

## Behavioural Change

### Steps to Success

As a personal trainer, I have interacted with clients who succeed easily and others who struggle tremendously. The sad fact is seven out of 10 people who start an exercise or nutrition program drop out within a few months. If I have been one of the seven, the problem may not be with you – it may be with the method.

Most people attempt to do too much too quickly. They do not do any planning and they have no idea how to monitor their progress.

Your chances for success will improve dramatically, however, if you do the planning and monitoring and break the process into 4 complete steps.

Step 1. Determine how ready you are to make the changes.

Step 2. Develop concrete motivation for adhering to your program.

Step 3. Set SMART goals

Step 4. Outline potential obstacles to success and strategies for overcoming them

Step 1. Are you ready?

I generally know within a few minutes whether a client will succeed easily or not. If the client accepts my recommendations for changes to their exercise or nutrition program immediately and unconditionally, I know we will achieve success easily. If the client begins to make excuses or give reasons they feel they will not be able to adhere to the program, I can generally expect struggles throughout the process. They are not ready to make the changes required to see the results they want. I supply the following questionnaires to clients to help me determine where they are on the readiness scale. If they score poorly, I accept the fact that the timing may not be perfect for quick results. They can still initiate many of the changes and start to develop patterns, but I can expect

some resistance to the changes. You can perform the same tests to determine how ready you are to initiate the lifestyle changes necessary to maximize fat loss.

### Homework

Complete the following two questionnaires.

#### Readiness questionnaire I

|  | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Do you feel you are at some sort of health risk because of your current behaviours/lifestyle?                                   |     |    |
| 2. Do you feel that making lifestyle changes will improve your quality of life and decrease your risk of health-related disorders? |     |    |
| 3. Do you view lifestyle change as a lifetime goal rather than a short-term temporary goal?  |     |    |
| 4. Are you willing to get personally involved in planning a lifestyle change program?  |     |    |
| 5. Are you willing to try different approaches?  |     |    |
| 6. Do you have the patience to accept success in small increments and deal with possible setbacks?                                 |     |    |
| 7. Are you willing to set realistic goals?   |     |    |
| 8. Are you willing to make lifestyle changes?  |     |    |

If you answered yes to all these questions, you are ready for action! If you said no to one or more of the questions, you may experience personal resistance as you begin to initiate many of the actions required to achieve your fat loss goals. It may be helpful for you to review what is really important to you and learn more about the negative effects of your current behaviour and the benefits of change.

#### **Readiness questionnaire II**

|   | 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                   |
|---|----------------------|---|---|---|---------------------|
| 1. Compared to previous attempts, how motivated are you this time to try to lose body fat?  | Not at all motivated |   |   |   | Extremely motivated |
| 2. How certain are you that you will stay committed to a fat loss program for the time it will take to reach your goal?   | Not at all certain   |   |   |   | Extremely certain   |
| 3. Considering all outside factors at this time in your life - the stress you are feeling at work, your family obligations etc. - to what extent can you tolerate the effort required to stick to a lifetime exercise and nutrition plan? | Cannot tolerate      |   |   |   | Can tolerate easily |
| 4. Think honestly about how much weight you hope to lose and how quickly you hope to lose it. Figuring a healthy weight loss of 1-2lbs per week, how realistic are your expectations?   | Very unrealistic     |   |   |   | Very realistic      |
| 5. Do you fantasize about eating a lot of your favourite foods?   | Always               |   |   |   | Never               |
| 6. How confident are you that you can work regular exercise into your daily schedule, starting tomorrow?  | Not at all confident |   |   |   | Extremely confident |

Score: 6-12: Low Motivation    13-25: Moderate motivation    25+: High motivation

If you scored low, this may not be the best time for you to initiate major changes to your lifestyle. It does not mean, however, that you cannot begin the program. You should just have lower expectations of yourself. If you scored moderately, expect a few struggles on

route towards your goals. If you scored high, this is the perfect time for you to begin taking action towards your goals. Good luck!

Change is a good thing!

It is important to understand that change is a process. When initiating any major lifestyle change, you will experience the following stages:

1. Pre-contemplation: You have no intention to change your behaviours
2. Contemplation: You are aware a problem exists and are seriously thinking of changing
3. Preparation: You are intending to take action in the next month and have unsuccessfully taken action in the last year
4. Action: You are presently modifying your behaviour or environment
5. Maintenance: You are working to prevent relapse and maintain your gains

This entire process may take up to two years to complete. Do not be so hard on yourself if you are having difficulty initiating action. Recognize where you are in the stages of change. Because you have purchased this book, you are probably at stage two, three or four. Don't be surprised, however, if you find yourself shifting between different stages. For example, many people attempt to stop smoking numerous times before they actually succeed. Do whatever you can to take action and this will move you closer towards your goal. Purchasing this book was an action step that has taken you closer to success!

