



March News

I GIVE UP!

Okay, you started out in January with a bang, slowed down a little in February and now you've quit. What's Next? Get the magnet! I love our FP4H magnet that says, "Setbacks are temporary but quitting is permanent." It happens to all of us. You do not want to stay stuck in the feeling of failure. Every time you give up on your wellness journey, you have two choices: keep walking backwards, which will place you even farther away from your goal (If you chose this option, says my husband, Rob, "Make sure your insurance is paid up because you are going to need it!"), or you can take the steps necessary to begin again. What steps do I need to take to start again?

LET GO OF THE SLIPUP. Joyce Meyer says, "We will all fail in life, but nobody has to be a failure. Failing at a thing doesn't make you a failure. You are only a failure when you quit trying." Getting healthy takes a great amount of effort and it is hard work. You will not be able to do it all exactly right. Accept the fact that you are not perfect; forgive yourself and start again.

PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT. Jesus said in Mark 12:30 "Love the Lord your God with all you HEART..." We cannot go into a wellness effort halfhearted. Jesus calls us to wholehearted commitment. He did not go halfway to the Cross. He set his face toward Jerusalem and went all the way to Calvary. And we must do the same. Climb the hill of health and wellness until we reach the summit of what He has for us.

Setbacks are temporary; it's quitting that makes it permanent.

www.FirstPlace4Health.com

DO WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE. One of the biggest reasons most people quit is that what we are doing is not sustainable. The crazy diet plans and all-out brutal exercises can only last a little while. Eventually, you will get to the point where you say, "I'm done with this" and walk right back into your old habits of overeating unhealthy food and refusing to exercise. A healthy food plan with plenty of variety in proper quantities is a sustainable way to lose weight. Moderate exercise five times a week will go a long way to get you healthy and moving toward your weight-loss goals. That's our FP4H Live It plan. We call it that because you can live this way for the rest of your life and never quit.

SET REASONABLE GOALS. That's why I love FP4H. You have 12 weeks to get to a reasonable goal. Losing one to two pounds a week is a sustainable weight-loss goal. I can't look at all the things I need to change in my life. That overwhelms me. Setting small, reasonable goals will get you there step by step.

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians shared that his life goal was *to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering (3:10)*. He stated in chapter 3:13-14 that he had not even come close to arriving. But this one thing he did: pressing on every day toward the goal. As we press on, we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the One who started this in us in the first place. He is the One who will help us finish.



It's time to start again and this time – to the goal.

Vicki Heath.....vicki.heath@fp4h.com



At the beginning of my weight-loss journey I boldly said to my class, “I will never give up Half & Half.” Although the coffee seemed a necessary requirement for daily survival, the added condiments racked up calories. In 2008, my pastor challenged us: “Give up a luxury for forty days.” The forty days has spiritual significance; it symbolizes following the temptation of Christ who denied himself during His time spent in the desert

My church focus provided the holy motivation needed as others joined in *giving up* something too. I gave up my precious four cups of caffeinated goodness. No coincidence that around the same time I learned consuming low-fat dairy products helped with weight loss. When the forty days ended, I savored my cup of coffee with one-half cup of steamed skim milk instead of Half & Half. The Lord blessed me with a bonus. I cut the fat from my diet and I increased my dairy intake.

Over the course of my wellness journey, I experienced more self-control after I abstained from something for an extended period-of-time.

