

Feel Your Personal Best



9 Surprisingly Simple Secrets to Weight Loss & Fitness Success

Alice Greene

Welcome,



I'm Alice Greene.

This book is a journey that opens up the possibility and opportunity to discover a delightful way of getting and staying fit and being at a weight that feels wonderful.

The secrets I reveal will likely resonate with you at your core and help you to restore feeling great about your body and yourself – a struggle shared with even the most successful and beautiful women we hold up as role models.

What I will share with you comes from what I have learned as America's healthy lifestyle coach, from working with many women who I have helped reclaim their fitness, confidence and motivation, and as a success story in my own right.

Feeling great about yourself comes from more than exercising, healthy eating and reducing weight. It comes from what we believe about ourselves, how we judge ourselves and what it takes to treat ourselves with respect and love.

The struggle to feel great and make healthy lifestyle choices is as much about what we think, believe and feel as it is about the behavioral changes we make. I help women address both sides of the equation, and this approach is helping them change their attitude about food, exercise and themselves. It is enabling them to recognize their successes and achieve more self confidence, and it is helping them stick with their new fitness and health-oriented lifestyle changes for the long-term.

May you gain new insights about yourself and what it takes to gain that wonderful great feeling you are longing for.



9 Life Changing Secrets to Feeling Fit & Great

Table of Contents

| | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| Introduction | 1-2 |
| #1: Respond to a Defining Moment | 3-4 |
| #2: Get Motivated by a New Vision | 5-6 |
| #3: Listen to Your Body and Honor It | 7-8 |
| #4: Determine Whose Beliefs are Running You | 9-10 |
| #5: Create Routines that Work for Your Life | 11-12 |
| #6: Rewrite the Rules About Being a Perfectionist | 13-14 |
| #7: Discover What Really Makes You Feel Good | 15-16 |
| #8: Establish Accountability to Keep Your Resolve | 17-18 |
| #9: Create Ah-ha Strategies Out of Disappointments | 19-20 |
| Summary | 21 |

9 Life Changing Secrets to Feeling Fit & Great

Introduction

Feeling great in your own body is a feeling of being invincible, confident, energized, able to do anything, and delighted with oneself. It is a wonderful feeling that most of us can achieve, whether for the first time or through recapturing an old feeling.

Unfortunately, the majority of us as women don't usually feel great in our own bodies. For many of us it is a gradual loss of feeling good and for others we know exactly the day it happened when the pain, discomfort or shame set in. But there is a way to change this.

Is Feeling Great Really Possible?

I know many women for whom the idea that it is possible to feel really great physically or emotionally is deemed a fantasy. For them and many of the rest of us, it is hard to imagine feeling great within the context of a chaotic lifestyle when the focus is on others and not on oneself. Where is the time for that? Everything else has priority. We question how we can possibly take any time for our own self-care, fitness and health when so much depends on us to get things done and done right.

Does Feeling Great Really Matter?

But if we don't take time, we aren't the only ones who suffer. When we feel lousy, stressed, overwhelmed, overweight, ugly, imperfect, incompetent, inadequate, out of control, or simply exhausted, it affects everyone around us. That isn't our intent. We work to keep all our feelings from coming to the surface, but unchecked feelings can have a way of getting expressed in ways we don't always intend.

I've learned the hard way that when I try to be everything to all people, keep my feelings buried, and let shame for my imperfections be my middle name that everything gets a whole lot worse. I've discovered that by taking care of myself that I feel more grounded, in control and confident and a whole lot less judgmental of myself and others. I am not perfect, and I no longer try to be what I think everyone wants me to be. Instead, I am taking care of me and what I need to do to feel great about myself and great in my own body. For some I may seem like a maverick, but I look around and I see women suffering and paying a high price for not putting themselves on the list of priorities.

9 Life Changing Secrets to Feeling Fit & Great

Our Beliefs Tend to Get in the Way

What is interesting is that we live in a free world and we have achieved the equality we fought for in the 1970s and 80s. As women, we make our own rules and we choose whether we will have marriages, children, careers, our own businesses or be a jetsetter. We aren't defined by our sex. Instead we are defined by our beliefs about ourselves, and those beliefs have narrowed our options. We choose to be perfect and then judge ourselves by our ability to live up to our own high standards. In years past, we harshly judged our peers with the white-glove test, but we don't judge our friends and neighbors that way anymore. We focus the criticism squarely on ourselves. And now our daughters are striving to outdo us and be even more perfect than is humanly possible. Only we can stop it, because we are creating it.

What Will it Take to Decide to Feel Great?

So it begs the question. What will it take to decide that enough is enough? How bad do things have to get for any one of us to realize that we don't deserve to feel this lousy, to have so much pain, or treat ourselves the way we do?

