



From the Heart ~ Carole Lewis

How can we Live Life Right Here, Right Now this year. This is the only 2013 we will experience so let's make it the best year we have ever had. The year 2012 was to be my year and in many ways it was a great year, but weight-wise it was not what I had hoped.

In January 2012, my trainer, Donna Roberts, issued a challenge to all her clients to fast from desserts for 12 weeks. Our goal was to put \$5 in a jar each week and at the end of 12 weeks, match the \$60 in our jar, resulting in each client donating \$120 to **As Our Own**, a ministry that rescues girls from the sex slave trade. I signed up, but I was not wholehearted in my endeavor. On the other hand, my friend Diane Hawkins signed up, gave up desserts and faithfully put her \$5 in the jar each week. Before the 12 weeks were over, Diane realized that the Lord was delivering her from her sugar addiction. Diane is stronger today and at her weight goal after years of struggling, because of her addiction to sugar.



On the other hand, I halfway did the challenge and for the most part, maintained my weight at 152 all year. I wrote my check to **As Our Own** at the end of 12 weeks, but I didn't reap the personal benefit because I didn't fully commit.

I don't need to tell you how hard my life is because most of you also have a hard life. What I can tell you is that eating irresponsibly doesn't make a hard life better. Even though we had a six-week holiday session after our classes were over in November, I somehow shut down all resolve after going to Johnny's Oncologist on November 11th. We were told that his prostate cancer has spread from his bones to his liver. I didn't bother to call out for help; I just started eating what I wanted and quit logging on My Fitness Pal. I continued this cycle through Thanksgiving and Christmas, while knowing there was coming a time real soon when I would have to face the music.

Well, that time finally came on December 31, at 8:00 a.m. It was New Year's Eve and I was leaving for a wellness week on January 4th. Imagine my shock and dismay when the scale showed that I had gained 10 pounds! I immediately reached out to my trainer and said, "Donna, I have sinned and gained 10 pounds, all the while telling you I was doing fine!" Donna encouraged me to begin writing down my food, which I did that day. I am thrilled that I have already lost the 10 pounds I gained and now I am ready to lead my new FP4H class, which begins soon.

Matthew 6:33:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

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If this still happens to me, I am quite sure that it also happens to you. There are a few questions we must answer in the affirmative if 2013 is to be our year.

Questions like....

- Am I tired enough of this pattern to change my ways?
- Do I really believe that 2013 can be my year?
- Am I willing to do the hard work and call out for help when I fall?
- Will I commit to pray for God’s strength before I take that first bite?

If we can answer yes to the questions above, we can be sure that we experience our best year ever. I have taken the **As Our Own** challenge again this year and already have my jar out with the first \$5 in it! I am expecting victory—and victory will be mine—as long as I pray before I eat and then *Do The Next Right Thing!* I am RESOLVED; how about you?

“No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that when I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize”. 1 Corinthians 9:27

Special Note from Carole

My trainer, Donna Roberts, has listened to many of you who have asked how you can work with a trainer where you live? Donna has a brand new website, www.fitabove50.com. Check it out! Donna has featured me and another FP4H member, Linda Smith, modeling the exercises. You will be amazed at the low cost for this fabulous training you will receive. The best part is we will all feel as we are getting strong together. Finally, you are going to be able to do strength training that you can afford and do in your own home. Check out the video where Donna interviewed me about the benefits I have received over the 3 years I have been working with her. You can find it on www.fitabove50.com.

Valentine’s Special



Plus



= **\$10**
Great bundle price!

