what ways does not giving ourselves Permission to prioritize our self-care influence our lives (e.g., our families, our work, how happy we feel every day)?
6. What is the difference between our mindsets and ourselves, and how does this play out when it comes to our needs and behaviors? Give an example.
7. Describe the phenomenon of “caretakeritis.” How does this affect people’s daily experience? Do you know anyone with caretakeritis? What do they do that suggests they have caretakeritis?
8. How does caretakeritis affect men and women? In what ways is socialization and/or gender related to caretakeritis?
9. Why is it that “taking care of business” can feel addictive?
10. How is the phrase “I don’t have time for exercise” a smokescreen?

11. Does everyone have equal opportunity when it comes to self-care? Describe the types of challenging circumstances that prevent people from being able to prioritize their own self-care.
12. Why does Michelle's husband, Jeff, wake up every morning at 5 am to exercise? What did he tell Michelle was his reason, his Why, for exercising when she first asked him? What did he realize was driving his early morning exercise sessions upon deeper reflection?
13. In what ways do Michelle and Jeff's self-care hierarchies differ? What do they both have in common about their foundational self-care behavior?
14. What did Arianna Huffington figure out after she collapsed?
15. Where do our mindset and beliefs about self-care come from?
16. In what ways does following "shoulds" abdicate our personal responsibility about our daily choices?
17. What is neuroplasticity? What are the implications of neuroplasticity for re-shaping our beliefs and behaviors?
18. Where is the first place to start if we want to change our behavior?
19. What has Michelle found that most derails self-care behavior?

Summary Questions



1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about caretakeritis, and giving yourself Permission to prioritize self-care? Does this feel like an issue in your own life? (Why/Why not?)
4. In what other aspects of your life could giving yourself Permission to prioritize something over your list of "shoulds" be of benefit?

Activities

1. Should List: Get a sheet of paper and a pencil. Write down your top five “shoulds.” Where do these “shoulds” come from? Do these “shoulds” influence your self-care, and if so in what ways?
2. What research helps us understand the power of “shoulds” over our daily choices?
3. Self-care hierarchy: Draw out your own self-care hierarchy, what is your foundational self-care behavior, now, and why?
4. Self-care Interviews: Pick someone you know who consistently takes good care of themselves. Interview them and ask:
 - a. What beliefs do they hold about self-care?
 - b. Where did they learn these beliefs?
 - c. Did they have any role models that prioritized their own self-care?
 - d. Explain the concept of “Permission” to them. Ask them if they give themselves explicit “Permission” to prioritize their own self-care or whether they just do it without thinking about it?
 - e. What do they notice about their daily roles and responsibilities when they practice their core self-care behaviors?
 - f. Is anything different in their day when circumstances prevent them from practicing their foundational self-care behavior?
 - g. What advice would they give to people who don’t feel comfortable or entitled to make their own self-care a priority?

5. Role-Play: You and a friend

- a. Your friend comes to you very fatigued, overburdened, and telling you that they don't have time or energy to exercise.
- b. What questions would you ask them to identify whether they have caretakeritis?
- c. How would you explain caretakeritis to your friend?
- d. What would you want them to know about Permission and self-care as they relate to daily feeling and functioning?