The nine secrets that I have to share with you come from my own wake up call that got me to stop, take care of myself, and ultimately become a fitness and weight loss success story.

As Richard Simmons Says: Love yourself

While the focus was on feeling better again in my own body and losing the weight that was destroying my self esteem, the lessons I learned and the secrets I have to share go beyond exercise, better eating and healthier habits. They get to the core of the real issue, which is rebuilding self-worth and believing that we are beautiful in our own right, deserving of self-care, and that our health and fitness is a priority equal to the other things that now top our lists. Instead of feeling guilty for taking time for ourselves, we can change our perspectives and make adjustments that everyone in our lives can support, appreciate and benefit from. I know this because I see it happen over and over with my clients and it happened for me. It can also be true for you.

May the Nine Secrets Ignite You

The nine secrets may surprise you, enlighten you and confirm what you already know deep in your soul to be true. More importantly I hope it ignites something in you that changes your perception of yourself and gives you permission to put self care on equal par with the other priorities in your day and week.

Secret #1: Respond to a Defining Moment

Have you ever had a moment that gave you enormous resolve to make a change in your life? What did you do with that resolve?

It can occur in an instant. The resolve to change how you feel in your body and about yourself can happen when you see a photo of yourself that stuns you, overhear someone say something that hurts you, get a frightening medical diagnosis, or when you can no longer physically do what you need to do.

Defining Moments are Wake Up Calls

These can be wake up calls, or what I call a defining moment. Mine happened looking in the mirror naked and being horrified by how heavy I'd become, seeing the cellulite down to my knees, and feeling the jelly fat of my inner thighs.

There are countless opportunities to have a defining moment when you are stopped in your tracks and decide in that moment that you must take action to turn things around before it gets too late. Unfortunately most women let the moment slip by, pushing the thought and feelings down inside with hopes the memory will quickly pass. And it does. But it was a missed opportunity.

Defining Moments Touch Us at the Core

It is the impact of facing mortality, your inner critic or even your wise soul, that gets your attention and pushes you from inaction to action. Have you ever read the success stories of women in Shape or Self magazine? What about the annual success stories that are featured each January in People magazine? In nearly every instance what got them to do something about their weight and health was a defining moment. Something grabbed them from their passivity and gave them strength of courage and a determined persistence to overcome the inertia that had been their lifestyles.

That's what happened to me. I stood there and thought "enough is enough. I have to do something about this before it gets too late." It was the catalyst for me, and it was a memorable defining moment. It was also the last of a series of moments that led to this point. I'd seen a photo of me at a wedding and was struck by how far out my tummy protruded. It was so unsightly and it was embarrassing. I couldn't fit into any of the clothes that I had bought just a few months before, and it was the fourth round of size increases over a sixteen month period. And I had given up on the idea of finding jeans that would fit my protruding thighs that were out of proportion to my expanding waist. It was all adding up, but it was looking in the mirror and really dealing with what I saw and felt that became my defining moment.

Secret #1: Respond to a Defining Moment

Responding to a Defining Moment

We all have these moments. It is a matter of letting it be the defining moment that changes your behavior and motivates you out of your numbness and inertia. It is what propels you to make healthy lifestyle changes that are hard to make without a catalyst that moves you.

What moments have been starting to add up for you?

What defining moments have you tried to ignore?

What will it take to get you to stop in your tracks and take stock of yourself?

What are you most afraid of that is keeping you from paying attention?

Are you ready or willing to respond to a defining moment? _____

Secret #2: Get Motivated by a New Vision

Motivation to act on a defining moment and stick with our new resolutions to get back into shape, eat better and take better care of ourselves is available to all us. It is a matter of understanding what is and isn't motivating.

Think of the last time you got motivated to make a change in your lifestyle or to get healthier. What motivated you? Were you motivated by what you should do or by what you envisioned was possible?

