



Secondary Gain Worksheet.

Secondary Gain. How we gain benefits from running disease and illness.

Secondary Gains are the “benefits” people get from NOT overcoming an emotional issue. For many people who are stuck/closed, secondary gains are an important mechanism in why they stay stuck/closed. Secondary gain is usually not something people are consciously aware of e.g. generally the person is not being consciously manipulative or faking the distress/anxiety, it is still real. Secondary gain does not mean having the problem is positive for the person overall, just that there are some benefits to it.

So we acknowledge that behaviour does serve a purpose, meet a need, and that it is emotionally fitting somehow. This fittingness of human behaviour rings true no matter how painful and destructive the behaviour and its consequences are.

- Secondary Gains are the “benefits” people get from NOT overcoming an emotional issue.
- That behaviour does serve a purpose, meet a need.
- Secondary gain is usually not something people are consciously aware of.
- Secondary gain does not mean having the problem is positive for the person overall, just that there are some benefits to it.

Eg:

- Person is scared of succeeding almost as much as they are scared of failing. Person knows making changes to their work process would give them a chance of succeeding on a much bigger scale than their current level of success. They don't make the changes they know are likely to help because when they get started on the changes they get a spike in anxiety about succeeding.

- Person is putting off their life (e.g. putting off dating) until they lose weight. If dating is anxiety provoking, then not losing weight is reinforced.
- Person's partner does not leave them while they are depressed or suicidal. Staying depressed/suicidal is reinforced.
- Person is scared of letting people close to them. They act outlandishly and people withdraw from them. Acting outlandishly is reinforced.

People can learn alternative coping for getting their needs met rather than staying stuck. This helps the stuck person and their significant others.

Significant others can learn helpful ways of dealing with illness/stuckness behaviours that help everyone get less trapped and keep more self-respect.

Identifying the problem is likely to help solve/improve the problem.

Go over these two lists and see what resonates with you. Write the ones that do on another sheet of paper.

List 1

The Benefits of Suffering: "Secondary Gains" Associated with Illness.

1. (False) power and control
2. (False) self being built up by knocking another self-down (e.g., domination, aggression, acting out, and passive-aggressive stratagems)
3. (Unhealthy) selfishness and greed
4. (Unhealthy) laziness and resigning oneself to helplessness
5. (Negative) attention, thinking oneself invisible, useless, or valueless
6. (Negative) acting out unrealistic fears (phobias) and anxieties, including being alone, unloved, unwanted, rejected, not good enough, worthless, undeserving, disliked, and stupid
7. Self-hatred and attacking oneself or another modelling unacceptable qualities
8. Punishing oneself or another, or setting up and even inviting another to punish you or punish them, to obtain relief from real or imagined guilt or shame

9. To degrade oneself, another, life, or God as a re-creation of abusive trauma, neglect, wilful cruelty, degradation, and humiliation.
10. Misguided attachments (i.e., "have to's"), tied to pleasing someone's performance standard and obtaining love, or to avoid displeasing someone's performance standard and losing love
11. To think oneself as important, "special", indispensable, or irreplaceable
12. To "look good", or at least not "look bad", in one's own eyes, in significant other's eyes, and in the world's eyes
13. Addictively, to obtain the mood change desired (i.e., obtain an adrenalin rush / "buzz" or create high drama/personal soap opera)
14. An overcompensation to "prove" oneself strong, competent, and confident, in the face of "believing" the exact opposite
15. To demonstrate love, loyalty, and honour to a significant other by taking on a characteristic malady, disorder, or dysfunctional attitude or behaviour of theirs
16. Avoidance of conflict, yelling, domination, and aggression
17. To hide real feelings from oneself and/or others out of an earlier self-protective decision
18. To feel something / anything coming out of psychic and sensory numbness, emptiness, worthlessness, and deadness
19. Avoidance of unwanted or disliked responsibilities as well as unacceptable consequences of one's irresponsible actions and unrealistic attitudes
20. Irresponsible ventilating, dumping, and displacing internalized tension / stress that he or she doesn't know how else to let go of, channel, or transform
21. To justify acting out an old grudge, injustice, unfairness, or perceived wrong (i.e., revenge and "payback" motives)
22. Legitimize an invested belief in the unfairness and injustice of people, institutions, the world, God, etcetera
23. To justify and legitimize blaming, finding fault, complaining, criticizing, being snobbish, rude, uncaring, insensitive, and "laying on" guilt or shame

24. To obtain sympathy, pity, and others feeling sorry for him or her
25. Proves one "wrong", "bad", "a failure", "incompetent", and "a nothing" or proves one "right" about being so "wrong"

List 2

The Costs of Well-Being: "Secondary Losses" Associated with Becoming Well.

