

Little Things Mean a Lot (Transcription)

Hi this is Dr. Ron Kaiser with your March 2014 podcast from The Mental Health Gym. This month's podcast is titled "Little Things mean A Lot". Anybody who was around sixty years ago may recall that there was a popular song to that name sung by a popular singer of that time Kitty Kallen and it was really designed to discuss how little things mean a lot in terms of relationships.

The first verse goes "blow me a kiss from across the room, say I look nice when I'm not. Touch my hair as you pass my chair, little things mean a lot". It goes on with similar verses and somehow that's one of the songs from my youth that stuck with me and I've tried to apply some of those principles not just in terms of relationships but also in relation to how I view myself and how I view change.

And over the years I've found that there are little things that I can do that aren't major projects that can really enhance growth and change and feeling better about myself. And this is something that I've tried to introduce in working with others. Namely that a major change or a major project is not all that one has to be thinking about. In the growth and developmental process little things, little changes that we can make and little steps in the right direction ultimately add up and become big steps. Add up and lead to the kind of change and the kind of personal growth that we are seeking.

So the purpose of this podcast is to really encourage you to be able to make little changes to not say that something isn't worth doing if it's not a major change and just really try to make these little changes that take little effort but add up to big results. I can give few examples from my life. First let's look at the health and fitness area.

About five years ago actually, almost exactly five years ago in 2009 my primary doctor became a hospitalist and no longer saw private patients. So I had to make a switch. I had choices that I could make at that time and I asked people whom they were using and so on. I didn't make the most financially than official switch from my stand point but I did wind up with a physician who thinks in the same realm as I do.

He's the type of physician who when I have my annual physical will ask me you know, how many days a week I eat meat or how many days a week I eat egg or when I do my cardio workout at the gym do I wind up sweating, things of this nature. Things that from aside from showing me that he cares about some of the same things I do, also makes me accountable. I wanna be able to answer in an honest healthy way when he asks me about health.

Similarly somewhere along the line I learned from somebody a technique of weight loss sort of without going on a diet. Basically this person told me that after breakfast he just drinks water during the course of the day as far as beverages. You know he eats normally but drinks water during the course of the day and I've kind of looked at that as a small change that I could that essentially I kind of during the course of the day limit myself to three cups of coffee which is considered to be pretty healthy actually and that's spread out between breakfast and sometimes during the course of the day I may take half a cup or sometimes a whole bit I limit myself to three and perhaps a glass of wine at dinner.

Any other drinking beverages that I do is limited to water. I also became a little more conscious of ordering salads at lunch time. Again not a major diet but just basically eating little healthier vegetable salads, fruit salads things of this nature and I found that over time that I really feel less inclined to eat heavier kinds of things.

And another change that I've made is at work. A lot of times some people that go on vacation, they bring back candy or some other kinds of treats from the area which they've been visiting and typically they leave it in the kitchen at our suite of offices and generally if something was there I would take it.

My clue was is something was there and if there is I better take that piece of candy. You know because if I come back after I've seen a couple more patients and then go in the kitchen it may not be there. So my clue was, was it there? I made a switch in my thinking and came up with this brilliant idea, don't take it unless I'm hungry. And since I eat three meals a day I'm rarely hungry in between meals. And I find that it's really not that hard to bypass treats that are there that I don't really crave. And funny thing happened, in the five years since I've been with this physician while I never considered myself to be over weight in any particular way but I lost about 16 or 18 pounds.

Now part of that is also bit tied to the fact that as I've lost weight I've also been a lot more religious about maintaining my involvement at the gym. I used to go through blocks of time where if I got busy or something like that, that might be an excuse for not working out. That no longer is an excuse. So that's been real helpful. Another area in which I've made small changes and I'm sure some of you have in same way, has been to start paying more of my bills online. Now that's saves on stamps, it assures that I'm gonna get paid I never get dinged for a late charge on a bill that I have to pay online.

And it saves little bits of money, not gonna make me wealthy but it puts a few more dollars in my pocket by the end of the year. Also as I thought about it, recognized that I was getting some monthly subscriptions online that I was passively allowing to keep happening. For example we generally, my wife and I generally like to see the best movies in a theater, we just kind of like the experience, we like larger

screen and so on. So there was no advantage of having a subscription series for movies that we weren't really using. Again small change but it adds up. And one other area that I think is worth mentioning is general lifestyle.

At some point and I'm not really sure what the motivation for it was I started getting up 15 minutes early. Now I come from a generation that still reads newspapers rather than getting all news online. And by getting up 15 minutes early I am able to read the newspaper and also kind of to go along what I mentioned before I also check my bank statements online because I find that every couple of months or so I forget that something is being automatically deducted from my cheque book to be paid online. And I am able to catch it in time.

Fortunately I usually have enough money to cover the thing that I forgot. But sometimes I find it in the pending transactions and I am able to usually correct it the same day. Move some money over and take care of the payment. Now those again aren't major changes but they enable to get started in the right frame of mind in the kind to kind of ease into the day and to not have to look at the paper when its old news when I come home and can use the time better for other kinds of things. Other people have told me that they get up you know 15 minutes early because they like to get into the work place little earlier, get settled in and not feel rushed. That's not a real motivating factor for me but easing into the day is.

So I hope by mentioning a few of these thing I've given you some ideas of ways you can make small changes. Little things that mean a lot in your life, and those little changes become self reinforcing. In other words, if I know that I'm weighing less now than I did in a few years ago, I wanna make that work. If I know that can I get to the gym on a regular base I don't tolerate excuses for that. If I am able to

handle my needs by just getting up 15 minutes earlier and not rushing or pressuring myself, that really works for me.

So these are some kinds of things that help me to feel better about myself and I think that small changes that you make will help you to feel better about yourself. And if you wanna apply this to relationships I think that you can still download the music of Kitty Kallen singing little things mean a lot and there actually is a male version of it that I believe was Willie Nelson sang from the standpoint of the person who is across the room and is responding in his own way to the little things that she's singing about.

Anyway I hope that this gives you a little bit of food for thought and I especially hope that it will help you to see that making changes does not have to be a major project, a major commitment to doing some irrevocable kinds of things that change your life style totally but it enables you to creep up on changing your life style in ways that will be rewarding to you. This has been Dr. Ron Kaiser with your March 2014 podcast from the mental health gym. I would love to hear from you to let me know some of the changes that you have made either in the past or as a result of perhaps a little bit inspiration from this podcast and of course I hope you will visit our website at The Mental Health Gym on a regular basis.