Motivation Pitfalls and Recommendations

1. Choices Based on Shoulds – Most lifestyle change goals come from taking an inventory of ourselves as compared to others and identifying what it is we think we should improve about ourselves or our lifestyle. This is not what will inspire you or me for very long, because these types of goals are based on things we feel we should do and not the things we want to do.
2. Decisions Without Inspiration – If you choose goals that don't inspire you, it is less likely you will succeed because you won't enjoy doing them. A common resolution is to join a gym and go three or more days a week. That's great if you like going to the gym, but the average person doesn't enjoy working out at a gym and stops going within a couple of months. What inspires you?
3. Goals That Aren't Realistic – Setting goals that are too high or require more than you can really do will usually lead to frustration and discouragement. By the time you give up, you will have convinced yourself that you can't succeed, follow through or be counted on to finish things. But that isn't likely the truth. When you set goals that aren't feasible based on your schedule, capabilities or resources, you set yourself up to fail. Set goals to succeed.
4. A Focus on Perfection – Life isn't perfect, and there are times you can't do what you thought you could or you just aren't up for it. The general reaction is to quit then and there because you blew it, clearly can't do it, and can't get re-motivated. But everyone has bad days and weeks when they can't work out or eat so well. That's life and not a reason to quit. Instead it helps to set realistic expectations, create strategies for these times and allow for weeks when things don't go as planned and you can't reach the full goal.
5. Too Many Goals – Lifestyle changes are difficult. They require a readiness to take action, a determination to put the change into practice, and patience while waiting for results or the goal to become a way of living. Many people attempt to make multiple changes in their life all at once, which makes it nearly impossible to succeed at any one of the goals. Pick just 1-2 new goals.

Secret #2: Get Motivated by a New Vision

6. Giving Up Too Easily – Just like creating a new habit, you need to do it frequently enough for it to become ingrained. This takes some planning, encouragement and accountability. Without these things in place, it is easy to give up when you don't reach the goal when you hoped to. Most of us give up too easily and too soon, and don't give ourselves a chance to succeed.

What Motivates You?

Focus on what really matters to you. If you want to lose weight, get more toned or have more stamina; do it for you, not someone else. Be inspired by a vision of what you wish to achieve and how it will feel when you have reached your goal. Imagine in detail how great it will feel to effortlessly walk up a flight of stairs, to feel confident about how you look, to stop taking your medication, or to fit into your favorite pair of jeans.

Visualize & Affirm Your Success Daily

Imagine yourself reaching your goal and having those great feelings as often as possible. By thinking about yourself as if you have already succeeded, you will start to live as if you are more healthy and trim and the vision will keep you going.

Visualizations and affirmations change our perception of reality, which in turn impacts what we think and believe. If you visualize yourself healthy and fit and state to yourself that you are achieving your goals each day, you will change your negative thinking from "I can't" to "I can", and that will increase your motivation.

Be Inspired

Continual motivation comes from being inspired by what you believe is possible and what excites you about achieving the vision.

What do you really want for yourself?

How will it feel to achieve this? How will it change your life?

Imagine this coming true for you, even if you don't really believe it can.

Create an affirmation (a statement that affirms you are achieving this)

I am _____

Let the visualization motivate you and the affirmation support you.

Secret #3: Listen to Your Body and Honor It

Our bodies are wiser than we realize, and if we honored the signals it gave us we would be so much better off. What is your body telling you?

Regain Control by Getting in Tune

It is common for women to feel resigned to chronic aches and pains, extended illnesses, fatigue, weight gain, lack of energy, and high stress. Do you feel this way? If so, resignation often comes from feeling hopeless and out of control. But control can be regained by listening to our bodies and responding to it.

I had to learn that my body was trying to tell me something when I repeatedly ended up in bed for months at a time with chronic fatigue, when I was practically living at the chiropractors with chronic back spasms, and when my joints hurt so much I couldn't kneel down or comb my hair without a lot of pain.

I was refusing to listen to my inner wisdom that told me I was in a bad relationship and to get out, that I was overworking and needed to take some down time, and that I was exercising without stretching and creating muscle imbalances.

What Are the Signals Trying to Tell You?

As women we are more in tune with our bodies than men typically are, but even with our greater awareness we tune out the signals our bodies give us. We assume physicians and healers are more intelligent than we are about our own bodies. I have been guilty of that by giving up my power to others who are no better equipped to help me than I am myself. It has been a process for me to get in touch with the fact that pain and the symptoms of stress aren't normal or something to accept. While some pain is tied to a medical diagnosis and beyond our control, a lot of pain is often a mechanism for letting us know that something isn't right. That we are pushing ourselves too far without regard to our needs.

“Stress is a red flag for not taking care of yourself” says Dr. Meredith Somers-Young, founder of Stillpoint Foundation. Stress is definitely a signal. When we are stressed by trying to do too much, by not taking care of our selves, and by dealing with situations out of our control, our bodies respond with illness, pain, weight gain, high blood pressure, exhaustion or depression.

Pain is a Message

Chronic joint pain is another signal, unless you have been diagnosed with arthritis. Joint pain begins to appear in our 30s and 40s when our muscles have become unbalanced. This is due to years of poor posture, a lack of stretching tight muscles (think hip, leg, shoulder and neck muscles) or strengthening

Secret #3: Listen to Your Body and Honor It

weaker muscles (mostly core muscles of the upper and lower back, buttocks and abdomen). Around every joint are two opposing muscles, and when one is weaker or stronger than the other you will have joint pain. My pain was a red flag that I ignored until I tore a tendon and went to physical therapy to learn that I was an injury waiting to happen. Most of us are. That is why injuries are common when we start exercising after a hiatus. We aren't in balance, and we don't listen when our aches and pains let us know this.