- ✓ In 2009, I gave up alcohol for the summer, hit my 100-pounds-lost threshold, and recognized alcohol lessens my self-control.
- ✓ In 2011, I improved my blood pressure when I removed caffeine for the last time. Today, I enjoy a cup of decaffeinated coffee periodically, with skim milk, of course. I’m shameful when I brag that my blood pressure is consistently below 110/65. After the initial withdrawal, my body no longer requires the caffeine.
- ✓ In 2012, I recognized my non-existent Sabbath. Weekly, I unplug from email with a twenty-four hour fast from my laptop.
- ✓ In 2014, I removed crackers from the house. I binge with crackers when under emotional stress. When I started writing my book *Restored: Forever Free from Obesity* due out later in 2017, I realized the crackers needed to leave the house. However, crackers are still on the *never give up* list.
- ✓ In 2016 and 2017, my accountability partner and I started the year with a twenty-one-day Ultimate Daniel Fast, eliminating all animal products, sweeteners, leavened breads, refined or processed foods, and solid fats. Water was our only beverage. I welcomed meats and breads when I broke my fast. The long term result: I consume a minimal amount of sugar and prefer less processed foods.

Abstinence and fasting helped me understand hunger—physical and spiritual. When my mind and body yearned for the off-limit item, in silence I asserted, “God, I want You.” With each denial, my spiritual life deepened and my self-control strengthened.

Consider denying yourself something for forty days. Pray and ask God to reveal the food or habit you will **never** give up? Give up and give God the glory.



Helen Baratta.....helen.baratta@fp4h.com
This excerpt is from Helen Baratta’s current book project, Restored: Forever Free from Obesity, due out later in 2017. Helen is Director of Development and oversees FP4H Virtual Groups. [Click here](#) to read her Blessed Big Loser success story.



WHY I WON'T GIVE UP

What's your greatest motivation? Are you a natural-born competitor? Are you striving to keep up with your children or grandchildren? Are you working to fit into that special spring outfit this year? Are you hoping to outrun your DNA? Or are you simply trying to live a more healthy life all the way around? What I'm really asking all of us is this: **When you want to give up, what stops you?**

I have a competitive streak that's pretty wide. My motivation originates in the challenge of being a little bit better (healthier, smarter, kinder) than I was yesterday. For this miraculous growth to occur, I must choose to make one good decision at a time. **All of us are one decision away from moving in a positive direction or a negative one.** I apply this principle to my physical lifestyle as well as my spiritual life, and I'd like you to consider doing the same.

I'm grateful that spring has sprung in the area of the world where I live. The days are a bit longer and a bit warmer, so I'm trading in my long-sleeve hoodie for the cooler, cuter spring top. This motivates me to step up my arm workout. Shallow, I know, but motivation nonetheless. Also as spring arrives I'm reminded of the outdoor activities I love – mountain biking and hiking, so I'd better continue my lower body workouts too. You see, besides being competitive, I'm activity-motivated. There are many active hobbies that I love, and in order to continue with these, my body needs to be healthy and well. In my pursuit of wellness, I have good days and not-so-good days. The good days, where I make wise choices, help me push through the not-so-good days, where I lack the motivation to make wise choices.

For many of us, we are motivated to live a more active lifestyle by participating in group fitness classes – like the classes offered in Body & Soul. I am inspired by the students that come to class, and I believe that they inspire one another. If that sounds like a positive choice to you, be sure to get yourself to the nearest class as soon as possible. You won't be disappointed – and chances are you'll inspire the person next to you. It's a win-win!

So, what's your motivation? Are you training for an event? Are you hoping to pick up a new, active hobby? Are you fighting a condition that threatens your wellness? **Whatever your motivation, keep it in your sights.** Do not get distracted by the not-so-good days. Don't get derailed. This focus applies to our spiritual wellness as well as our physical. My greatest motivation spiritually is to know Jesus Christ and glorify Him. I have good days and not-so-good days. On the good days, I'm focused on Him, I'm in His Word, and I'm on the lookout for His presence. On the not-so-good days, I'm distracted, but not for long. Just like in my fitness life, I'm on a journey toward wellness and striving to make one positive decision at a time. This means I'm focused on my goal and making one choice that moves me in that direction. And that's why I won't give up.



