



DISCOVERING A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT FITNESS



By Alice Greene

When exercise and eating right is a chore and something you have to do because you are supposed to or feel you must do right, than it is difficult to stay motivated and it doesn't take much to get derailed.

Once derailed, it is fairly challenging to get back on track. More often than not it takes more effort than you can really muster and the days slip into months. Soon you've lost the resolve to even care. You can't think about it or really even face it. And you certainly don't want to hear what your concerned family, friends or colleagues have to say about it, much less your inner critic, as your weight increases, your energy wanes and your well-being deteriorates. Sometimes it is easier to be in denial and avoid dealing with your body altogether. But eventually a part of you begins to push you into taking some kind of action, and with some reluctance and perhaps anxiety you consider your options for losing weight and feeling better.

When Barbara came to me she had let exercise and healthy eating slip for the prior 15 months and she didn't feel very well. She told me "I don't have it in me to do this right now, and I have a sense of failing and hopelessness." But at the same time, she had succeeded a couple of years before and knew she could do it again. She wanted to feel better, to get past her complacency and to find a way to be motivated for herself and accountable so that fitness was a way of life. And that is exactly what she accomplished from doing the 12-week eating and exercise lifestyle coaching program.

Lifestyle fitness coaching is a whole new way of thinking about fitness. It helps you incorporate

regular activity, healthy eating and self care into your life in a way that is enjoyable, positive and motivating. During the process you change the way you think about exercise, food and yourself. It also helps you become confident that you can do this for yourself and that you have lots of choices.

Barbara started off easy, choosing to get some aerobic exercise three times a week for 30 minutes and she rediscovered that it felt good to be in motion again. She realized that while she had put off exercise, once she got moving again her mood lifted and it felt wonderful to get her heart rate up a bit. Within six weeks her knee, that had bothered her for years, wasn't so painful anymore. By the eighth week she was really seeing some big shifts in how she felt. She said in our eighth session, "It was like old times this week. I got a great feeling from exercising. It really feels good and my body wants to do it. I feel secure, trusting in my body and myself, and I feel balanced."

And the following week she was walking further distances because it exhilarated her and from that she got the energy and motivation to finally tackle some of her home projects. She was feeling highly productive and invigorated, which comes with improving aerobic fitness levels. In the eleventh week she was excited and said to me in our call "The endorphins are alive and active. I am fitter now, and I felt fine after mowing the entire yard, which takes 90 minutes. I felt like I was 16 years old. I've really built my strength and stamina." And on our last week, she said "Wow, I walked for 60 minutes because I wanted to, and my knee just doesn't hurt as much at all. When I'm taking care of myself I feel so much better. My life balance is better, and I feel much stronger. I am happy with the amount of exercise I am doing and how easily I'm doing it."

Barbara also began changing the way she looked at food. She learned to listen to her hunger signals and to eat whenever she got hungry and to stop when she was satisfied but not full. She also discovered that it wasn't that hard to add more vegetables or to prepare meals and snacks ahead of time that were balanced so she had things available whenever she got hungry. By the sixth week she was finding she really liked eat-

ing healthy meals and that she was feeling physically better. And she noticed that "every time I don't eat a healthy meal, I naturally gravitate back to healthy options without bingeing. I'm not out of control. With balanced meals, I'm not obsessed or getting too hungry. I'm also gaining trust in having some of my forbidden foods this way."

She was learning that it isn't the behavior of eating right or wrong, but what drives our behavior that matters. When you can be conscious without judgment, you can stop, check in and determine what is triggering the compulsion to eat and address it instead of turning to food. She had an epiphany in the eighth week, telling me "This is so much more than about food (and she's right). Without controlling everything, I have more control, and it is less about judging things as good or bad but accepting there is no perfect way." Within the next couple of weeks she was happier, more confident and trusting herself to make

choices that best served her. She also noticed that the less she judged herself around food the less she judged herself and others elsewhere in her life. By the twelfth week she was feeling like she was really living life and not depriving herself or hung up about food. "I know what I'm hungry for and how I can balance it, which makes it all just flow so easily." She was now in control with a sense of freedom to really enjoy food without fear of being preoccupied by it or of judging herself.

Now Barbara is checking in with me monthly to maintain her progress, discuss observations and get new exercise routines. She is meeting her goals and challenging herself at the pace that works for her. She is motivated, holding herself accountable and staying on track with enthusiasm and pride.

"This program is the missing piece. I already knew about nutrition, diet and exercise, but this allows all that to be used in a

lifestyle way with greater trust in oneself. What is so different about this program is that the focus is on making choices that best serve me instead of trying to measure up to a structure and feeling judged for how well I did. This program helps you trust and feel good about yourself and I am so thankful for the changes in my thinking. It isn't about fixing me. It is about self acceptance and having choice. I now feel better, happier and more confident. I also know that I do have control and can keep doing this for myself. I want others to know about this, because it has really made a big difference in my life."

Barbara Swartz - Pennsylvania

I provide complimentary consultations so that you can experience the benefit of having a lifestyle fitness coach for yourself. Call me at 978-465-3555 x5 or sign up for a free consultation on my site www.fitbeyond40.com.



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