

Flip the Switch WELLNESS MATTERS!

By Lisa Schilling RN

Every day I meet people who share their frustrations with healthy living attempts. Much of what I hear is the same. People tend to view exercise and eating a balanced nutritious diet as work, something else to think about or an expectation they must fulfill. I see this deep-seeded perception as the root of many failed attempts to change behavior. Until people begin to view changes with expectancy, versus creating an expectation that must be fulfilled, they will not enjoy the *process* that is the basis of healthy living.

It is important to find activity that you enjoy and can look forward to. This creates the healthy anticipation for participation. For me, I have learned to enjoy yoga class. I look forward to my time in class and anticipate getting to go. This seems unlikely for me, since I used to regularly state how inflexible I was. I have learned not to say or think that about myself. I can improve my flexibility, and in fact I am. I will not limit myself with negative thinking any longer. I am now cautious about the thoughts I dwell on and the words I say about myself. You should be cautious as well. By thinking, "I am getting more flexible each time I attend class." I am actually achieving that versus continuing to be stuck in "inflexible" thinking.

This *purposeful thought shifting* reduces the idea of the behavior as an "expectation" that must be fulfilled. An unfulfilled expectation leads to *dread*. Dread only serves to negatively influence your *internal dialogue*. Your internal dialogue steers your behavior. The "Law of Attraction" claims that you bring to yourself what your mind dwells on. So it stands to reason that by putting your *thoughts* in order you will put your *steps* in order, thus creating the success you desire. This is a key concept on your journey to better total health, fitness and wellness.

Purposeful thought shifting can create *expectancy* about new behaviors. They can become something you look forward to completing. Why? There are several reasons. First of all you realize that completing your task unloads your guilt-baggage over not doing it. You are now focusing on the *joy* of having it done and no longer nagging yourself to "just go do it." It also focuses on the benefit of the task, not the task itself.

Procrastination is a tool we subconsciously use to put off doing the unpleasant in hopes that it will go away. However most people never mentally let themselves off the hook, the negative feelings this creates is detrimental to progress. Recognize this trap and gain joy from doing your most "difficult to get motivated for" task first. You are now taking action and making a purposeful plan.

In the book *Eat That Frog* by Brian Tracy, he summarizes Mark Twain's sentiments like this, "If eating a live frog is the worst thing you have to do all day, then do it first and get it out of the way." By getting it out of the way, you will not let the dreadful anticipation of that task ruin the rest of your day. Get excited about creating new healthy behaviors. This new way of thinking is important because it will shape your *willingness* to continue the healthy habits long-term (the goal).

Being *enthusiastic* about your new way of living is part of the journey. From this point on, each choice will have more meaning and purpose. Realize that you steer the ship and that you are in control of what happens. This will be a big part of your success. Personal control *empowers* you to stay on track. Realize that you don't have to do *all* the right things *all* the time in order to improve your health! Small meaningful changes, practiced over time will shape the big picture. This is a radical *thought-shift* from traditional teaching.

The journey to improving these things is actually more important than reaching the final destination of goal

fulfillment. You are learning a process. A process you will use to maintain health, fitness and wellness for the long-run. It is very important to enjoy the process. Along the way, be sure to reward yourself with gifts of time and relaxation. Nurture yourself during this shift in focus and begin to enjoy greater health and wellness. It is time for you to flip the switch and begin to shift your way of thinking. Refuse to say or think negative or limiting things about yourself. Instead choose to rephrase your thought in a positive and encouraging way. Your thoughts will manifest in your actions. Create healthy thoughts and you will start the process of creating a healthy body. It is all within your control. Start today!