CHAPTER 8: WHAT SUSTAINS US, WE SUSTAIN

Discussion Questions



1. Think back to Char’s story. What beliefs lead her to feel that self-care and family care were mutually exclusive? When she started to think more deeply about the issue, what did she realize helped her take better care of herself?
2. What hidden relationship often sabotages our self-care outside of our awareness?
3. Why is it so difficult to prioritize self-care even when we know it’s good for us?
4. Read the article by Arthur Lupia, “[Communicating Science in Politicized Environments](#)” and then discuss what causes us to keep believing our beliefs even when we have evidence that they are not true?
5. Why might it be helpful to consider yourself as “being the energy center of your life”?
6. What did Isla realize? How does her experiences compare with yours?
7. What is the paradox of self-care? How did this manifest in Isla?
8. What does the phrase “energy in/energy out” traditionally refer to? What is its meaning in the context of this specific chapter about self-care? How do you bring energy into yourself on most days? What do you spend your energy on that is meaningful to you? What do you spend your energy on that is a waste of this precious energy?
9. Why does Michelle refer to the transformation of physical activity from a “gift” into “essential fuel” as alchemy?
10. Can you envision giving yourself Permission to turn physical activity into essential fuel? Why/Why not? Give an example of your thought process for making physical activity essential fuel for your daily life.

11. In this chapter, what is one way to think about what “well-being” reflects?
12. What did Jane Brody realize about exercise? How did her explicit reasons for exercising differ from what motivated her to do it day in and day out?
13. What is the Sustainable Cycle of Self-Care? In what ways does it differ from the Vicious Cycle of Failure and the Successful Cycle of Motivation?
14. Explain what Michelle’s phrase, “what sustains us, we sustain,” means. Does this idea resonate with you or do you disagree? What experiences have you had with physical activity, self-care, or other behaviors that relate to this phrase?
15. Have you ever thought of or considered a self-care behavior like physical activity as it is depicted in the What Sustains Us, We Sustain Tree?
16. When psychologists help people make behavior changes, what do they often focus on first? What does Michelle suggest is more relevant for creating behavioral sustainability and why?
17. Give a specific example of how doing activities that feel good and are meaningful results in increased overall wellbeing.
18. How does Barbara Fredrickson’s **broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions** intersect with the ideas in this chapter? How do your own experiences with generating positive emotions through self-care behaviors compare or contrast with the ideas posited in Frederickson’s theory and the concepts discussed in this chapter?
19. Visit the Huffington Post website, “**The Third Metric.**” What is the definition of “the third metric?” What can this approach teach us about redefining success, and how can this relate to physical activity and self-care? Find an article to read in this column and discuss its relevance with an idea(s) in this chapter.
20. What are the two things Isla realized after creating a list of activities that she both enjoyed and felt energized by? How did this change her view of prioritizing self-care?

21. Why did Michelle suggest that Isla focus on one need? How did focusing on that need affect her? What did she use to assess the effects of her choices on that need? Have you ever done an assessment of something in your life using that type of system? If you were going to try to assess the influence of a self-care behavior on a daily need in your life, what need would you focus on and why?
22. What was Michelle's self-care conundrum? What choice did she make, and why? What effects did that choice have?
23. Why isn't "choosing to move" always the right choice? What other things might be better choices for you on any given day, and why?
24. How can we become more comfortable with the idea that sometimes we make the right choice, and sometimes we don't?
25. Has your MAP (Meaning, Awareness, and Permission) changed in any way since starting No Sweat, and if so, how?

Summary Questions



1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about using physical activity and self-care as an essential fuel to help propel you through your day?
4. What other kinds of self-care, other than physical activity, count as essential fuel for you?

Activities

1. Sustainable Cycle of Self-Care: Draw your own Sustainable Cycle of Self-Care. What are the roles that matter most to you now? Fill them in, and discuss how self-care acts as fuel for these specific essential roles.
2. Self-Care and You: Create a menu of self-care activities that you enjoy, and/or that sustain you—similar to the list that Isla created. What is on your list? What are the reasons that you don't engage in those behaviors more often? What kinds of changes could you make in your life to accommodate one or two of those activities more often? Is there anyone you'd enjoy doing them with?
3. Use Your Imagination: Pretend that you are facing a self-care conundrum about whether to engage in self-care (such as getting some fresh air, working out, or taking a nap) or to continue working on another part of your daily life that is important to you (such as taking care of children, finishing a project, or studying for a class.)
 - a. Create the context in which you choose to keep working. What is going on in your life? Who is involved? Why is it important to keep working? How do you feel about not picking self-care in this context?
 - b. Now create the context in which you choose self-care. What is going on in your life? Who is involved? Why is it important to pick self-care here? How do you feel about picking self-care in this context?
4. Get into groups of 3 or 4 to discuss and compare your answers. What do you feel are the most important take-aways from this conversation and chapter? Are there any people in your life you want to share these ideas with?