Amy Stafford.....amy@bodyandsoul.org
Amy Stafford is the President of Body & Soul Fitness. She is a Certified Personal Trainer and Group Fitness Instructor, ACE (American Council on Exercise) Faculty member, wife of Steven, and mom to Jordan.
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Success Story ~ *Christine Bevilacqua*



I grew up believing in God, but I did not have a relationship with Jesus. My life before knowing Jesus—I was depressed for over 20 years and searching for happiness in all the wrong places. I made many bad decisions in my life, and I always questioned, “How could God forgive me for my past?”

On February 12, 2009, my life changed forever. I just celebrated my 40th birthday the month before and on this day I was being rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. The EMT told me that I was having a heart attack. During this frightful ride, I only thought about my 8-year-old daughter—who would take care of her if I died? Why is this happening to me? I’m a healthy 40-year-old woman that never smoked and was not overweight. After spending a week in the hospital, I returned to work after 10 days knowing I still did not feel well, but I wanted to go back to my normal life.

The next month I felt a lump in my left breast. On April 29, 2009, I heard the words, “You have breast cancer.” The Dr. said that I had “triple negative breast cancer.” At that moment I was so scared and cried out to God, “Why is this happening to

me?” After researching this disease, I knew I had the deadliest form of breast cancer, but I did not know about my future. I was frightened and scared. In June 2009, I drove to Boston from Orlando to receive the best treatment possible. I had no idea how sick I would become. My plan was to get treatment as quickly as possible and return back to my old life, but God had other plans. My first visit to the oncologist was terrifying, but my dad was right beside me. Because of my heart attack, the doctors had to figure out a unique treatment plan for me. At this point I was fighting for my life!

June 2009 through September 2009, I received eight high doses of chemotherapy. I felt guilty asking for help from my family and friends because I knew they had busy lives. My daughter was so young she could not understand why Mom could not take her camping, play basketball at the park or walk her to school. I did the best I could as I was fighting for my life.

I stayed with my cousin and his family while I was going through treatment. They have a strong faith in God and prayed daily for me. I started to attend church with them when I had the energy. Was God trying to tell me something? In October of 2009, I had a mastectomy on my left breast with no possibility for reconstruction because of my heart history. Taking the bandages off after this surgery was devastating. I thought “How will a man ever find me attractive ever again?” This recovery was long and painful, not just physically, but mentally.

During this time, I lost my job that I loved, the bank foreclosed on my home and I lost the relationship with my husband. My world was crumbling around me. I was so angry and depressed. I joined a breast cancer support group in Arlington, MA. These women were so kind, loving and supportive. They understood what I was going through. They listened as I cried and we all shared a very special bond.

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A year passed and I still was not feeling well—out of breath and low energy. My cardiologist ordered a stress test. All of the tests showed that I needed to have double-bypass surgery. How am I going to get through this? Where is God? Why is this happening to me? Friends and family had to help me again. I felt guilty again. After my surgery, I started to use alcohol and food to numb my depression and anxiety. I gained a ton of weight and just checked out of life. At this point, my life was very dark and I needed to do something because God obviously needs to use me for His purpose.

I started to attend Grace Chapel in Lexington and my life changed forever again! I finally felt true joy and peace in my heart for the first time in my life. I decided to give my life to Christ because I could not live Christine's life alone. I realized that God was talking to me and holding my hand during the most difficult time in my life. I saw in the church bulletin a weight-loss group called First Place 4 Health. My goal was to lose weight, but God had other plans. The first Bible study was very overwhelming because of the books, DVDs and all of these new women that I had never met before. The next day, I called my Bible study leader and said, "I cannot do this; it is too overwhelming for me." She told me to forget about the books and just come to the Bible study.

During the first few weeks, God slowly started to talk to me. Through the Bible study I learned how much God loves me and how He can heal me and forgive me for all of my sins. My sisters in my group prayed for me, supported and loved me. I have never felt so much love in my life. The first six months, I did not lose weight because I first needed healing in my heart. Through God's grace and strength I stopped using alcohol for medication and started exercising and eating healthy. My anxiety and depression started to lift and I felt like a new person. Through the darkness I started to see the light. Through this experience I have learned to be more compassionate, forgiving, loving and selfless and to enjoy the moment.