Hunger Levels are Metabolic Signals

Feeling full or ravenously hungry are also important signals. There is no better appetite suppressant than feeling full, but many of us don't stop to notice when we get full and later feel horrible because we overate. For some women, this is a nightly occurrence. On the flip side, it is becoming very common to ignore hunger signals because we are too busy to stop and food isn't readily available when we feel hungry. Ignoring either signal slows down metabolism, leads to weight gain, and creates carb cravings and bingeing.

More is Less – Less is More

Overdoing it is a common factor. We take on too much, push ourselves too hard, and put our own physical needs last. We even do this when starting back into exercise. We overdo it and get an overuse injury, because more is better. Actually less is more. It is better to pace yourself, listen to your body and gradually progress in a way that feels good to your body.

Listen to Your Own Inner Wisdom

Have you stopped listening to your own internal guidance? _____

Try to think of any signals you've been getting from your body and what you think they are trying to telling you?

What is one of the signals your body is sending you?

What is your body trying to tell you?

What will you do to honor your body in the future?

Secret #4: Determine Whose Beliefs are Running You

We all make decisions based on what we think is right or wrong, which is based on our belief system. But this is not something we are conscious of. These are just facts of life, or are they? Are your beliefs fact or what you believe to be true?

Have you ever thought it amazing that your beliefs were incredibly different from someone else's, yet you both managed to function? The question is, are you functioning the way you really want, and how do these beliefs impact your life, your body and how you feel? That is a hard question to answer if you've never really looked at them before. Have you ever taken an inventory of your beliefs?

Beliefs Don't Have to Be Taken for Granted

Six years ago I took a look at mine, and it was one of the biggest eye openers of my life. I was working with a therapist who said that my beliefs were getting in the way of making the changes I wanted in my life and keeping me from being happy. I wasn't even sure I understood what he meant until I began to look at what I believed about myself, my obligations and my life. I took all of my beliefs for granted – as gospel, but he helped me to see that I didn't have to keep any of the beliefs if they didn't work for me and kept me from doing what was in my best interests. Now that was a radical, yet freeing concept to me.

Beliefs Are Seldom Your Own

Everyone has internal beliefs that drive their decisions and behaviors, but those beliefs are not necessarily their own. Most beliefs are instilled during childhood and early adulthood as well as through ongoing social messages. The belief that we as women are selfish by taking time out for ourselves is not what any of us would choose to believe were we given a choice. This is a collective belief that we carry and promote.

Beliefs Are Ours to Keep, Discard and Change

We don't have to hold onto the belief that we must do everything or nothing will get done right. We don't have to believe that we must be perfect to be loved, liked or worthy. We can release the belief that our weight defines us as beautiful, capable and desirable women. One of the reasons we don't feel great in our own body is the judgment we impose on ourselves and on each other. We choose to believe that if we are overweight we are not equal to those that weigh less. And the more we believe this and harshly judge ourselves, the more we will judge other women. But what is interesting about judgment is that it only hurts the one doing the judging. If the person we are judging loves themselves, it won't matter what we believe or think. But most women don't love themselves. We suffer from poor self-esteem, so we are deeply impacted by any hint of judgment whether it is there or not.

Secret #4: Determine Whose Beliefs are Running You

Thoughts Validate Beliefs That Lead to Feelings and Drive Behaviors

I have learned from my work with Diana Lipson-Burge, a dietician and leader in the field of emotional eating, that our thoughts (85% of which are not based on fact but on interpretations of the past or projections onto the future) validate our beliefs (most of which are not our own) and impact our feelings (most of which we don't know we have), which in turn drives our behavior (for which we harshly criticize ourselves). We are quick to note that we are good or bad, right or wrong, a success or a failure for behaviors that are based on aspects of ourselves we aren't in touch with, and those aspects are never black and white.

Restate What You Tell Yourself using Positive Self-Talk

Listen to your self talk, and determine if your thoughts are serving you and if they are really true. Reframe what you say to yourself by turning a negative thought or belief into a positive one. For example, turn "I'm a failure. I only exercised twice when I said I'd do it three times" into "I succeeded to exercise twice, and I see that the problem is preparation." If you think you failed by having a bad day, not meeting your goal or eating something on your forbidden food list, know that everyone has bad days, and then forgive yourself, adapt and keep on moving.

