



January 2007 Health Letter

The Change Candidate: Your Health

It's Presidential Primary season, and every last one of the candidates wants to ride the desire for "change" into the White House. It seems there's a national discontent, a desire for something different, a need to leave some of the past and present behind us and see some better days. So, "change" is the answer. But, not so fast! For me as an individual, change is also a little threatening. Even if my current reality is not the best, change always moves me into some unknown territory, outside my comfort zone. Even if the status quo is lousy, change can feel like a threat, and so my subconscious mind works really hard to keep me from changing, like a set-point on a thermostat or an auto-pilot on an airliner. If I get "off-course" from my accustomed reality, my habits will rapidly bring me back to "the way it's always been."

Do you want to change in 2008? The truth is, you WILL change in 2008! We all change continually from birth to death. The important question I'm posing to you now is, "Do you want your change in 2008 to be (a) unconscious drift, or (b) the product of your conscious decisions about goals?" (think...think....) OK, great! You answered (b), so let's talk about how you get there.

- Set specific, measurable goals: this is the "what, how much, by when" questions. For example, if shedding extra pounds is a health goal for you, saying "my goal is to be 140 pounds by 9:00 AM on June 30, 2008" is better than "I plan to lose 35 pounds in the next 5 months." Anyone should be able to step into your life on your target date and see if you have hit your goal.
- Focus on what you want, not what you don't want. Train your mind to reset the "thermostat" by visualizing your success daily, by using verbal affirmations such as "I am so happy and grateful now that I am feeling strong, flexible, and at my goal weight of 140 pounds." Avoid giving energy to your undesirable reality by talking about it; saying "I hate being fat!" just reinforces that as your "auto-pilot" to your subconscious. And your subconscious doesn't understand the word "not." So "I wish I was not a smoker" ends up just reminding your internal thermostat that you are one. Try instead, "I'm happy I will soon be smoke-free!"
- Break down your long-term goals into short-term small behaviors. So if your goal is to lower your LDL-cholesterol by 20 points by the 31st of May using diet, you can put small goals into your planner such as "eat oatmeal 5 times this week for breakfast" and "limit saturated fat by eating meat only three meals this week and use legumes with whole grains as my protein source at other meals."
- Get support. Change is possible, and you have successfully negotiated difficult change in the past, and change is also hard. Find someone who gives you unconditional positive support who can be your cheerleader, and tell them your plans. Ask them to call or visit on a regular schedule so that you can be accountable to someone as a promise. This person's job is not to criticize you for lapses, but to support you and cheer even small successes.
- Love yourself the way you are. It is perfectly alright to want very much for things to be different and at the same time be grateful every day for what a wonderful person you are, and how well your body works in countless ways. Your breath, your heartbeat, your muscles and bones, your eyes, ears, sense of touch, your ability to appreciate beautiful music or a sunset, are all evidence of a Divine handprint. You are a miracle!

So, 2008 will be a year of change. May it be for all of us a year of awakening to our highest potential in body, mind and spirit, and a year of new peace dawning on our planet.

For health and healing

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