21 oz. Water Bottle
MSRP \$12

Mousepad
MSRP \$4



Fun & Motivational Ideas for Your Class

- **Exercise Minute.** A quick way to add in exercise – something doable in class.
- **Five reasons to lose weight.** Use paper and pen to write down five reasons you want to lose weight. Mix them up and hand back out to the class. Have class members read aloud. No one will know whose they are reading, but may see that others are there for the same reason as they are there. Builds connection.
- **Victory Notes.** Celebrate small victories by writing down a victory you had for the week and putting it in the victory jar. Periodically draw out a slip or two and share with the class for encouragement.
- **Mile Jar.** For every mile, you receive a chip or marble to add to a jar. At the end of class, add up the class miles. Maybe include competition between classes.
- **Assign a “helper”** to new members or strugglers you see in your class.
- **Recruit a Note of Encouragement Person** in your class to encourage other members.
- **Fruit Basket Give Away.** Have class members bring a piece of fruit to class. The person, who lost the most weight for the week, knew their verse, etc., leaves with a basket of fruit.
- **Canned Goods Drive.** At the end of session or halfway, each member brings in canned goods equal to their weight loss. Canned goods will be donated to a food bank chosen by the class.

Stuck in a Running/Walking Rut?

Start a walking book club. Each month (or however often you decide), choose a book to read and discuss during your walks. The miles will fly by as you dissect every chapter.

Reverse your route. It’s amazing how different everything looks from the opposite direction.

Meet your partner/group at a favorite breakfast spot. Start and end your run or walk there. The new scenery will boost your motivation and the good food at the end doesn’t hurt!

Pray during your run! The time will fly by.

Don’t Just Sit There...Stand Up!

Standing burns twice as many calories as sitting. It may also increase “good” cholesterol and stimulate enzymes that burn fat. The rates of obesity and heart disease also double for people who sit for longer periods of time. Ways to get on your feet: Stand up while you’re on the phone, at children’s sports events, at your desk, or take frequent breaks. Hide the remote and get up to change channels.



Fit Tips

Don't Skip the Stretch!

Vicki Heath

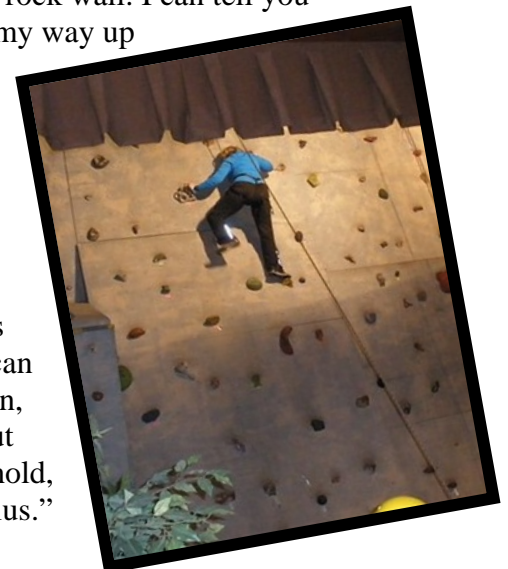
vicki.heath@firstplace4health.com



Has the winter weather got you climbing the walls? I have been known to climb a few walls in my time.

Power of the Plus

While I was attending Weigh to Wellness Week at Sandy Cove Ministries retreat center, I had my opportunity. With both excitement and a little fear, I took on the challenge of climbing the rock wall. I can tell you right now it is way harder than it looks! I started out pretty strong and made my way up about 15 feet, when I started to get really tired. I felt as though I had used every muscle group just to make the first 15 feet. I had about 20 more feet to go before the top. Pushing on, I came to a spot where I just could not find a handhold. Every hold I tried was just a little out of reach for me. I told the Lord, "If you had only made me just one inch taller, I could reach this next peg." No matter where I positioned myself, I could not get to the next handhold. Then I remembered something I had learned at a Body & Soul Fitness workshop—our muscles have this little thing called a "plus". The plus happens when you reach out your arm or leg, or whatever part, as far as you can and then when it's at the fullest extension from the joint or point of connection, you give it just a little more—that's the plus! One more time I reached up, but this time I gave it the plus and it happened! I was able to reach the next handhold, pull myself up and keep going! I experienced what I call the "power of the plus." We all have it in us. The power of the plus causes us to be victorious and to believe in and act on what God says is true about us.



In that moment I realized (again) the importance and power of stretching, both in our spiritual lives and in our physical lives. The Lord will often place us in situations in which he is stretching our ability to trust Him. When we turn to Him we'll not only experience His presence, but we'll also find out that God is more than able to provide for us in any situation. The Apostle Paul felt God's stretching throughout his Christian life. In fact, you might even call Paul the flexible Apostle. Listen to how he describes in a letter he wrote to his friends in the city of Philippi his life and ability to trust God.

