

It's time to commit to healthful life

By Sandy Hansen

*Published in the St. Cloud Times, St. Cloud, Minnesota
Moms.mn section, page 7A, Dec. 29, 2008*

The upcoming year end is a time when many of us reflect on accomplishments of the past year. It is also a time when we look forward to a new year and vow to make resolutions to improve our lives.

Perhaps we have a bad habit that needs attention. In many cases, the resolution comes at a point of surrender. This is a point that we finally decide that something needs to change.

The holidays are almost over. We enjoyed many fine morsels around the table. Our clothes fit more snugly than usual. We are feeling frustrated with the extra pounds that crept on during our season of feasting.

Now what?

We need to take control of our health and eating habits. It's time to resolve to live that healthful lifestyle. It's time to stop thinking about this change and take action. No more excuses! After all, our lives will always be filled with stress, busy schedules and life situations that demand our attention.

The decision is ours to take action despite the excuses since the perfect, peaceful time to start is indeed a dream.

The first step in weight loss and adjusting our patterns to live a healthful lifestyle is to make the decision. Surrender to your old ways since these habits have not served you well and decide that the time is now.

This decision is the trigger to commit to the intended change. It is at this point that we start feeling overwhelmed with the goal. I remember when I made a decision to lose the extra 80 pounds I had carried into

my young adulthood. I didn't want to start since the goal was too large. The next step is to make a plan that includes the ultimate goal as well as small, measurable goals. It is important to declare your intentions and goals in writing since seeing the intentions will help create the change. I couldn't lose 80 pounds in two months.

However, I could start eating more fruits, vegetables and other healthful food choices.

I could start watching portions and eliminate fad diets. I couldn't just want the change in my mind. I had to live the change in my lifestyle choices and behavior.

We are all trying to find that miracle diet or pill. When asked how I shed my extra weight, my response is that it takes hard work, exercise and a dose of discipline to stay on task.

I continue to make time for exercise.

It is an essential link in long-term weight loss. I choose salads and healthful foods instead of a good burger and fries. Again, it is hard work, but it is worth it. Once we embrace the fact that a healthful lifestyle is a journey, we give ourselves the leniency to begin again if needed.

There is a little note on my planner that states "Don't get derailed!" as a constant reminder to keep working hard at a goal. It is acceptable to start over as many times as needed. The beauty is each day is a chance to begin again. Make the decision to take better care of your health. It's time to live your resolution!

Sandy Hansen is a speaker and business owner who delivers motivation to break free of roadblocks in business, lifestyle choices and life balance.

Copyright (c) St. Cloud Times. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.; Record Number: stc29739767