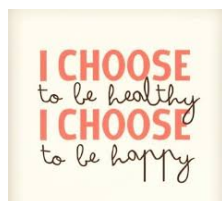


***“Those we love don’t go away, they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed and very close to our hearts.”***

- ***Author unknown***

This is an important quote for me. The last month marked the anniversaries of the death of two people I loved, one of whom was my brother. It’s still hard to believe they’re gone. I’ve written about grief (June 2015) and one of the important points is that you truly never get over the death of someone you love, you just learn how to live with it. There will be good days and bad days. Hopefully, the good ones outweigh the bad. But holidays, birthdays and anniversaries are certainly the hardest times. So as we enter this new year, my wish is for each and every one of you to be happy, healthy and at peace. Remember to live every day as if it will be your last, because one day, it will be. Don’t forget to tell the people you love how you feel because tomorrow may be too late. Happy new year!

## **Ideas for a Healthier and Happier 2022**



Okay people. It's a new year, which means it's time to think about how to have a healthier and happier you. Many people make resolutions, only to break them within about a month. Think about how crowded the gym is the first couple weeks in January, when you have to wait your turn for a treadmill. Then here comes February, and the gym is like a ghost town. So rather than suggesting you make resolutions that can be broken, I'd like to focus on some simple lifestyle changes that can make a tremendous impact on your life and become permanent, because they're easy and achievable. Even if you decide to try out only one of the suggestions from my list below, it'll put you on a path to a healthier and happier you. Perhaps you'll be adventurous enough to try them all. Here are a few of my suggestions to start the new year off on a positive trajectory:

**Increase consumption of organic food:** *"But Susan, going organic is so expensive,"* people tell me. My response? *"If you buy only one thing that's organic, choose milk."* Non-organic milk contains the antibiotics and growth hormones that are fed to cows to increase their size. These drugs then get absorbed into our bodies, which has contributed to our increased resistance to the antibiotics we're prescribed when we're sick. What's the health of you and your children worth? Can you really put a price tag on it? In my house, we do raw organic milk, organic meat and organic fruits and vegetables from the "Dirty Dozen" list. See my July 2016 newsletter for details. The good news is that there are many types of produce you can eat that don't need to be organic. So don't waste money on organic versions of those. Please contact me if you want details.

**Cut down on simple carbs:** I once had a client who told me he couldn't live without his morning bagel. I'm sure he was expecting me to tell him to stop eating it and was shocked when I didn't. Instead, I told him he could keep eating his morning bagel, but to only have half. Then I told him to replace the other half with a protein and some fat like eggs, nitrate-free turkey bacon or nut butter. These would help fill him up and keep him satisfied, while not spiking his blood sugar levels like a whole bagel. He could still have the pleasure of his bagel, but just in a smaller quantity. No one wins when a Health Coach tells you to eliminate something you love. Simply cut back and add something else that will help satisfy you. This idea of "crowding out" something not so nutritious with something that has more nutrition will go a long way toward helping you improve your overall diet and health. Remember, many carbs that people love, like rice and potatoes, have very little nutritional value. Look for and choose complex carbs that will provide your body with more nutrition, including fiber.

**Cut down on processed foods:** Did you notice I didn't say "*eliminate all processed foods*"? While doing so would dramatically increase your health, going cold turkey would probably be almost impossible. Processed foods contain a tremendous amount of chemicals, sugars and sodium and they lack the nutrients our bodies desperately need. If they're part of your daily diet, start by cutting out just one per day. Hopefully, you'll realize you don't miss it and you'll choose another one to eliminate. At the end of the day, your body will thank you.

**Cut out (or at least reduce) soda consumption:** This means both diet and regular soda. I'd really like to tell you to get these toxic drinks completely out of your diet, but for some of you, it would probably be like telling you to stop breathing. There's truly nothing good about any kind of soda. Regular ones are full of high fructose corn syrup, which is thought to cause a myriad of issues, including ADD and ADHD in children. They also contain a number of other chemicals that just aren't good for you. Diet sodas are no better. They're packed full of probably one of the most dangerous additives ever approved by the FDA: Aspartame (also known as NutraSweet, Equal or the lesser known name of Phenylalanine). Please read my October 2019 newsletter, which goes into great detail on this truly poisonous chemical. In addition to its toxicity, the reality is that diet sodas sweetened with Aspartame have been shown to INCREASE your appetite. After its approval by my least favorite government agency, there were complaints of headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, memory loss and seizures. The harmful effects of Aspartame are actually documented by the FDA's own data. In 1995, under the Freedom of Information Act, the FDA was forced to release a list of 92 Aspartame symptoms reported by tens of thousands of victims. The National Institute of Health has cataloged 167 adverse effects from Aspartame. Start weaning it out of your diet as soon as possible. If you want something fizzy, choose club soda or seltzer water with lime. There are quite a few naturally flavored ones out there that are super yummy....and safe.

**Get moving:** For those of you who have been doing close to nothing, a mere 15 minutes of movement per day will go a long way to improve your health. It doesn't even have to be all at once. Just start to move more. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park a little farther from the store when you're running errands. Your waistline and your car (fewer dings) will thank you. Perhaps you'll like it so much you'll increase it to 30 or 45 minutes. Quite frankly, ANY amount of movement is better than none. If you already exercise, add a little bit more. Here's an instance where I do think that more is better.

**Forgive:** Let's be honest. At least one person in our lives has hurt us. Sometimes the hurt was intentional. Other times, that person has absolutely no idea he/she wronged us. It doesn't matter which one it is. What matters is when you don't forgive, the only person it hurts is YOU. Anger and resentment are negative emotions and are harmful to your soul. They can and WILL have a detrimental impact on your health. Choose forgiveness and you'll be amazed by how much better you feel. You don't even have to tell anyone, including the person you've forgiven. Or you can shout it from the rooftops. It's YOUR choice how you handle it, but what's important is that you forgave, which is ultimately a personal matter between you and God. I wrote about forgiveness in June 2018. It's definitely worth a read.

**Do something nice for someone:** Let's face it. The holidays (and the cold weather and short days) are a tough time for a lot of people. If you have the winter blues, it's easy to retreat and as I like to say "hermitize yourself" (i.e.: have minimal contact with just about everyone). That is the WORST thing you can do when you're feeling blue. Instead, get out of your own head and do something for someone else. Give blood. Volunteer at your child's school. Pay for the coffee of the person behind you in line. Shovel a neighbor's driveway. Call a friend you haven't seen in a while. Not only will it make someone's day, it'll help YOU feel better. When you're sad, don't be alone. Reach out. Force yourself to be around others or to do a kind deed. Believe me, you'll be smiling again before you know it.

I hope these suggestions are helpful. The beginning of a new year is a great time to make some positive changes in your life to become happier and healthier. Things can and will get better and that's a fantastic goal for the new year. The choice is yours. Make it a good one and have a wonderful month.