"...for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:11-13

Paul flexed with whatever situation the Lord brought into his life. The Lord would stretch him and instead of depending on himself, he would turn to the only One who could carry the situation. With every new situation, his relationship with the Lord grew closer and he could do more, knowing the Lord would take care of him.

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The same is true in our physical bodies as we stretch and take time to develop our flexibility. Stretching and flexibility training is often the most neglected part of fitness, yet it can have the biggest long term impact on your overall health and well-being.

To Stretch or Not To Stretch

When people are considering how to achieve their weight loss goals, stretching is not usually their first thought. Everyone thinks of cardio first. After all, cardio plays a big role in increasing our metabolism and burning calories. It's not unusual for women to work with great intensity during one of our workouts, only to leave quickly at the end without stretching because they simply don't have time. That's true especially for younger women whose muscles respond quickly. But as we age, we begin to see the benefits of stretching, flexibility and relaxation training.

In your enthusiasm to start working out, you may be tempted to skip the stretch, thinking that stretching is a nice thing to do but really not necessary. However, stretching warms up your muscles, lengthens them, and gets them ready for action. You will run faster, throw better, jump higher, sit taller, and feel better with a good stretch. Consider adding some of the benefits of stretching to your overall fitness plan:

Promotes and maintains range of motion in joints and improves posture. When the muscles in the lower back are tight, it's hard to even stand up straight. When a muscle is lengthened through stretching, it exerts a greater torque on a joint to help you excel while you exercise. You'll be amazed at how a couple of minutes of stretching your back will improve your overall workout (and prevent injury).

Offsets age-related stiffness. Let's face it! As we age, it becomes harder to move. I cannot sit in one position as I could when I was younger. After just 15 minutes of sitting at my computer my legs start to stiffen up. Some people are naturally more flexible, but as we age, we all lose some of our flexibility. Flexibility is primarily due to one's genetics, gender, age and level of physical activity. We may lose flexibility and range of motion in our joints as we age, but most loss is a result of inactivity rather than the aging process. The less active we are, the less flexible we are likely to be.

Enhance physical and mental relaxation. Stretching not only helps to release your muscle tension, but also gives you time to clear your mind as you enter back into your day. Relaxation is a state in which we experience a calm mind and a tension-free body. It is essential to our health and well-being. Most of the time we are wound up so tight that we think tension is a normal state of existence. Intentional relaxation of the muscles gives us a sense of well-being. When we make a conscious effort to relax through techniques such as stretching accompanied by reflection, prayer and exercise, it helps the mind to become calm and the body to become loose in addition to lowering blood pressure, reducing arteriosclerosis (thickening of the arterial walls), slowing down brain cell deterioration and slowing age-related memory loss).

Stretch for success

Before stretching, take a few minutes to warm up in order to prevent injuries to your cold muscles. Begin with a simple, low-intensity warm-up, such as easy walking while swinging the arms in a wide circle. Spend at least 5 to 10 minutes warming up prior to stretching.

As with each part of your personal exercise program, we'll apply the F.I.T.T. formula to help you determine the best stretching routine.

- **F**requency – Stretch every day. Because stretching does not take much time at all and does not exhaust the muscle group, stretching can be done every day. Stretch before and after each workout.
- **I**ntensity - Gentle muscle stretching to the point of tension, never pain.

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- **Time** - 10 to 15 minutes to stretch all major muscle groups; holding each stretch for each muscle 10 to 30 seconds. Start at the top of the body and working your way down to the feet.
- **Type** - General stretching routine that stretches all major muscle groups and connective tissue.

If you want to maximize your stretch and avoid painful injuries, follow these simple guidelines. When performing any stretch:

- Start each stretch slowly, exhaling as you gently stretch the muscle and inhale as you release the stretch.
- Try to hold each stretch for at least 10 to 30 seconds.