What Are Your Beliefs?

Not until it is clear what your beliefs are can you determine if they are right or wrong for your life. If they aren't right for you, create a new belief that serves you better.

Start by looking at one of your beliefs that you now want to question. A common one is "I'm not as important as the kid's happiness."

What do you believe – and why.

Where does this belief come from?

Does this belief serve you? _____

Would you like to change it to better honor you and fit your needs? _____

What would be a better belief for you?

Secret #5: Create Routines that Work for Your Life

To succeed long term in getting back into shape, maintaining your health and achieving a great feeling in your body means creating a lifestyle that fits your life. Do you have a healthy lifestyle that works for you? Do you feel successful?

Success Comes From Consistent Healthy Habits

Success isn't quick weight loss. Success is consistency in maintaining healthy habits that include balanced eating, regular exercise, enough sleep, and ways to build muscle, strengthen the core, improve balance, stretch and de-stress.

Start Gradually and Build On Incorporated Routines

But you don't want to try this all at once. It is way too overwhelming. In my first year of taking care of myself, I started off by just doing cardio exercise and some light stretching. The second year I added strengthening. The third year I added Pilates and some yoga. The fourth and fifth year I added more variety into my exercises. And I don't try to do 3-4 days of strengthening. I do 2 days and just 2 sets, instead of the recommended 3. And yes, I am a certified personal trainer, but this is what works best for me. I added things gradually, made incremental changes in my schedule and have figured out what I need and to what extent I need it.

Too Much Too Soon Won't Last

What so many of us do is create a kick-ass routine, like boot camp, that requires a big commitment of time, effort and perseverance. And the result is a short-lived program that is unsustainable for the long term. This is a quick way to lose the results gained, get injured and come to believe that nothing really works. I know that boot camps are the rage and that personal trainers encourage 3-4 days of strength training along with 5 or more days of cardio, time for stretching and a specified diet. If you are like me, that is way too much to take on at one time. This takes us back to the all or nothing mentality. If you aren't like me and can do it, then you know yourself best. For some people bootcamp is just the right thing.

Determine What is Realistic For You and Your Life

Determine what is realistic for you and your body. Start by creating realistic daily practices that slowly change your lifestyle so that eating better and regular exercise get easily incorporated in your planning and schedule. It is better to start with just a few changes and a small commitment – maybe exercising a few days a week doing as much time as you can and working up to five days for 30-40 minutes. What is most important is incrementally increasing the days, time and intensity in a way that is best for your fitness level and schedule. This isn't a race or a comparison game. It is a process of incorporating fitness for a lifetime.

Secret #5: Create Routines that Work for Your Life

Incorporate Healthy Eating That Suits You

The same goes for food. When we feel fat, we start a diet. But diets have less than a 2% success rate. Almost no one can keep the weight off a year or more after the diet, but that doesn't stop us from trying what everyone is doing. This is particularly alluring for us as women. We are compelled to do the next diet.

It is far better to select healthy options from among foods you enjoy, and to eat when you get hungry and stop before you get full. You will be more successful long term if you enjoy what you eat, feel free to eat what you love without being deprived or judged, and creating a routine that isn't driven by the latest diet. This is easier than starting something new every six months.

How Can Regular Activity Fit Into Your Life?

Know what is right for you. Decide what is realistic and sustainable in your daily life. Everyone's goals, abilities and schedules are different, so it is best to focus on your situation and not someone else's. If you push too hard, you can get burned out, frustrated, injured or impatient for results. It is better to start with what you can easily add into your day or week, so you have success and can add more when you are ready to do so.

How much time can you devote to exercise each week and when?

Specific days of the week _____

Specific hours in the day _____

What type of exercise can you realistically start off doing?

Do you have any physical limitations you need to pay attention to?

What would be a realistic exercise schedule you could do next week?

Type of exercise _____ # of days _____

What were your successes? _____

What is your new weekly goal? _____

What do you like to eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks?

How can these be healthier using more lean protein, complex carbohydrates and unsaturated fats in each of these meals and snacks?

Secret #6: Rewrite the Rules About Being a Perfectionist

In the 1950s women judged one another on home cleanliness. Today the majority of women and teenage girls judge themselves on how well they do it all. If any one thing isn't done perfectly, they tend to beat themselves up for failure. Is this you too? Can you stop to see how much you do well or the conditions under which you do so much and appreciate your achievements?

We Have The Power to Rewrite The Rules

We have the power to determine what the standards are and to rewrite the rules. No one else is expecting us to have a perfect score. We are the ones coming up with the verdict and the penance. Instead we can decide when good is good enough for most things and when getting it perfect is really required. This applies to what we do and how we view our bodies.

