Finding Encouragement and Motivation to Keep Your Healthy Goals

By Chef Jen, RDN/LDN, RYT-200

When it comes to starting a new routine, depending on what it is, it can be a little tough for me. I'm not sure if you suffer from the same things as I, but here's usually what happens:

- I start out strong on week 1, sticking to the new routine. Loose pre-COVID example: Going to the gym 3x week.
- After a few weeks, I miss 1 day.
- After that week, I miss 2 days
- Then I'm back to square 1

YES! Even myself, a yoga instructor, doesn't do yoga every day! During the start of quarantine, I was NOT into doing anything. I definitely felt the initial quarantine depression/anxiety/stress. It wasn't until I was recruited to teach yoga virtually, for it to knock me out of my funk.

I LOVE doing yoga (obviously), so why is it that I'm not doing it more frequently? What is it that you love to do that's a healthy habit, but can't seem to stick to it? What can we do about this? I'll tell you my best motivation: Moe, my dog.

He doesn't necessarily get me to do yoga, but we walk. He's my accountability partner to get myself out that door every day! If I don't walk, him, I know he won't be happy for the rest of the day/night.

I believer that an accountability partner is one of the best ways to guarantee success for a healthy habit. I suggest you try not to make it family, as you can fight/argue, aggravate or be easier on one another; but if there's a family member that will work for you, then go ahead! Otherwise, find a friend or someone with the same views and motivation OR someone that you know will hold you to your word. Here's what you need to do:

- Agree to build each other up
- Text or call/check in
- Set a timer/reminder
- Get others involved if you need a group for motivation vs going solo
- try to plan 1 or 2 things (safely with masks or socially distant) with another person to keep yourself active or eating well.

If you need to go solo for one reason or another:

- set your phone or home assistant for reminders (daily, every other, etc.) to keep moving or eat well
- download motivational apps (Purposeful; My Fitness Pal; 30 day fitness; 7-minute workout; Chopra)
- download a podcast or make a playlist to keep you moving and can make the time feel like it's going by faster. AND—commit to ONLY listen to it when you are doing that routine.

These next few hints apply to both scenarios, AP or solo:

If you need to change your environment and surround yourself with positive images, speech and healthier foods; Or if you are with people who do not feel the same way as you, don’t

Delete the Instagram posts that make you feel bad about yourself. Follow positive body image accounts: For example, if you need a good laugh follow Celeste Barber, she rose to fame copying photos of celebrities from the “normal person's view”; Rachel Hollis, who often shows her 3-pregnancy baby belly with pride. Also, follow more positive posts, such as power of positivity, tiny buddha official and UD's own Sean's House for mental health promotion.

But guess what???!!! Not only do women suffer from body image issues, men do too! Follow Zach Miko and you'll get plenty of laughs, but mostly, more the average man.

Praise yourself and others, if you have a group or partner that you are doing this along with

Finally, if you need a break— TAKE IT! Your body has to adjust and needs time to repair itself, if it's new fitness routine. Take a few days off a week to allow the body to rest, recoup and repair its muscles. Last thing that you'd want to do is injure yourself! You could wind up back at square one.

Take a moment to ponder: when you start something new, it takes time to get used to it. Not only does that apply to physical activity, having a healthier body image, but to eating well also! For example: If you are cutting back on salt, your taste buds need time to adapt and get used to it. Depending on your salt intake, it may take up to a month for your taste to adapt. Same goes for cutting back on sugar and saturated fat. Note: for sugar, you may experience a "withdrawal" and cravings for it. When I get that way, I either start doing squats right then and there, hold plank until I can't anymore or I get a big glass of water and drink it all. This can work if you are trying to quit smoking too!

You can DO THIS! I believe in YOU!

Be Well, Eat Well, Walk Your Dog, Be Nice to Yourself and Bon Appetit!

~~ Chef Jen