You will also want to avoid these common mistakes and misconceptions:

- Don't bounce a stretch. This is called ballistic stretch and can be effective for some elite athletes, but static stretching is much gentler on the muscle groups. Bouncing gives you a longer stretch, but can tear muscles. Statically holding a stretch is more effective and there is less risk of injury.
- Don't stretch a muscle that is not warmed up.
- Don't strain or push a muscle too far. If a stretch hurts, ease up.
- Don't hold your breath during the stretch.

Fitting stretching into a compressed schedule

Time constraints keep many people from stretching. Some complain they just don't have time to stretch; others hurry out of their fitness classes before the cool-down flexibility exercises are completed.

Ideally, taking a few minutes every day to stretch your major muscle groups will give you the most benefit. Even five minutes of stretching at the end of an exercise session is better than nothing at all. And all cardio respiratory exercise should be followed by at least a few minutes of stretching. If you work at a sedentary job, taking a five minute stretch break can help fight fatigue and muscle strain in the lower back, neck and chest. Sitting all day can also shorten the hamstring muscles on the back of the leg, so just the simple act of standing and bending at the waist can get the blood flowing back into the legs and calves.

Finding time to Stretch

- If you don't have time to sufficiently warm up before stretching, try doing a few stretches immediately after a shower or while soaking in a hot tub. The hot water elevates muscle temperature enough to make them more pliable and receptive to stretching.
- Try a few simple stretches before getting out of bed in the morning. Wake yourself up with a few full-body stretches by pointing the toes and reaching the arms above your head. This can clear your mind and help jump-start your morning.
- Take a stretching class. A flexibility class will help you to stick with a regular stretching program. Both Pilates and Martial Arts classes include flexibility exercises as part of the programming.

Even with the simplicity of stretching, we still have a tendency to want to skip the stretch; we think it's not important. But it is warming up your muscles, lengthening them, and getting them ready for action. Everything you do, you will do better if you incorporate flexibility and stretching exercises into your daily routine.

Stay loose this winter, even if you have to climb the walls!

Vicki Heath



From the Pastor

Making a Difference Through Goals

Steve Reynolds
sreynolds@capitalbaptist.org



So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” Mark 11:22-23

One year ends and another begins. Once again the New Year’s resolutions are shared with enthusiasm and excitement, for about a week before and after the first of January. Then life returns to normal as we forget about all the “resolutions” we planned to accomplish. May I suggest that you tackle the rest of this New Year by taking a different approach? How about making a difference with your life by setting and reaching your goals?

Let me share my definition of a goal. Goals are a statement of faith in God and a vision for a brighter future. So what are the steps we should take to accomplish these goals? I’m glad you asked. I really enjoy acrostics and of course I have one for the word “goals”.

Get with God

James 1:5 says, *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.* I strongly believe that if you care about your goals you will pray about your goals.

First, find out what God wants you to be. Ask yourself what it is about your life that isn’t pleasing to God and change it. Consider 1 Peter 1:14-16, *As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”*

Second, find out what God wants you to do. Remember Psalm 37:23 which says, *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.*

Organize the Plan

A goal without a plan will result in failure. A goal without a plan is only a wish. Therefore, make sure you have **S-M-A-R-T** goals:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Resources

Timed

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You may be thinking that this is a lot of work!! You are right and this is why most people never reach their goals. Proverbs 13:4 says, *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.*

Ask for help

There is an African proverb, which says “If you want to go fast, go by yourself. If you want to go far, go with others.” Ask people for advice. Ask people for assistance. Proverbs 15:22 says, *Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established.*

Live in obedience

God’s love language is obedience. Jesus made that clear in John 14:15, *If you love Me, keep My commandments.* Obedience results in blessing, *But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”* (Luke 11:28).

Stick to It

I was always taught that anything worth having was worth working for. Very often your goals will require sacrifice, but don’t give up. Galatians 6:9 says, *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.* You will face challenges in accomplishing your goals. Do not quit.

Will you make a difference through your goals? Now is the time to focus again on those New Year’s resolutions and make them a reality this year.

Steve Reynolds

Steve Reynolds is the Senior Pastor of Capital Baptist Church in Annandale, VA. He is also the author of the book Bod4God and the creator of the Losing to Live Weight Loss Competition. Steve has lost over 100 pounds and has led his church to lose over three tons of weight.