Homework:

Identify the stage of change you are in right now with regards to fat loss.

If you are in Stages 1-3, is there anything you can do to get yourself closer to taking action?

## Laws of Success:

I have noticed a number of characteristics separate those who succeed and those who do not. Those who succeed buy into the "Four Laws of Success". You must be ready to accept these laws without exception.

First Law – The law of possession. You need to understand that if you are going to achieve results, it is going to be up to you. The phrases "If it is going to be, it is up to me" or "If I think I can or think I can't, I'm right," ring very true. You have to take ultimate responsibility for success or failure. Sometimes I'll get a client who believes I am going to be the one who makes it happen for them. I set them straight right away. I tell them I can not do anything for them. All I can do is educate and guide. They must be willing to make and stick to the changes. You can not completely rely on someone else like a personal trainer or workout partner to make it happen for you and likewise, you can not blame the kids or your partner for any failures.

Second Law – The law of effort. Anything worth achieving is worth working for. Exercise and healthy eating takes discipline, will power, character, persistency and a commitment to delayed gratification.

Third Law – The law of consistency. A month-long effort is not going to get you where you want. In order to achieve any goal, you must stick to your game plan on an ongoing, long-term, consistent basis. Getting off track for a week is no big deal if you are consistent in your efforts. But if you are regularly tempted away from your program, you will not succeed. Consistency and persistency are the keys to manifesting any goals.

Remember that if you want to be 10 pounds thinner 10 years from now, it is not what you do over the next eight weeks that matters, it is what you do over the next 10 years. All the

changes I will suggest must be followed for the rest of your life. They are not short-term, quick-fix solutions. Safe and permanent fat loss often takes years – not weeks or months!! Researchers have found only one characteristic common to those who succeed with exercise. All such people move towards their goal one step at a time. They are committed to constant, never-ending improvement. In practical terms, it means that regardless of anything else – busy work schedules, lack of energy, lack of time, feeling old, feeling lazy, hating exercise – they made no excuses! They kept exercising, taking their long-term goals and splitting them up into smaller goals. They took it one day at a time.

Fourth Law – The law of self-efficacy. If you are already questioning whether or not you can actually make the required changes, you are going to have a difficult time with your program. You must believe you can do it! Think of self-esteem as a bank. Each time you keep a promise to yourself, the store of self-esteem gets bigger, making it easier to keep the next promise to yourself. It's all about "Results Momentum" I discussed earlier. Each time a promise is broken, however, your self-esteem goes down, making it easier to break the next promise. Reinforce this belief in yourself by surrounding yourself with others who are doing or have accomplished what you're attempting. After all, if they can do it, so can you!

Step 2. Are you motivated?

If you want to change something, you have got to change something! Makes sense, doesn't it? But change is difficult. Most people attempt major changes in their life without setting up a framework for success. How can you get anywhere without a map or a game plan?

Finding the motivation and inspiration to adhere to the changes in your life day-in, day-out, is challenging. Many people have very good intentions and start an exercise or healthy nutrition program, but within a few months 70 percent of them have dropped out.

They could not find a reason to keep going. Much of being motivated boils down to associating pain with the situation you're in now – basically being "sick and tired of being sick and tired" – and associating pleasure with the situation you will be in once you achieve your goal. If you can develop these pain and pleasure sensations, you will pinpoint your personal motivation for exercise and healthy eating and you'll find it much easier to stick with the program.

### Homework

Write down all the pain you associate with being in your present situation.

For example, None of my clothes fit; I have no energy; My blood pressure has risen; I can't sit comfortably in chairs; I feel embarrassed to wear a bathing suit."

Write down all the pleasure you associate with achieving your goals.

For example, "I'll be able to wear whatever I want; My energy will improve; My blood pressure will drop; I'll be more productive at work; I'll feel more self-confident; I'll have enough energy to go hiking."

Go back and review your notes in these two areas. Is there enough reason there for you to stick to your game plan no matter what? If not, go back and think more carefully. Maybe, you will have to inflict self-imposed pain to your present situation. For example, in Anthony Robin's book, *Awaken the Giant Within*, two friends were sick and tired of starting an exercise program or diet and never actually succeeding. So they made a public bet that if they wavered from their program they would each have to eat a can of dog-food. So whenever they were tempted to skip their workout or not follow their nutrition plan, they would go and read the ingredients label listing Horse chunks etc and the urges would quickly disappear. So, try to come up with a painful consequence to you not following your program. In contract, also try to associate extreme pleasure with sticking to your plan and achieving your goals. You may reward yourself with a \$1000 shopping spree, a week-long trip to a spa or a well-deserved day off or holiday. Go back to your notes and make sure you have come up with enough pain and pleasurable sensations that there will be no doubt that you will stick to the plan!

