



ENCOURAGING PERSEVERANCE IN CLIENTS

When only 10% of the population regularly exercises vigorously, and only 15% regularly exercises moderately, the so-called “fitness boom” isn’t making much noise. Statistics show that within six months of beginning a fitness program, 50% of all new exercisers will quit.

As Body Sculpting™ instructors, one of our goals is to retain clients. To do this, a basic understanding of how to motivate people and help them maintain interest is crucial. We also need to be aware of the fear many experience in a group situation -- fear of humiliation, embarrassment, or failure. It’s human nature to avoid “performance or socially evaluative situations” in which people are “socially judged or assessed by others in a public or semi-public situation”. In other words, we don’t want to look stupid in public. Yet, we cannot help but observe and, sometimes, judge others. Simply being aware of these tendencies goes a long way to creating a safe and comfortable environment.

None of us blatantly humiliate or embarrass our students. But if you think about it, it’s easy to say something we think is innocent, but the people on the other side of the water bottle may hear something completely different. “If you can’t do regular push-ups, do the easy ones on your knees.” “You’re not tired already, are you?” Once while subbing, I referred to the weights I was using (5 pounds) as “real light ones”. Looking around, I realized that 95% of the class were using the same weights. And it was a struggle for many of them. I felt that what I said was a gigantic put-down, although certainly unintentional. Always emphasize the positive - say, “do this” instead of “don’t do that”. Learn from your mistakes. Great instructors didn’t get that way overnight.

The Process Is More Important Than The Outcome.

BY EMPHASIZING WHAT IS POSSIBLE FOR ONLY A FEW, BUT UNLIKELY FOR MOST, YOU ARE PRACTICALLY GUARANTEEING DISAPPOINTMENT.

Despite what the media bombards us with, most people are not going to have “six-pack” abs or wear a string bikini, no matter how many crunches they do. It’s difficult to alter these expectations, but you can help your students set realistic goals. It’s more realistic to say that after several weeks of class, your jeans will feel looser and that you may drop down a dress size or two (like most of you have as clients-turned-instructors). Set your clients up for success, not failure.

Emphasize other benefits of fitness -- increased physical strength, more energy, better mood, better sleep, sense of accomplishment, better overall health, etc. These are far more achievable goals for most people.

Offer the encouragement your clients need to keep going. Emphasize the process, instead of the outcome. Applaud how hard they work out and tell them you are proud of their efforts. Even if they don't see a "perfect" body after six months, they will realize all the other positive benefits of exercise. Your students should be amazed at **WHAT THEIR BODIES CAN DO AND HOW GOOD THEIR BODIES AND MINDS FEEL**. Get them to that point, and they'll be hooked!

Why do people stick with things?

It boils down to:

1. The activity is FUN.
2. It allows an opportunity for mastery.
3. It reinforces a person's sense of competency.
4. It provides a chance to make friends
(which will happen naturally when process, not outcome, is stressed).
5. It increases a person's self-esteem

People are far more motivated to continue when their progress is compared to their past performance. If you see improvement, speak up. In their eyes, you're the expert and your evaluation means something. You can always find something positive to comment on. Focus on things that are directly under the client's control such as their outstanding efforts to attempt a particularly difficult move, or the dedication to attend class at 8:30 a.m. when bed may be preferable. Commenting on the "noticeable" improvements from the hips down, where it is first and foremost to happen, is a great compliment. Think of how good you will feel by making someone else feel good about themselves!

When it comes to addressing incorrect/bad form, again look for opportunities to bring attention to correct/good form. Make eye contact with the person who needs to tweak something, smile, and emphasize what you're looking for. If you're making the rounds through class, be extremely subtle when correcting an individual. Be sensitive to her sense of pride and ego. Don't single out the same person over and over again. If the problem persists, you can always have a brief chat after class. Your client will appreciate your discretion, and your concern. Remember how it was when you went through training and how the certifying instructor corrected your form? Listen and learn from these pointers and incorporate them into your teaching. That's what "making the rounds" is all about.

Feel free to use your own experiences to let your class know that everyone has moments when they didn't perform as well as they had hoped. You were a beginner once too -- share a silly mistake with them. Tell them the exercise that's hardest for you so that they'll appreciate that you, too, struggle.

As a Body Sculpting™ instructor, you have the opportunity to really make a tremendous difference in someone's life. If you are able to nudge someone from the "I know this is supposed to be good for me but I still hate it" stage to the "I love moving my body and feeling strong and confident" stage, you have succeeded. **CONGRATULATIONS!**

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