We Are Choosing to be Hard On Ourselves

In survey after survey, women admit they don't like how they look and are quick to find flaws about themselves. Even celebrities and super models are shamed by parts of their bodies and put themselves through grueling workouts to meet their own high expectations and what they believe their adoring fans demand of them. The more perfect they are, however, the higher the standards become for all women.

Setting high standards of perfection isn't limited to our bodies, it permeates every aspect of our lives. And this in turn affects our self-esteem, because there is no woman that can attain the perfection she demands of herself. We have come to believe that no matter how perfect or great everything is that we do, if one small detail gets missed or messed up or if one thing isn't done right, then we have failed and it colors everything else – no matter that the rest of what we've done is really great.

We Take On The World With The Same High Expectations

That might make sense if our tasks were limited to a few things each day and we had ample time and resources to be flawless, but many women have taken on triple what any one person can do in a day. We are entrepreneurs and career women, we handle most of the household and child rearing, we do the majority of the cooking and meal planning, we run most of the errands and haul kids nearly every day of the week between activities, we try to keep up with the family and our friendships, and we host dinner parties, special events and take time out to make our kids feel supported. On top of that we check on email, manage the finances, book appointments and keep up with what goes on in the world and around town. Are you one of these women? How much of this was done really well and deserving of applause?

Secret #6: Rewrite the Rules About Being a Perfectionist

The Difference Between Men and Women

A columnist once noted that the difference between men and women is that women think that everything they do has to be perfect, while a man picks his battles. What isn't deserving of his full attention is relegated to a pass-fail measure of success, and his goal is to simply to pass. Knowing this won't change a woman's perspective. It is in our DNA to attempt full scale perfectionism, and that doesn't make us wrong. But men may be able to teach us something.

Perfectionism Impacts Time For Ourselves

So what does this have to do with how we feel about and in our bodies? Everything. It is our need for being viewed as a perfect wife, mother, employee, friend, business woman or volunteer. This external perfectionism keeps us from having time and from being willing to make time for our selves. It is also our judgment of ourselves that keeps us from believing in our ability to succeed in feeling great again. Many women have given up, given in and let herself fall prey to the belief that she can't change her life, her body or herself. That is understandable from her position.

Perfectionism Impacts How We Feel About Our Self-Worth

However that belief is killing our love for ourselves, our ability to be happy and our confidence in getting control over our eating, our weight and our health. Even highly successful business women struggle with their lack of control over their bodies. And one of the reasons is that our bodies don't respond well to force, stress and dieting. But that is the state that most of our bodies live in. The other reason is that we are so overwhelmed with feelings of failure, inadequacies and shame.

What is perfectionism costing you?

Who really cares, besides yourself, that you are perfect?

How can you rewrite your own rules about perfectionism in order to take better care of yourself?

Secret #7: Discover What Really Makes You Feel Good

Do you know what feels good to you? Do you like to dance or do yoga? Do you like long baths, soft music and hot cocoa? Do you enjoy certain kinds of fruits or vegetables? Do you like to be touched or to get a deep massage?

If you know, that is wonderful. Not everyone knows. I didn't until I took time to connect with myself.

Feeling Good Can Be a Discovery Process

To find out what feels good can be a discovery process. The objective is to find what feels positive, inspiring, enjoyable or satisfying. And the outcome is to include those things in your life that recharge your batteries, reduce the stress, get you moving and help you eat what is healthy as a way of life. Ultimately we all want to feel good – even great – every day, even though we may settle for feeling less than ok on most days.

When you are doing things you enjoy and that make you feel alive, great about your body and confident, then it is easy to keep doing them. That is why picking aerobic activities you really like and healthy foods that you really enjoy and find satisfying are so important. If you incorporate these things into your daily routine, you'll be more likely to adopt them more easily for the long term for better health and sustainable weight loss.

Choosing What Feels Good to You Can Turn Into a Passion

They can even become a passion, which is what happened to me. I always hated the thought of exercise and did it sporadically like a yo-yo diet, but I knew if I was going to do it my preference was doing something at home. I'm not an outdoor person and I like solitary activity. I had bought a Stairmaster that was gathering dust, but once I paired it with my favorite evening show I got hooked. Six years later I still like it, and I discovered a few years into using it nearly every day that I had a passion for exercise. I still marvel at that.

What Aerobic Activity Do You Really Enjoy?

But exercise equipment isn't for everyone, and it doesn't have to be. I know women that have rediscovered the hoola hoop, chosen belly or rock n roll dancing, gotten back into rowing, kayaking and hiking. Many women like swing dancing, video tapes and gardening. All of these are good. So is roller blading, cross country skiing, Nordic walking, swimming, aquatics, walking, outdoor circuits, Curves, biking, countra dancing, and countless other activities.