CHAPTER 9: SIX BIG IDEAS FOR LIFELONG SUSTAINABILITY

Discussion Questions

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1. Why was Michelle worried when she heard Emily’s excitement about exercising for almost an hour for the past six days? What did Michelle suggest would better drive Emily's sustained physical activity over time? Why did she talk about life being a moving target?
2. Big Idea 1: What is the difference between a learning and performance goal? What does research suggest is a better goal to have when a task is complex, and why? Do you have any goals you can identify as either learning or performance goals? If you were to decide to reframe a specific goal from one to the other, what differences in mindset and behavior might you experience? Do you think these changes might undermine your pursuit of this goal or support it?
3. Big Idea 2: How might your perspective on a behavior be different if you adopted this new behavior to achieve a short-term goal compared to having your goal be that you stick with it “for a lifetime”? What different types of ways would you approach it? Would you pick distinct types of activities within the area of this behavior based on which goal you had in mind? Do you think these two distinct goal mindsets would result in different reactions/feelings if you weren’t able to attain the specific plan you had made for a week?
 - a. Can you see the parallels between our behavioral choices based on this idea and our partner choice or mindset when we are dating someone versus partnering for life?

4. Big Idea 3: Why does Michelle suggest that sustainable self-care is an essential strategy? How does the Expanding Path of Well-Being function? Is this similar to other ideas you've read about in *No Sweat* and if so, what are they?
5. Big Idea 4: Why does Michelle suggest that it's strategic to integrate only one new behavior at a time?
6. Big Idea 5: Why is building consistency before quantity beneficial for life-long sustainability?
 - a. How did Michelle's son learn to ride a bike, and how does this process reflect the overall Strategy of building consistency first?
 - b. Why is starting small a smart idea when it comes to creating a life-long behavior?
7. Big Idea 6: What does Paulo Freire's empowerment-based learning method assume? In what ways is his method integrated into the (MAPS) sustainable behavior change framework in *No Sweat*?
8. Which of the Big Ideas did you know about already? Which ones surprised you? Do any concern you, and if so why? Which one seems to be the most important to you?

Summary Questions



1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about creating sustainable behavior change through these specific Big Idea Strategies?
4. In what other areas of your life could you benefit from having a Strategy focused on taking a life-long approach instead of just thinking in the short-term?

Activities

1. The Six Big Ideas and You: For this activity, you will be going through each of the Six Big Ideas to see how you can use them each to your advantage when creating a new behavior change you want to last. You will get into groups of 3-5 to share and compare your answers for each question.
 - a. 1: Use Learning Goals to get Intrinsic Motivation, Persistence, Resilience
 - i. Think about your previous experience with exercise and self-care. Were you more focused on learning goals or performance goals?
 - ii. Consider how you would go about creating a learning goal for yourself within some new area of your life, and write out what this learning goal would be.
 - b. 2: Begin With the End in Mind
 - i. Think about your current perception of physical activity. Do you see it—and have you seen it in the past—through a short-term or long-term lens? How would your approach be different if you shifted it to focus on the rest of your life? In what ways might you change your Meaning for exercise, and/or approach exercise as a self-care activity? What would you need to learn in order to sustain physical activity for the rest of your life?