FP4H saved my life. God has blessed me in so many ways this year. I can now walk 5-6 miles a day! On March 16, I was baptized at Grace Chapel, in April I told my cardiologist that I lost 58 pounds and on May 27, I found love again. David loves what is in my heart and will look past my physical scars. In August, I went on that camping trip that I promised my daughter back in 2009—we hiked our first mountain. My daughter was also baptized during this trip. October 22, I said good-bye to my oncologist because this year I celebrate five years of being cancer-free!





Devo

Obedience School

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. HEBREWS 10:25

My pug puppy Stella Rose is doing great in puppy obedience school. She's my fifth pug, but the first I've had to take to school. My wild child has learned how to behave and even shine around other dogs and the teacher/trainer. We've both had fun getting to know people "owned" by a varied mix of breeds. Stella Rose and I watched the tiny, shy poodle finally come out of her shell. We were thrilled when the boxer mix eventually developed control of his incessant bark.

Everyone was proud and relieved when the huge Irish wolfhound stopped jumping up on people. All the dogs had "issues," and we will never know why or how they developed them. What we saw was how they learned to overcome them by sitting under the teaching of a masterful dog trainer (we nicknamed her the Dog Whisperette). I remembered thinking the first night that everyone looked like they wanted to exclaim, "I know my dog's not bad; he just needs a little help." And they all got it. We humans are the same. It is so much more fun and effective to gather together in Bible study to learn from the Master. He allows us to help each other to grow when we meet in His name. We come with unique and individual struggles that are sometimes irritating to outsiders. But not to seasoned classmates—they know that with time and effort, God teaches us how to overcome, and we blossom into humble, grateful, appreciated "oaks of righteousness."

We watch, assist and celebrate classmates' victories and usually (probably always) glean understanding for ourselves. Everyone is different, but we all have the same compassionate, patient Trainer/Teacher. How much better to sit at His feet with other precious students than to struggle alone! "They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor" (Isaiah 61:3).

Action Item: Think of a time when the growth of a fellow classmate ministered to you. Pray for preservation of that victory.

Prayer: *O God, You are the Teacher. Thank You for all my precious classmates. Help us to learn what You need us to know.*

Beth Serpas, Houston, Texas

Devotion taken from Better Together, available now in the online store at www.fp4h.com.



Upcoming Events

Live Webinar – How to Stock a Healthy Pantry
March 13, 2017
Online

Nevada/Northern California Wellness Workshop
April 1, 2017
Reno, NV

Nacogdoches Texas Wellness Workshop
April 8, 2017
Nacogdoches, TX

Victory Celebration – SC
April 18, 2017
Six Mile, SC

RESTORE
April 28-30, 2017
Kansas City, KS

Wellness Workshop – North East
May 6, 2017
Wakefield, MA

Summit 2017 ~ Your Best Life!
July 21-22, 2017
Newnan, GA

Wellness Week
October 12-18, 2017
Round Top, TX

Did You Miss a Webinar? No Problem!
You can find the recorded webinar
under the event tab at FP4H.com

Interested in hosting a FP4H event in your
area? Contact Helen Baratta at
helen.baratta@fp4h.com to find out how.



Your Best Life! #SUMMIT2017 Atlanta, GA

You're invited!

**The biggest FP4H event of the year
is in Atlanta, GA this summer.**

**Join others from across the
country at this two-day event.**

**Gwen Smith, author and co-
founder of Girlfriends in God will
be the keynote along with other
great speakers from around the
country.**

**You will love all the new surprises
this year, including a new VIP
registration, fabulous giveaways
and much more.**

**Mark your calendar right now to
join us this summer!**



Green Onion Biscuits

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
3 tablespoons vegetable shortening
1/4 cup finely chopped green onions
1 cup low-fat buttermilk
Cooking spray

Preheat oven to 400°. Combine first 4 ingredients in a large bowl; cut in shortening with a pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal. Stir in green onions. Add buttermilk, stirring just until flour mixture is moist. Drop batter by heaping tablespoons onto a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes 16 biscuits.

