

How Changing Your Focus Can Change Your Life-From Fat to Fabulous!

By Lisa Schilling RN

While driving to work today, I heard at least three commercials advertising products designed to make you: thin, skinny, or slim. Is it just me, or does anyone else remember hearing kids called this on the playground as a taunt or putdown? Perhaps you had a grandma or certain relative that would comment on how skinny you were getting. But also recall their plan was to “put some meat on your bones,” not congratulate you.

Somehow these are now desirable traits, and companies spend a great deal of money to convince you that their product, plan or pill will help you achieve this. Unfortunately, they are missing the point. People simply want to buy a “look,” not improve their health. To be healthy does not require you to be skinny, however many healthy people have lean, trim figures as a result of their efforts. Your state of fitness has more to do with how your body functions than what the scale says.

There are many ways to be thin and only a handful of those ways are healthy. If you only try to be skinny, and neglect improving your health and fitness, you have sold yourself short. One of my favorite mantras has always been: “Focus on the fitness, not the fatness.”

The more you work to eat sensible, participate in weight bearing exercise, and challenging your heart and lungs with cardiovascular training, the greater your health and fitness improvement will be. This will not only affect how you look, but how you feel, for the duration of your life.

Just looking skinny or weighing less, should not be the goal. Instead consider making your goal to lose body fat through targeted exercise and nutrition changes, to increase lean muscle by adding weight bearing exercise, to improve endurance by challenging your heart and lung function with cardio-based exercise, or to reduce or eliminate medication by changing your habits.

This positive activity will also increase your mental attitude as well as your self-esteem. When you improve your health and change your weight due to consistent healthier habits, you will walk with a little spring in your step. You will feel so good about what you are doing

for yourself that others can't help but notice the change in how you carry yourself.

This is about you taking a proactive approach to your habits. Caring more about how healthy and fit you are, than how much you weigh. When you change your focus you can begin to change your life.

If you find yourself overscheduled, overwhelmed and burned-out, or you have struggled with health, fitness, wellness or life-balance issue in the past, it is time to shift your focus. Spend more time on prevention and less time dealing with the preventable symptoms or conditions caused by unhealthy living.

When you learn the supreme importance of valuing yourself, you are empowered to take responsibility for your choices and thus, take control of your outcomes. When you begin to embrace this connection, you can begin to enjoy where you are on the way to where you are going.

Embrace the Get REAL Body Image approach, and learn to value your body as well as what makes you unique. I call this learning to love the skin you are in, while making targeted changes to improve your future. By taking a Get REAL approach, you can learn to embrace moderation and let go of “all or nothing” patterns that drive yo-yo dieting and weight cycling.

I challenge you to see the REAL beauty you have within and begin to let that shine through. By changing your focus and attitude, you can begin to improve your external appearance for the better. Always focusing on becoming the best you, you can be and letting go of unrealistic goals and stereotypes.

Having learned the difference between struggling to be what you were 10 years ago, and enjoying a healthy life at the place you are now, I can relate to the struggles that REAL people have; thus, I speak with empathy and authenticity.

By changing your focus to improved health and fitness and releasing the goal of just being skinny, you will gain the perspective to uncover and implement REAL lifestyle changes to move you toward your goals of improved wellness and self acceptance.