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February 8-10, 2013
Sandy Cove Ministries
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Contact Phone: 800.234.COVE (2683)
More info.: www.sandycove.org

Georgia Area Training Meeting

March 9, 2013
Mountain Park Baptist Church
Stone Mountain, GA
Contact: Vicki Heath
Email: vicki.heath@fp4h.com
Phone: 843.224.1960

Alabama Area Training Meeting

March 16, 2013
Taylor Road Baptist Church
Montgomery, AL
Contact: Michele Vermillion
Email: misha95@aol.com
Phone: 334-549-3444

Minnesota Area Training Meeting

March 16, 2013
First Lutheran Church
White Bear Lake, MN
Contact: Andrea Berletic
Email: berletic@charter.net
Phone: 507-251-0286

Live Life! ~ Oklahoma

April 6, 2013
Village Baptist Church
Oklahoma City, OK
Contact: Syd Porter
Email: sydporter@yahoo.com
Phone: 405-787-2667

Live Life! ~ Pennsylvania

April 13, 2013
Crossroads Church
Oakdale, PA
Contact: Cheryl Davis
Email: cheryl.davis@crossroadsumc.org
Phone: 412-818-1962

Wellness Week ~ Sandy Cove

April 28 – May 3, 2013
Sandy Cove Ministries
North East, MD
Contact Phone: 800.234.COVE (2683)
More info.: www.sandycove.org

Summit 2013

July 26-27, 2013
Houston's First Baptist Church
Houston, Texas
Contact: Lisa Lewis
Phone: 800.727.5223, x1001
Email: lisa.lewis@fp4h.com

First Place 4 Health Live!

September 14, 2103
Bookcliff Baptist Church
Grand Junction, CO

Wellness Week @ Round Top

October 10-17, 2013
Round Top Retreat
Round Top, Texas
Contact phone: 800.727.5223, x1001
Email: lisa.lewis@fp4h.com

Mississippi Area Training Meeting

November 2, 2013
Baptist Association Building
Marion, MS
Contact: Joyce Ainsworth
Email: glenna@netdoor.com
Phone: 601-927-8974

For more information about any of these events, please visit www.fp4h.com.



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Hope & Inspiration

Mailbag Letter from Susan Curtin! Raleigh, NC

I know I am late to make this report. I had a 3-way bypass surgery Nov. 21, and praise God I am a walking miracle, gaining more strength each and every day!

Our small group of five (Raleigh St. James UMC FP4H Group) has made the most progress this past fall. We are proud to say that with God's help, we lost a total of 64.7 lbs. in the twelve weeks. We were unable to have a celebration gathering due to my surgery and want to have one when we return for our first meeting in January, which will be 1-15-13.

I wrote an article to give other church members hope and possibly more interest in joining us. Even our preacher gave us a "congrats," and that's saying something! I am so proud of our group. I hope our Raleigh group will be a lighthouse to others and that we will keep our motivation.

We hope that through our prayers, guide book, and God's path and love, we will all be pleasing to God and make the most of our New Year.



From L. to R: Susan Curtin, Monta Betts, Peggy Linder and Sandy Lane.
Deb Neuhart was absent due to illness.



Healthy Foods that Aren't So Healthy!

David L. Meinz, MS, RD, FADA, CSP



Things aren't always as good as they appear in the American supermarket and restaurant. Here's ten food items that don't always deserve their healthy reputation:

Yogurt. Yes, plain yogurt is a great high-calcium food, but it tastes like sour milk. And that's because it is sour milk. So the food manufacturers add "fruit on the bottom," which is really more like fruit preserves or jelly than real fruit. That gives you a food that often has 5-10 teaspoons of sugar per serving. What I do is buy one large container of plain non-fat yogurt and mix it with one large container of non-fat vanilla yogurt. That cuts the sugar per serving significantly from the "fruit added" kind but still gives you a product that tastes good.