Nutrition Information: 97 Calories, 3g Fat, 2g Protein, 16g Carbohydrate, 1g Dietary Fiber, 21mg Cholesterol, 48mg Sodium.

Live It Tracker: 1 oz. Grain





Hearty Vegetable and Beef Stew

- 3/4 lb. boneless, lean chuck roast, trimmed of fat and cut into 1/2-in. cubes
- (2) 14 1/4-oz. cans fat-free beef broth
- 2 tsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 1/3 cup tomato paste
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 cup diced carrots
- 3 cup diced red potatoes
- 2 1/2 cups quartered mushrooms
- 1/2 cup red cooking wine or broth
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- (1) 8-oz. can cut green beans
- 2 tbsp. water
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- chopped fresh parsley (optional)

In medium saucepan, bring beef broth to boil. Boil 15 minutes or until reduced to 2 cups; remove from heat and set aside. In large Dutch oven, heat 1 teaspoon oil over medium-high heat. Add beef; brown on one side and remove from pan. Heat remaining oil in pan over medium-high heat; add onion, tomato paste and garlic; cook 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Return beef to pan; add reduced broth, carrots, potatoes, mushrooms, cooking wine, pepper and green beans. Bring to boil; cover, reduce heat and simmer 45 minutes or until vegetables are tender. In small bowl, combine water and cornstarch; stir well to remove lumps. Add to stew; bring to a boil and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Ladle 2 cups of stew into each soup bowl; garnish with parsley, if desired. Serves 4.

Nutrition Information: 422 Calories; 16g Fat (33.1% calories from fat); 28g Protein; 45g Carbohydrate; 8g Dietary Fiber; 49mg Cholesterol; 844mg Sodium

Chocolate Chip Ice Cream Sandwiches

“Forget the store-bought ice cream sandwiches and make your own all-natural healthy treats.”

- 1/2 cup fat-free vanilla frozen yogurt
- 24 vanilla wafer cookies
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips

Prepare your storage container by lining with waxed paper. Put a small scoop of ice cream on a cookie; top with another cookie and flatten until filling reaches the edge of the cookie. Roll the side of the sandwich in the mini chocolate chips. Place in your prepared container. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Place in the freezer to set for at least 30 minutes, or cover and freeze for up to one week. Serves 12.

Tip: Substitute your favorite sprinkles for the chocolate chips for some assortment.

Nutritional Information: 80 Calories; 4g Fat (38.1% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 12g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; trace Cholesterol; 42mg Sodium.

Tracker: No trackable nutrition

Recipe taken from Healthy Happy Cooking, available now in the online store at www.fp4h.com.



What personal relationship could be more important than your relationship with God? The RESTORE: An Emotional Health and Wellness Weekend provides a retreat away from your normal activities and an opportunity to restore and strengthen your relationship with the Lord.

Come to RESTORE and experience:

- Calm from the presence of the Holy Spirit
- A safe haven for spending time with the Lord
- Christ centered teaching
- Freedom as you discover the root of your emotional eating
- Clarity on why you sabotage your efforts towards a healthy weight
- Healing through prayer
- Healthy and satisfying meals

What are people saying about RESTORE?

- This time prepared me for the deeper things God still wanted to reveal to me.
- In the Spirit realm, I think it broke off and broke through some of my walls.
- Awesome! I am certain it was the most healing moment for most of us. Having an opportunity to confess our deepest needs and prayed over was the climax.
- Personally, for me it was a significant "life" moment.
- Over the weekend as I became more honest with myself, I saw my true condition.
- Helped prepare heart and mind for next step.
- Click [here](#) to read an inspirational story about Restore.

An ancient practice, we invite you to come away with Jesus, by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest (Mark 6:31). Be restored.

Early Bird pricing available until March 15, 2017. Click here for information: [RESTORE](#)