SELF-PRESERVATION and the art of the SELF-ASSESSMENT

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Self-Preservation

My definition:
“Doing what we’ve deemed essential for our individual lives and personal survival.”
Self-Assessment

My definition:

“A thought exercise in which we evaluate our past, present, and future with the mission being potential growth.”
The first time I saw these two concepts at work...

After I wrestled my addicted father to the ground.
A DUI changed my life…

After my 21 year old daughter was killed by a drunk driver.
According to MADD, 33% of those charged with a DUI will fail and get charged with another DUI.

The “system” is designed to hold people accountable by fining and punishing...
So I asked myself...

How can we compliment the system, regardless of cultural background, and truly make a difference in society?
They didn't wake up...

- ...And say lets go get a DUI, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, or POSSESSION charge.
- Instead, I feel they found themselves in “auto-pilot” mode.
- Automatic vs controlled thinking
Sell them on Self-Preservation

Right from the intake, I feel we need to be rebranding this process from a sanction to wake up call and opportunity.
Once the concept of Self-Preservation has been accepted, we can then begin to help them find their strengths and purpose.
But, how do we do this?

I wasn’t sure, so I researched addiction, anxiety, depression, the way the brain and body work, etc.
The AUTOMATIC v. CONTROL model

EVENT

POSITIVE
- TURNS ON SOMETHING GOOD
- TURNS OFF SOMETHING BAD

NEGATIVE
- TURNS ON SOMETHING BAD

THESE ALL BECOME PART OF OUR AUTOMATIC THINKING
**Johari Window**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPEN AREA - STUFF WE ALL KNOW ABOUT ME</th>
<th>BLIND AREA - STUFF ONLY YOU KNOW ABOUT ME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE AREA - STUFF ONLY I KNOW ABOUT ME</td>
<td>HIDDEN AREA - STUFF NO ONE, INCLUDING MYSELF, KNOWS ABOUT ME</td>
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**FEEDBACK**

- **SHARE/ASK**
So what are we going to talk about?

- Ways to make you happier, healthier, more aware, more informed, more in control and present in your own life.
- We’ll discuss the charge, what it cost, who was affected, and your plans moving forward.
I started to look at research...

That looked at our long-term neurological health and how to help to keep both our minds and bodies healthy and found a connection between our:

- Sleep
- Eating
- Exercise
- Learning
- Loving/Appreciation
Sleep

- Low hanging fruit of mental health
- The sleep cycle
- HGH
- When the brain cleans out waste
Eating

- We get out what we put in.
- Start with a good source of protein, add a complex carb, and add some textural “crunch” – Carb Hack
- Making healthy choices means not just giving our body good fuel, but it forces all of our systems to kick into gear.
- We feel better, look better, and begin to feel pride that we’re taking care of ourselves. Ego boost!
Exercise

- We know the benefits moving our body with purpose can have on stress, depression, and overall health.
- It is a great universal coping skill.
- But, it’s also something that, if done right, studies show shouldn’t take more than 10-20 min. a day.
- Unless of course you choose to extend it.
Learning

- Every time we learn something new or make some sort of association it’s like a lightning bolt in our brain that burns pathways and makes connections.
- It’s this kind of activity that keeps our brain and neurons active. The idea of learning something new everyday allows this new layer of construction in our brain to continuously be evolving.
- It keeps our neurological system actively producing and functioning which may help with cognitive decline as we age.
Loving/appreciation

- When we feel appreciation and show love regularly, it affects our decisions because we take into account how things may affect those things we love.
- It is something that we can control and something that can truly change the micro-environment we live in.
- Beyond that, it is a connection to our world that motivates us to be better and gives us something bigger than ourselves to consider.
- It’s the link to the mind, body, and soul connection.
I thought about the coming together...

And how those with strong family bonds seemed to be the healthiest and happiest. I thought of Sunday dinner.
I also took into consideration...