- c. 3: Use Sustainable Self-Care as an Essential Strategy for Well-Being
 - i. Does being on the Expanding Path of Well-Being fit into your vision for your own life? What path are you on; what's it leading to? What are some of the ways that self-care as an intentional Strategy might help you better experience and sustain well-being? Does it feel important to make well-being a top personal project in your life, and why/why not? Have you been intentionally practicing self-care behaviors that help you feel and/or be your best?
- d. 4: Integrate One New Behavior at a Time
 - i. What has your past approach been to creating behavior change: are you someone who tries to tackle several changes at once, or do you go about it one change at a time? Have you ever tried to change more than one complex behavior at a time? If so, what did you experience? Are you still sustaining them? Think about what might be different in your behavior change experience and process if you only started one new behavior change at a time.
- e. 5: Strengthen the Core—Build Consistency Before Quantity
 - i. When you have approached behavior change in the past (whether with exercise or any other behavior), did you approach it in small steps that let you create consistency or did you take leaps and bounds to change as much as you could, as fast as you could? Discuss the differences in approach to, and potential results from, targeting consistency vs. quantity in two other types of behaviors.

f. 6: Bring Your Learning to Life

- i. How do you interpret the phrase that learners are “beings in the process of becoming?” How do you feel that this relates to other areas of your life and experiences? How does thinking about using this learning method make you feel, and why?
- ii. Recall a past experience with becoming physically active or another behavior you wanted to adopt. Based on Freire’s insights, what contexts in your life were influenced by your behavior and/or influenced it? In what ways did that behavioral process influence your beliefs, expectations, drive, personal responsibility, skills, and even who you are becoming?

CHAPTER 10: SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING

Discussion Questions



1. What got in Jule’s way when she hoped to start being more physically active? What is the bigger issue at play here?
2. What overpowers even our greatest of intentions for being physically active?
3. What determines which priorities we choose?
4. What does the concept of “negotiating” refer to in the context of this book? How does it relate to behavior sustainability?
5. What is “self-regulation” and why is it in a conversation about negotiation?
6. According to the studies referenced, through what mechanism does autonomous motivation and/or self-determined goals lead to more participation in physical activity?
7. Explain Michelle’s following idea: “self-regulation is meaningful motivation manifested.” Have you noticed this phenomenon in your own life, when you have had autonomous reasons for something (either related to exercise or something else in your life)?
8. Why does Michelle suggest that people need “sustainability training”?
9. Becoming a skilled self-care negotiator helps with what? Are you a skilled self-care negotiator, or do you know someone who is? In general, how can we recognize who is a skilled self-care negotiator and who is not?

10. What does Michelle mean by saying that we need to give physical activity “clout?”
What are some ways you can give physical activity or another self-care behavior clout?
11. What is the “continuum of success,” and why might it be better than having just a single goal to achieve in any given week?
12. What are some differences between a “roadblock” and a “challenge?” Which concept is more likely to drive sustainability and why? What science suggests that our reactions and thoughts about a “roadblock” or “barrier” *compared to a* “challenge” might be different?
13. How can we deal with the pushback we may get from those around us when we decide to change our behavior in ways that have some type of implications for their lives? What are some strategies for bringing our loved ones on board?
14. Describe the concept of “if-then” planning. How is it similar to an insurance policy? Have you ever made if-then plans and what type of result did you get?
15. Have you ever “danced with your challenges” before?” In what ways does this concept suggest we’ll benefit? In what areas of your life might this Strategy help you be more successful?
16. Why is it so crucial to listen to your body’s messages when it comes to being physically active? In what ways did Tanesha benefit because she was willing to ask and listen before she decided to leave for her scheduled exercise?
17. Why is it so crucial to evaluate yourself and your plans in nonjudgmental ways? Do you tend to do this or are you more of a harsh critic when things don’t go the way you had hoped or planned? Does your current approach support or undermine sustainable behavior change?
18. Why is the feedback you get from doing or not doing a behavior important to its long term sustainability?
19. What did Ari Weinzweig’s learn from having his injury? Have you ever had an injury that taught you something important about yourself and, if so, what?