Fish. Yes, fish is a great food for our health, but not *fast food* fish. Not only is it deep-fried but as a result, it can contain those bad trans fats. A *fast food* fish sandwich is usually made of cod, which contains hardly any of those good omega-3 fats for which fish is famous. A McDonalds Filet-O-Fish sandwich contains around 16 grams of fat. Their regular hamburger only contains 9. You could almost have two hamburgers. By the way, commercially-made tuna fish salad is a dietitian's nightmare. If you make it at home, you can hopefully go easy with a lower-fat mayonnaise. But when it's made for you, it's usually full-fat mayonnaise. A typical restaurant tuna sandwich has 700 calories and 43 grams of fat. Ouch!

Organic Food. There are now federal standards that require organic foods to be grown under very strict conditions. That's good news for the consumer. It usually means much less exposure to pesticides and preservatives; however, just because a food says "organic" on the label doesn't mean it's healthy. Not only do you pay more for organic, there's still nothing healthy about organic potato chips or "all natural" candy bars. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear and you can't make a healthy food out of an unhealthy one just because it's grown under organic conditions.

Muffins. Now it's true that if you make muffins at home, control the amount of sugar and fat and use whole grain flour, they can be good for you. Somehow commercially-made muffins got a health food reputation they don't deserve. What are muffins? White flour, sugar, and fat. What are donuts? White flour, sugar, and fat. Muffins just have more. Have you seen the size of some of these muffins you can buy? They're huge and usually cost a lot more than a donut. Bottom line? Muffins are donuts for rich people.

Frozen "Diet" entrees. While Lean Cuisine and Weight Watchers tend to be lower in calories and fat, their sodium levels can be high and the portion size is on the small side. Do they really fill you up? It's no bargain if you're hungry two hours later. If you use them for convenience, at least have them with a small salad and/or some whole grain bread or pasta to help fill you up. A piece of fruit would be a good dessert as well.

Olive Oil and Canola Oil. Yes, those are the oils you should be using. They're low in saturated fat and high in the good monounsaturated. Of course, since they come from plants, they have no cholesterol. But remember when it comes to calories, fat is fat is fat. You can gain weight on any fat, whether it's lard or olive

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oil. The difference is that lard will clog your arteries and olive oil won't. All fat has the same number of calories per unit volume of food. The problem is that a lot of people think they can start frying everything in olive and canola oil since they're healthy oils. But that misses the point that Americans still are eating too much fat. The average American eats about 82 grams of fat a day. A better target is around 50 grams for adults, both men and women. Use olive and canola oil, but that doesn't give you license to eat unlimited amounts.

Tea. No question that brewed tea contains antioxidants and other phytonutrients that are good for your health. Unfortunately, bottled tea drinks like those made by Snapple and Arizona Tea often contain very little actual tea and can contain lots of sugar or artificial sweetener. Researchers have found that freshly-brewed tea can have 10 to 100 times more antioxidants than these bottled teas. Brew your own tea or choose one that lists brewed tea as the first ingredient and no more than 4 grams of sugar per serving.

Energy/Sports Bars. Unless you're a high-level athlete, you probably don't need these. They can come in handy right after an intense workout to help you replenish muscle glycogen, but the average American doesn't work out that hard. They can also give you some protein; however, most of us get twice the protein we need everyday already. They also have vitamins, but you get a much better deal from a regular daily vitamin supplement that you're probably already taking. Oh, and they also can have lots of sugar and fat and may run around 200-400 calories each. Are they better than a candy bar? Yes! And, have you noticed they are a lot more expensive?

Juice. Drinking juice is NOT the same as eating the fruit or vegetable. First of all, the fiber—one of the benefits of eating whole foods—is lost. The processing of the fruit into its juice may cause the loss of some nutrient content as well. Many commercially available "fruit drinks" are not much more than soda without the bubbles. They're high in sugar or corn syrup, flavors, and contain very little, if any, real juice. Drinking a "100% real juice" beverage is better than getting no fruit or vegetables at all; better yet is to eat the whole food. I've found that people don't like to commit to a whole apple or orange, but if you slice it up, they seem more likely to eat them.