Which of these calls out to you?

What did you like to do when you were younger or when you were more active?

Secret #7: Discover What Really Makes You Feel Good

Exercise Does Not Require Gym Equipment

There is a misconception that a workout or exercise that gets us in shape must be done at the gym or with gym equipment. Not true. That concept was introduced in the 1980s as gyms were promoting heavily and time got so crunched that leisurely activities during the evenings and weekends were less frequent. What is more important is discovering a few activities that you really enjoy doing that get your heart rate up a bit so you feel some exertion but not so high you are struggling to hold a conversation.

Healthy Eating Does Not Require Dieting

Misconceptions about what to eat are equally off base. We've been programmed to pick dieting as a way to eat better and lost sight of good nutrition. There is so much confusion now adays about what is right and wrong, and that is part of the problem. Diets, I have come to believe are complicated. Basic healthy nutrition is actually very simple. Healthy nutrition can be very enjoyable, fulfilling and satisfying. It is all in picking foods that you enjoy and make you feel good.

The USDA food pyramid is actually a good guideline. It emphasizes all things in moderation and eliminates the need to deprive ourselves of what we enjoy. The goal is to primarily eat whole grains, vegetables and beans (all complex carbs), fruits (healthy simple carbs), lean meats, fish and eggs (lean protein), and vegetable, nut and fish oils (unsaturated fats). If you eat a meal or snack with these things – focusing on ways to get your favorite foods, then there is always a bit of room for simple carbs and more saturated fats (treats). The way to manage portions is to listen to your body's hunger levels.

Pick Healthy Lifestyle Goals You Enjoy Doing

So when setting healthy lifestyle goals, pick what you'd really enjoy doing. It is more motivating and easier to make a long term way of life.

What type of aerobic activities do you like to do?

What do you like for breakfast? _____

What do you like for lunch? _____

What do you like for dinner? _____

What do you like for snacks? _____

Can you see a way to balance them and make healthier choices? _____

Secret #8: Establish Accountability to Keep Your Resolve

When we resolve to take better care of ourselves, the first few weeks can seem fairly easy. We have the motivational force from our defining moment spurring us on in moments when we'd rather do anything else. But after a while that isn't always enough, and we need something else to retain our resolve. Do you have an easier time getting started or staying on track?

Staying on Track Takes Determination Until It Is Routine

Staying on track is usually much harder than getting started. And if you stop and start, it only becomes more painful to start again and feeling great becomes more allusive. You have to stick with it, and initially that is how it feels. It isn't easy. I fought the urge to say "not today, I'll do it tomorrow" all the time. I refused to listen to that voice. Instead I said repeatedly "no discussion", "too bad", "just go do it". It worked. It drowned out the complainer voice in my head. Now it is a non-issue. I want to go do it. I want to eat well, and I want to experience the self-esteem that I've earned by doing it all for myself.

Accountability to Ourselves is Often Difficult

Accountability to ourselves is one of the toughest things for most of us to accomplish. We can follow through for someone else in our attempt to prove our perfection, but for ourselves we think it doesn't really matter if we let things slide.

Integrity With Ourselves Increases Self Trust

I thought that too, until I heard Marcia Wieder, author of *Making Your Dreams Come True*, and one of my mentors explain what happens when we don't follow through for ourselves. It was a revelation to me when she said that each time we tell ourselves we are going to do something and then don't do it, we are reducing the trust we have in ourselves. In time we will not believe our own word, in our inner wisdom or our own integrity. And I see that she is absolutely right. Women are constantly telling me that they don't have trust in themselves, they don't believe in themselves and they can't connect to their own wisdom. And I've been working to overcome that same issue.

Our Word to Ourselves is Powerful

What we tell ourselves we will do matters a great deal, and when we fail to do it over and over again we lose integrity with ourselves and move further into that place of denial, shame and pain. I now get that, and I am working much harder at being accountable and having integrity with myself, and it feels really good.

Accountability to Another Helps Keep the Resolve

That said, it still helps to have accountability to another person to whom you account for what you said you would do. It is great if you can check in from week

Secret #9: Create Ah-ha Strategies Out of Disappointments

When things don't quite happen as planned, such as completing your exercise goals for the week, overeating at night or not controlling your temper, how do you feel about it? Do you feel ok and look for a way to learn from the experience or do you think you failed and can't succeed?

Good Reasons For Things Not Going As Planned

Nine times out of ten, there is often a good reason why we didn't manage to do as we planned or as we set out to do. Seldom is it because we are bad, flawed or at risk of being a failure. We don't have to immediately assume there is something wrong with us. Instead we can assume there is something that can be changed so that in the future we won't be as easily thrown off course.