20. Why is self-criticism often counter-productive as way to motivate yourself to sustain a behavior? How might the process of compassionately assessing your plans and progress change how you feel when things don't go as you planned? Have you tried this technique for exercising, or in other parts of your life? What were the results?
21. Visit the self-compassion exercises on [Dr. Kristin Neff's website](#). Pick an exercise to try or read other parts of her website. How does her work on self-compassion complement *No Sweat's* teachings about nonjudgmental self-assessment related to exercise and self-care? Why does being self-compassionate benefit motivation?

Summary Questions



1. What was the most important takeaway from this chapter for you?
2. What surprised you the most in this chapter?
3. What did you learn about negotiating challenges that arise in your daily life?
4. What are the three phases of negotiation that Michelle suggests are necessary for the sustainability training? How do these three phases complement each other for sustainable behavior change?
5. In what other areas of your life could it be beneficial to practice self-care, self-compassion, negotiation, and self-assessment?
6. Which of the Strategies do you feel you'd most benefit from learning?

Activities

1. Grow Your Own What Sustains Us, We Sustain Tree™:
 - a. Find a partner to work with. For this activity, each person will be filling out their own “what sustains us, we sustain” tree. As Michelle suggested in Chapter 9, sustainable behavior change begins in the middle of the tree. What experiences do you need in your day to better fuel you?
 - i. Fill in the middle part of the tree with those experiences. Circle the single experience you are most in need of having at this point in time.
 - ii. Now, fill out the top level with the areas of your life that you want this experience to fuel (e.g., the roles and responsibilities you most care about).
 - iii. Lastly, fill in the self-care behavior you believe is currently the one that will fuel you and your life in this way.
 - b. Now it’s time to experiment and learn! Let this tree guide your upcoming week and at the end of the week evaluate what happens.
 - c. Get together with your partner.
 - i. Discuss how your week went and whether this self-care behavior was your essential fuel for what matters most to you during the last week.
 - ii. If it helped, describe what you did, how you felt, and what was influenced. How noticeable were these things? Did it surprise you?
 - iii. If it didn’t help why do you think that is? What might you try instead? How would you change your tree to get an impact?

2. Chapter Worksheets and Planning Tools:

- a. Get into groups of 3 or 4. This week you'll be using the planning, negotiating and evaluation tools. Pick a behavior for the upcoming week, give it clout, schedule into your upcoming week and then use the following worksheets:
 - i. Weekly Physical Activity Negotiation Planning Worksheet
 - ii. Communication Planning Chart
 - iii. If-Then Planning Tool
 - iv. Weekly Compassionate and Nonjudgmental Evaluation and Recalibration
- b. At the end of this week get back together.
 - i. Discuss how your week went and whether this self-care behavior was your essential fuel for what matters most to you during the last week.
 - ii. Discuss whether the worksheets helped you and, if so, how?
 - iii. If things didn't go as you hoped, what did you learn and what might you do differently?
 - iv. Which worksheets and concepts seem most important for your sustainability training?

3. Other Chapter Activities

- a. Negotiation Strategy #6: Dance with your Challenges
 - i. Partner up with a friend. Take turns, with one person being the Devil's Advocate, and the other being the Exerciser. The person playing the Exerciser has plans to work out during the day, but the Devil's Advocate's job is to keep coming up with challenges that get in the way. The Exerciser has to then spontaneously think of ways to prevent and work around these challenges, to "dance" with them, so that they are still able to be active in some way. Then the two partners switch and reverse roles.