Turkey Burger. When you're eating out, this seems like it would be the natural choice over a greasy hamburger. It turns out a typical restaurant turkey burger has 850 calories and a whopping 50 grams of fat. Why? Turkey is indeed a very low-fat meat. So low, in fact, that they add the skin back so that you can make a burger or loaf out of it. Without the fat from the skin, it tends to just fall apart. Then there's the mayo, and probably some cheese to top off your turkey burger. When you go shopping, what you want to buy is ground turkey *breast*, not ground turkey. You'll be happiest with it if you use crumbled up, such as in tacos, chili, or added to spaghetti. One serving of ground turkey has 17 grams of fat; one serving of ground turkey breast, only 1 gram.

David Meinz

To see a sample of David's church program visit <http://www.christianhealth.com/video.html> and to find out how you can have David's program at your church for FREE visit www.freechurchprogram.com.



Devotional

A True Valentine Heart

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

J O H N 1 3 : 1 4

Every Valentine's Day since our marriage more than 30 years ago, my husband and I have done something special to celebrate. But Valentine's Day of 2006 proved to be very different. My father-in-law had come to live with us because of dementia with sundowner's syndrome. Due to his sundowning, he would wander around the house all night. We had to watch over him 24 hours a day. My husband worked from our home and was able to watch over him during the night, and I watched over him during the day. His living with us changed our entire lives. It was our privilege to care for him, but it was very stressful as well.

We found ourselves trying to figure out a way to celebrate Valentine's Day that was in keeping with the changes in our home. My husband surprised me that morning about 6:00 a.m., when I usually get up and my father-in-law is still asleep. Still in my pj's, he sat me down in the chair in our bedroom and began to wash my feet and pray over me.

I was shocked—first that he even thought to do that and second, because he was the one I felt was making the biggest sacrifices and I should be washing his feet. He humbled himself before me to let me know how much he loved me, and how he appreciated my rearranging our lives to care for his father. It felt like Jesus was standing right there in the room in the form of my husband. It was the most special Valentine's Day I've ever had. Jesus said, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). This is the way we should live toward our fellow believers.

Action Item: Ask God if there is someone in your life before whom you need to humble yourself.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, please show me anyone in my life that I need to humble myself toward so that I might do as You have done to Your disciples. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Karen Ferguson
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*Devotional taken from the devotional, **Better Together**. To order, visit our website, www.firstplace4health.com, or call 800.727.5223, x1002.*

Recipes!

Bistro-Style Beef Tenderloin for Two



8 ounces beef tenderloin or sirloin steak, 1-1 1/2 inches thick, trimmed and cut into 2 steaks
1/4 teaspoon minced dried onion
1/4 teaspoon salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
3 teaspoons canola oil, divided
1 large sweet onion, thinly sliced
1 1/2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
1/2 cup reduced-sodium beef broth
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
2 slices whole-grain baguette (1/2 inch thick), toasted
1/4 cup shredded Swiss cheese

Sprinkle steaks with dried onion, 1/8 tsp. salt and pepper. Heat 1 1/2 tsp. oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the steaks and reduce the heat to medium. Cook, turning once, until desired doneness, 3 to 6 minutes per side for medium-rare. Transfer the steaks to a plate and tent with foil. Position a rack in upper third of oven. Preheat broiler. Add the remaining 1 1/2 tsp. oil to the pan. Add onion and cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is tender and golden brown and the liquid has evaporated, 6 to 8 minutes. Sprinkle flour over the onion and stir to coat. Add broth, thyme and the remaining 1/8 tsp. salt; cook until bubbling and thickened, about 1 minute more. Remove from the heat and return the steaks and any accumulated juice to the pan. Pile up some of the onions on top of the steaks. Top each steak with a slice of baguette and some cheese. Transfer the pan to the oven and broil until the cheese is melted and bubbling, about 2 minutes. Serve the steaks with the onions and sauce. Serves 2.