1. People will want something from you that you may not be willing to give
2. People, especially those who feed on offering pity, sympathy, misery, and suffering over another's problems, lose interest in you and no longer spend time with you
3. People, especially those who habitually think themselves the downtrodden of the earth, will be jealous, envious, displeased, and angered
4. People, especially those who feel insecure, will think you are acting superior and elite due to your success
5. People, acting in accord with their own attachments, will misconstrue your values, intentions, commitments, attitudes, and actions by drawing erroneous conclusions
6. Tolerate losing so-called "friends" and associates who cannot accept, agree, approve, appreciate, or acknowledge your life functioning this well
7. The cost does mean to give up and release all of your best excuses, cop-outs, lies, half-truths, misleading omissions, justifications, intellectualizations, and "good reasons" for life not adaptively functioning
8. The cost does mean to give up and release petty grudges, past wrongs, injustices, and unfairness's in triggering abused reactions
9. The cost does mean to give up and release the negative attention and agreement over your life and the world not functioning
10. The cost does mean to recognize and give up what does not function or serve in life adaptively working with reality
11. The cost does mean relinquishing special privileges at home and work, as well as with family members, friends, and associates

12. The cost does mean to give up and release significant anxieties, upsets, fears, frustrations, depression, and other unprocessed, somaticized, or behaviourally acted out emotions, by learning and consistently practicing constructive ways to help process feelings "through" one's guts, body, mind, and spirit

13. The cost does mean to give up and release significant unrealistic, irrational ideas and beliefs

14. The cost does mean to recognize and give up what is basically irresponsible, including unenlightened selfishness, "special interests", and the "seven deadly sins" of (false) pride, greed, lust, (acted out) anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth

15. The cost does mean to recognize and give up major sources of destructive distress along with unworkable attachments, animosities, and ignorance's

16. The cost does mean to tolerate feeling awkward and uncomfortable with highly unfamiliar healthy, successful attitudes and behaviour

17. The cost does mean to recognize and give up dysfunctional coping strategies such as doubt, denial, avoidance, escape attempts, going unconscious, suppression, not remembering, and not caring

18. The cost does mean to face oneself and find the means to resolve and complete remaining old problems as well as handle new challenges

19. Be willing to take responsibility for what you have control over in your life, including all of your words and actions (with rare exceptions) in addition to some of your thoughts

20. Be willing to take necessary actions to clean up unworkable aspects of your life, as well as transform your life into a state of being you are committed to live

21. The cost does mean to accept and learn to tolerate the realistic idea that nearly nothing can prevent you from taking the next scary, risky step in creating and claiming your True Self and taking your true power

22. Be willing to become tolerant and accepting of other peoples' choices that are unworkable and destructive, without "carrying" them, rescuing them, or making their lives fundamentally "your business"

23. Learn and practice daily whatever verbal, assertive, limit-setting, emotional coping and environmental management skills needed

24. Be willing to become firmly intolerant of irresponsible / destructive attitudes and behaviours, abusive behaviour, "injustice collecting", and all forms of harm to any living thing

25. Be willing to tolerate genuine enthusiasm, zest, and exuberance in addition to stretch beyond your beliefs and attitudes in regard to how significant a contribution, service, and lasting gift you your beliefs and attitudes in regard to how significant a contribution, service, and lasting gift you can offer

Now take some big breaths and ask yourself –

“What is staying closed/sick giving me?”

*Sit quietly with eyes closed to allow your body wisdom to show you. There may be multiple reasons so stay open and then write them down.

Feel the emotions that may come up with them. Write them down also.

That’s great take as long as you require to get all the answers.

Now that you have the answers to what you are gaining from staying sick/stuck ask yourself.

“What might change for the worst if I open up/healed?”

Write the answer down.

Then ask.....

“What does it cost me to stay closed/sick?”

“How will it benefit me, to open up/get well?”

“How am I going to feel when I open up/get well?”

“What will change for the better when I open up/get well?”

And now.....

“How can I still get the benefits and be free from the patterns?”

*Take some big breaths when you have finished. Now feel the ground under your feet, still taking some deep breaths. Relax.

Wow great job, well done. How does that feel?

I know when I realized that I broke bones in my body to have some quiet time from my brother and his antics I was shocked. Shocked that I could do that to myself but more so how powerful I was. That was the beginning of truly knowing I had power and that I could use that power to create really positive change in my life.

And so it is.

I do hope this has helped you to see some patterns that have been playing out in your life and that maybe this is the step to your freedom.

In love and Gratitude to you.

Mandy..x.

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