- My own experiences of facing adversity and tragedy and the point in which I looked back to find when it was that I was last truly happy and filled with childlike joy.
- I went back and began to experience the things I used to enjoy. All the things I pushed aside to focus on becoming part of society's machine.
- I now have an element in my life that I can enjoy if I get bored, something that has several angles in which to interact, and several ways to share. It lets me connect with others in a way that engages and breaks down walls of resistance in almost instantly either through their own nostalgia or their connection to mine.
- It becomes an example for them to instill something similar in their lives.
What do we talk about...

- Best thing that happened this week?
- Biggest struggle this week?
- Plans for the upcoming week?
- How was your week overall?
Best Thing

- Allows you to start with a praise report, something you can brag about, feel good about, something you’ve identified as beneficial.

- Something you can see as an example of something you want to duplicate.

- Asked to rate this on a scale of 1 to 10.
Biggest struggle

- Allows you to share your stresses and struggles with a group that has been taught the Johari Window concept.
- Knowing self-preservation, by sharing these struggles this way your own ego starts to kick in and even if you have no plans to change these things, that primal side of you isn’t going to be comfortable with these on our plates for long.
- Asked to rate this on a scale of 1 to 10.
Plans for week

- Identifying the biggest thing or things we need to do this week, sets goals, uses the power of the ego to increase the chances we’ll do them, and sends us off in the right, controlled direction.
- Asked to rate this on a scale of 1 to 10.
But, also ask sleeping, eating, exercising

- We ask them about how they’ve been sleeping, eating, and exercising this week. Not to pressure or criticize, we let the self-preservation work, and instead simply have the discussion out loud about where they feel they are with these elements of their lives.
- Typically they’ll identify where they can improve or need to focus.
- Asked to rate these on a scale of 1 to 10.
How was your week overall?

- By beginning to quantify one's overall week, we can gain a lot of truly amazing insights.
- We get a big picture rating of how they feel overall – with all the ups and downs – and in time begin to see patterns.
- Asked to rate this on a scale of 1 to 10.
First, our brains have a love for numbers and connecting the dots.

Using this classic motivational tool to quantify each of these areas, the client can now go back and ask,

- “What would it take for that to be a 10?” or
- “Why was that thing rated a 10?”

The answers become either a to do list or something we can appreciate more.
Putting it all together:

- Understanding self-preservation meant:
  - Success was something duplicated.
  - Struggles were things not kept on their plate long.
  - Plans set them in a chosen direction.
  - Health related items are being thought about as controllable elements that affect their quality of life.
  - Rating their week and asking why created appreciation and to do lists.
Add in the fact that...

...actively listening and offering appropriate feedback after hearing everyone else's self-assessment each week creates bonds and builds a skillset that is “duplicatable” in the real world, and because of that we are seeing quantifiable growth.
It's at this point...

That we have someone who is truly ready and willing to learn something new. It's here that we can introduce our educational portion of the group.
I've branded this part of my group process “Thought Exercises” and sell them on thinking about how this week's exercise for the rest of the week to see how it relates to your life versus an “educational lesson” that they may associate with something else and possibly shut down.

I like to leave the ball in their hands.
Take it or leave it. No problem either way.

It’s in this way that I feel:
No longer will our lessons on the effects of substances on the body, stages of change, or healthy coping skills fall on deaf ears. We’ve gone for most from resistance to receptive.
If we sell them right from the intake,

And hook them with the concepts, use the weekly self-assessments like training wheels to grow with a familiar process to get used to, we can then watch and take note as they begin to adjust their lives to become happier, healthier, and more prosocial individuals.
First, as we begin to wrap up...

I have experienced a few crazy byproducts from using this Self-Preservation and Self-Assessment approach...

**MADD**
- SUCCEEDED: 66.6%
- FAIL: 33.3%

**SELF-PRESERVATION**
- SUCCEEDED: 95.2%
- FAIL: 4.8%

* LIMITED TIME/PARTICIPANT STUDY
Second, it's very common for my court ordered clients to approach to their completion date and to ask me if when they're done, is it possible for them to keep coming?!
To that I say...

Of course!
Because...

If it'll keep one kid from having to get physical with their using father or one father from having to get that phone call telling him that he's lost his daughter, then I know we're onto something.
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, THOUGHTS?

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