We Aren't Our Behaviors

When we judge our behavior as good or bad, we often end up judging ourselves in the same breath. But that isn't fair, particularly when we determine we are inherently bad. What is important to realize is we aren't our behaviors. Our behaviors are a by-product of our thoughts, beliefs and feelings and how we react to what is going on around us.

Bingeing Isn't What it Appears

Bingeing on cake and ice cream can be a good example. The common reaction is "Oh no, look what I've done", but that assumes that you willingly did this to yourself and that you are bad. But you can look at this a different way. Very often bingeing happens at night, after a stressful day. This is because night time is when we relax and our emotions from the day start to come up. But we are conditioned to push them away, and food is the perfect mechanism to keep them at bay. This is called emotional eating, and very often we have no idea there are any emotions present. That is because the food keeps them repressed.

Bingeing on sugary foods can also occur when you've skipped meals or not eaten much all day, and the body needs fuel quickly. Simple carbs are the fastest way to refuel and make you feel better. Emotional eating and a physical urge for cake and ice cream doesn't make anyone bad. But once you are aware of what is leading to the behavior, you then have the ah-ha to create strategies to avoid bingeing in the future and to enjoy your cake and ice cream in moderation.

Non-judgment Allows Objectivity and Learning

When we are able to be objective, and look at our behaviors without judgment, then we can learn from the experience. First consider what went well to identify the successes. You might not have exercised all 4 days as planned, but you might have exercised 3 of the days. Those were a success. Then consider what didn't go well, and why that was. What was a contributing factor? Did you over

Secret #9: Create Ah-ha Strategies Out of Disappointments

commit yourself when you set your goals in the first place? If that is the case, then you can readjust your goals based on that hindsight and create more realistic goals for the following week. Or did you choose to do something you really don't enjoy and part of you was rebelling? That would be a good insight and would help you to pick things that would inspire you more.

Finding the Ah-has to Create Better Strategies

The objective is to find the lesson in the disappointment of missing your goals or doing what you didn't want to do. What can you learn from the experience? What is affecting your behavior when you are around certain foods or when you eat at night? The ah-has you get by being in a discovery mode and not in a judgment mode create opportunities to develop better strategies.

Strategies are simply solutions that will help you succeed in maintaining your new goals, a healthy lifestyle and feeling great in your own body. They are a way to consider what will serve you better the next time and will give you more choices based on what you have discovered works better for you.

What Are Your Ah-ha Discoveries?

Think back to a day when you didn't do as you said you would with food or exercise. What was it about that particular day that caused you to get derailed from your goals? What was affecting your behavior? What ah-has do you see?

Pick a recent scenario and think about what happened beforehand.

What went well? What was the success?

What didn't go so well?

Without judgment, what do you learn from that?

In Summary

The 9 Secrets are the Principles to Feeling Great About Your Body & Yourself

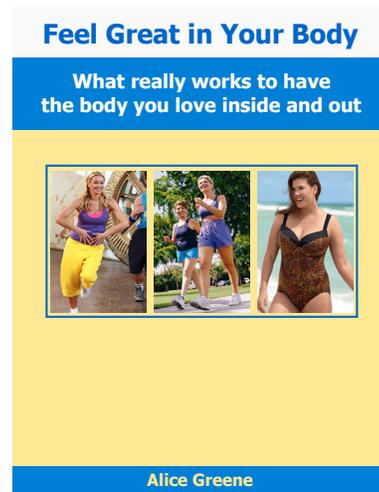
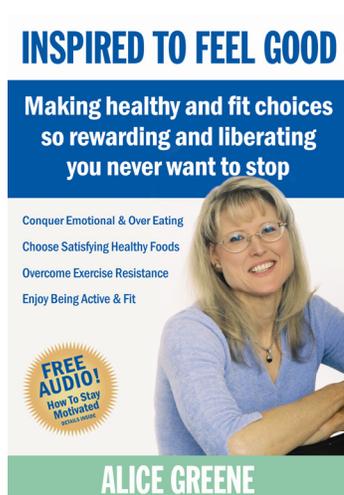
The nine secrets I've just shared with you are the foundation upon which you can change the way you feel in your body, about your body and about yourself.

You can apply these to getting fit, eating better, being healthier and feeling your personal best.

I hope that you've gained a lot of insights from the 9 secrets and that you have already found ways to help yourself make some changes in your life that feels good. These principles will help you take action for yourself, assist you in determining what is best for you, and gives you the tools to stay on track.



If you are looking for more resources, consider some of my other books.



Visit www.feelyourpersonalbest.com to learn more