

Easier than you think  
by Mike DeCinti

I kept staring at that little blinking cursor on my computer screen over the last several days not quite sure what it was I wanted to write about for my next article. You see a part of me wants to write about new and different stuff every time. Even things I may not currently know about, but would be willing to research and learn. There's something exciting about finding out new and useful information that I can pass on to the reader.

However another part of me wants to continue to write about some of the subjects that have monopolized most of my articles so far. You know, eat right, exercise, and quit smoking. Although they're topics I've already discussed, I feel like some of those messages need to be "pounded" home so people finally get the message.

So there I sat, in front of a blank computer screen, blinking cursor and all, trying to figure it out when I saw something that helped make my decision. It was an article in Sunday's Robesonian from W. Curt Vincent regarding his current mission to lose weight for his daughter's upcoming wedding. He also discussed how losing some unwanted pounds will also help him be able to enjoy his granddaughter more, regain some of his foosball glory days, and more importantly, improve his health. And as I read this I thought to myself how great it is that some many different people can have so many different reasons for wanting to get healthy. The important thing is that you have to make that mental connection. You have to decide to get healthy. You have to use whatever it takes to get your mind in a place that no matter how hard it may be, no matter how much you struggle, the reasons you have for starting are too powerful to quit. I just hope that after you meet your goal for that specific "event" you stick with it, and not go back to what you were doing before.

But that being said, I did have a few concerns while reading Mr. Vincent's article. Now since I am not a professional journalist, I don't know the rules, if any, about responding to one person's article through another, I did want to pass along a little advise, not only to him, but to anyone else who may be going through the same thing. And I say these things with respect for Mr. Vincent and others who have made the difficult decision to do something about wanting to get healthy. Plus, knowing that the title of his column is "On My Soap Box" I fully understand that he wasn't attempting to give fitness advise, but instead just passing along a little story about his current situation.

First, don't get caught up in the numbers. A lot of good people begin wellness programs thinking too much about counting calories, or adding up points and although this may work for some, most end up quitting because the numbers become too much to keep up with. Plus, just because you count calories or add up points, that doesn't mean your getting the right kind of calories or the best points. If you really need to make it a "numbers game" just remember this. If you burn more calories than you take in, you can't help but loose weight. Plus, don't "over weigh" yourself. If you're constantly checking the scale you may become more frustrated with a lack of results in short periods of time.

Second, don't deprive yourself of all of those foods you love to eat. You'll only end up craving them even more and eventually, after your weight loss goal has been met for that "event", you end up gorging on them and putting on all that weight, plus some. Instead concentrate on portion size. You can have pasta, but only eat an amount the size of your fist. Have some potatoes, but make it sweet potatoes, have your bread, but choose wheat bread and follow the serving size information on the label. However, you still need to avoid some things altogether. But those are the high fat, high calorie, high sugar foods that you know deep down you're not supposed to have. Even then, there's nothing wrong with rewarding yourself for a really really good week of being good, with a small treat of something bad.

Third, I just want to continue to encourage you to maintain a regular exercise schedule. Eating all the right foods, and portion sizes is only half the battle. You must also start getting your body in shape by participating in activities that get your heart rate going like walking, running, or aerobics and also some weight training to get strong muscles and tone your body. Nothing burns fat more than building muscle.

Finally, try not to think of yourself as on a diet or even having weight loss as your main goal. But instead, think of yourself making a life choice to get healthy. If you choose to get healthy by eating right, exercising, and quitting smoking, you can't help but lose weight. It will just happen. So instead of weight loss being your goal, and a diet being the method to get you there, think about it this way. Make the choice to live a healthier life; all those other things will fall into place. Still need a goal...how about running in this year's Chevy to the Levee 5k in October?