- ii. Discuss what this felt like and what you learned.
- b. Negotiation Strategy #7: Hesitate Before Your Respond to a Request
 - i. Partner up with a friend. Take turns, with one person playing the Requester, and one person playing the Exerciser. It is the Requester's job to ask the Exerciser to do a non-urgent and not outrageous favor. The Exerciser must hesitate and follow the rest of the hesitation guidelines, using their own responses that fit with the specific request.
 - ii. Then the two partners switch roles.
 - iii. Discuss what each person felt doing this.
 - iv. Repeat and do the full process again. This time Requester can gently try to persuade the Exerciser after they have given their answer. This push back will help the Exerciser strengthen their hesitation skills.)
- c. Negotiation Strategy #8: Listen to your Body's Messages
 - i. In this chapter, one of Michelle's clients has a conversation with her body to try to determine what it wants, and what kind of activity—if anything—is feasible for that moment in time. You will go through the same process the next time you are going to exercise. You don't have to speak out loud, but try closing your eyes and taking a few deep breaths, listening to what your body has to say and paying attention to how it feels. What are your instincts telling you that your body needs right now?

EPILOGUE: CHANGING YOUR BELIEFS, CHANGING YOUR BEHAVIOR, CHANGING YOUR LIFE

Discussion Questions

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1. In what way are our beliefs similar to the air we breathe? Does this make changing our behavior easy or challenging, why?
2. According to the opening quote by Ghandi, what is the seed out of which our behavior and destiny grow out of?
3. When she came to Michelle for coaching, Stephanie didn't actually need help with behavior change. What did she *really* need help with?
4. What can we all learn from Stephanie's experiences? How did her journey reflect *conscientization* and in what ways did it embody the MAPS process?
5. What leads to well-being?
6. Does Michelle advocate starting a second behavior right after the first one? Why/Why Not?
7. What two things make a behavior meaningful?
8. According to Michelle's MAPS process and philosophy, why might we need to revisit and/or redraw your MAPS for a self-care behavior like physical activity, at different points in our lives?
9. Are there any other behaviors or areas of your life where creating new MAPS would help you be more successful and/or happy? Which ones? Is this a good or bad time to consider this change given everything you've learned in *No Sweat*?

Summary Questions

1. What was the most important lesson from the entire book for you?
2. What surprised you the most in *No Sweat*?
3. What did you learn about the MAPS perspective? What is it, how does one follow it, and how does it change people's lives?
4. If you had to condense the message of this entire book down to a five-word phrase of Michelle's, what would it be and why?
5. Which part of MAPS do you feel like you need to work on in order to internalize the concepts and/or strategies?

Activity Questions

1. Break into pairs to discuss the key transitions in Stephanie's story:
 - a. Why exercise a chore for her?
 - b. What led her to transform physical activity from a chore into a gift?
 - c. Why did she stop exercising after exercise had already become a gift?
 - d. What causes physical activity to eventually metamorphose into essential fuel for Stephanie?
 - e. Ultimately, what did physical movement become for Stephane?

2. Reflection: Get into a group of 5 or 6 people. Think back to all you have learned, all of the activities you have completed, and all that you have gained or changed throughout your journey with *No Sweat*. Take some time to reflect on how you have changed as a person since you opened up to the first page of *No Sweat*. How are your beliefs, behaviors, thoughts, and actions different than they were when you started reading? How are they the same? What do you think was the most important change you saw in yourself throughout this process? Where they related to beliefs and feelings, Meanings, Permissions, and/or to your daily choices, and behavior? What stayed the same that you still want to change?
3. Helping Others: Stay in your groups. Discuss what you learned in this book that you could use to help others who are struggling to make behavior changes that they want to sustain. What do you know now about motivation and self-regulation and behavior that you didn't before, that you think can help individuals better succeed at lasting change?
4. How are you planning to integrate these ideas into your own life, the life of your family, and/or your patients, clients, consumers, or employees?

About the Author of *No Sweat*



MICHELLE SEGAR, PH.D., motivation scientist and author of *No Sweat! How the Simple Science of Motivation Can Bring You a Lifetime of Fitness* is a leading authority on what motivates people to choose and maintain healthy behaviors like physical activity. Pioneering new approaches to sustainable behavior change in the fitness, health, and wellness arenas, Segar is Director of the Sport, Health, and Activity Research and Policy Center (SHARP) at the University of Michigan, and Chair of the U.S. National

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