Nutritional Information: 376 calories; 12 g fat; 80 mg cholesterol; 20 g carbohydrates; 31 g protein; 3 g fiber; 533 mg sodium; 574 mg potassium.
Tracker: 1/2 oz.-eq. grain, 1 vegetable, 4 oz.-eq. meat, 1 tsp. oil

Chicken Piccata with Pasta & Mushrooms



6 ounces whole-wheat angel hair pasta
1/3 cup all-purpose flour, divided
2 1/2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
4 boneless, skinless, chicken breasts (3/4-1 pound total), trimmed
3 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 10-ounce package mushrooms, sliced
3 large cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons capers, rinsed
2 teaspoons butter

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and rinse. Meanwhile, whisk 5 tsp. flour and broth in a small bowl until smooth. Place the remaining flour in a shallow dish. Season chicken with 1/4 tsp salt and pepper and dredge both sides in the flour. Heat 2 tsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the chicken and cook until browned and no longer pink in the middle. Transfer to a plate; cover and keep warm. Heat the remaining 1 tsp. oil in the pan over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring, until they begin to brown. Transfer to a plate. Add garlic and 1/2 cup of broth to the pan and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the reserved broth-flour mixture, lemon juice and the remaining 1/4 tsp. salt. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring, until the sauce is thickened. Stir in parsley, capers, butter and the reserved mushrooms. Measure out 1/2 cup of the mushroom sauce. Toss the pasta in the pan with the remaining sauce. Serve the pasta topped with the chicken and the reserved sauce.

Nutrition Information: 397 Calories; 9 g Fat; 3 g Sat; 3 g Mono; 54 mg Cholesterol; 45 g Carbohydrates; 28 g Protein; 5 g Fiber; 544 mg Sodium; 609 mg Potassium
Tracker: 2 oz.-equivalent grain, 1/2 cup vegetable, 3 1/2 oz. meat

Healthy Valentine's Day Desserts!

Rocky Road Brownies

1 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1 large egg
1 tsp vanilla
1/4 cup low-fat yogurt
3/4 cup flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
3/4 cup miniature marshmallow
1/4 cup semi sweet chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 350°F Spray a 8-inch square baking dish with vegetable spray. In a bowl and using a whisk, beat sugar, cocoa, applesauce, oil, egg, vanilla and yogurt. In another bowl, stir together flour and baking powder. Stir the mixture into the applesauce mixture just until everything is combined. Pour the batter into a prepared dish. Bake in the centre of the oven for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with marshmallows and chocolate chips. Bake another 10 minutes. Let the dish cool on a wire rack.

Nutritional Information: 140 Calories, 4.5g Fat, 0mg Cholesterol, 10mg Sodium, 26g Carbohydrate, 1g Protein



Strawberry Short Cake

1 box white cake mix
1 12 oz. can diet 7-Up or Sprite
2 eggs
4 oz. Cool Whip Lite
Fresh strawberries, rinsed and cut in quarters

Mix cake mix, soda and eggs with mixer until smooth. Pour into a 13x9x2 pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes until done. Let cool. Cut cake into 20 pieces then slice in half to make layers. Top bottom half with strawberries and top with cake layer. Top with cool whip and another strawberry. Serves 20. Note: Want no artificial sweeteners? A regular soda only adds 7 calories to each serving.

Nutritional Information: 100 Calories; 3g Fat; 1g Protein; 16g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 21mg Cholesterol; 130mg Sodium



Texas Sheet Cake

1 box chocolate cake mix
2 eggs
1 can coke zero

Icing for sheet cake

6 Tablespoons butter
1/3 cup nonfat milk
3 cups powdered sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted

Mix cake mix, soda and eggs with electric mixer until smooth. Pour into a 15 x 10-inch jelly roll pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Bake at 350 degrees 18-20 minutes or until toothpick tests done. Let cool to room temperature. Top with warm icing. If you do not want any artificial sweetener a regular soda only adds 7 more calories to each serving.

For icing, combine 6 tbsp. butter, fat-free milk, and 1/4 cup cocoa in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Gradually stir in powdered sugar; stir in 2 teaspoons vanilla and pecans. Stir until well blended. Spread over cake. Serves 24.

Nutritional Information: 162 calories; 6g fat; 1g protein; 27g carbohydrate; trace dietary fiber; 25mg cholesterol; 136mg sodium