The motivation and inspiration to stick to your program is within you. You have just got to find the right reason – the reason that will make you so emotionally charged that you will take action, make the changes and stick to them regularly.

Here is an example to demonstrate this phenomenon. Let's imagine that you are on the 28<sup>th</sup> floor of a sky-rise building. There is a small 2X4 wooden plank that extends from the window of your building to the building on the opposite side of the street. In the other building, there is a man who is holding a \$100 bill and will give it to you if you walk across the plank to the other side. You look down 28 flights and you see the cars speeding by and your stomach turns into a knot. Would you go for \$100? Probably not! Would you go for \$1000? Still, no way! It is not worth it! But now imagine, the man is

threatening to shoot one of your closest loved ones - your spouse, your daughter, son, grandchild – if you do not walk over. Now, there is a different story. You would probably, without a doubt, without even thinking about it, walk the plank. You can see by the example that the ability to walk the plank is always there. It is never a question of ability! You just need to find that instant reason to walk the plank - to do something you would really rather not do. Perhaps just losing 10 pounds or decreasing your risk for cardiovascular disease is like \$100 – just not enough reason to walk the plank or take action towards your goals. You will need to get more emotionally charged in order to stick to your plan. Discover what it is going to take for you and remember, everyone is different. What is going to motivate me, is not necessarily going to motivate you. Spend some time with this area because this is what will establish the foundation for your success.

Refer to your pain and pleasure lists regularly to help remind you why you have chosen to become healthier and fitter.

Step 3. Your goals must be SMART

Homework

In the following space, right down all the fitness goals you would like to achieve. It is your personal fitness wish list. Remember when you were a kid making up your Christmas wish list. You wrote down everything under the sun. You did not care whether you thought you would actually get it or not. You wrote it anyways. That is what I want you to do. I want you to write down anything you have ever thought of achieving with regards to your own individual health and fitness. Which health and fitness goal, if you achieved it, would make this year unbelievable? Have you ever wanted to hike the Grand Canyon, complete a marathon, cycle through Italy, learn to Scuba Dive, or would you just be happy with working out 4x/week consistently? What are your health and fitness wishes?

Setting realistic goals is the key to success. But it is not enough to say, "I want to get into shape". Effective and realistic goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**eward-based and have a **T**ime frame. Here are some examples of SMART goal setting:

- Hike the Grand Canyon for 1 week this May
- Run on the treadmill for 10 minutes 3x/week by November 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Resistance train every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday until December 31<sup>st</sup>
- Train for and complete the Half Marathon on September 10<sup>th</sup>
- Exercise on the cardio machines for one hour without stopping by February 1<sup>st</sup>
- Work out with a personal trainer 2x/week
- Sign up for the Scuba Diving course that starts March 1st
- Drink 6 glasses of water every day by June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Eat 5 small meals/snacks every day by March 1<sup>st</sup>

Each goal is clear, easy to measure and has a deadline. Go back to your fitness wish-list and make sure each goal is specific, measurable, attainable and time-framed. Revise all your goals to make them as SMART as possible. You will also notice that none of the goals that I have listed include anything about body weight or size. Deciding to lose 10 pounds is an "Outcome-oriented" goal. I prefer to use "Behaviour or Action-oriented" goals. I firmly believe my approach is a lot more positive. For example, in the process of training for a half-marathon, you will definitely lose body fat but your focus is on something so much more positive. So avoid setting any weight or fat loss goals. Instead focus on the actions you can take which will promote fat loss.

But don't stop there. Successful goal-setting requires two more things. Be prepared to reassess and reevaluate your goals on a regular basis and reward yourself once you have achieved a goal. For example, treat yourself to a massage, a new outfit or a trip. Then set your sights on the next goals. Go back to your goals and attach a reward to each one. Be sure that the reward is motivating enough to encourage you to stick to your plan.

Sometimes, when starting an exercise or nutrition program, we can get overzealous and decide to change a million things all at once. It soon becomes clear that you have taken on too much and it becomes almost impossible to succeed at anything. To avoid this, you need to determine what is most important to you and focus on that first. Once you have got that under control, you can move on to your next goal.

Go back to your list and number your goals in order of priority. #1 for the goal you would like to achieve first and that is most important to you.

### Itsy, Bitsy, Baby Steps

If you are undertaking a major lifestyle change, the big picture may be a bit overwhelming. Take the big goal and split it into small, easily achievable goals. This is realistic. It will help you succeed on a regular basis and that will give you the momentum you need to reach the ultimate goal. Go back to your fitness wish list. Take the top three goals from your fitness wish list and break them down into smaller goals that will act as milestones towards your ultimate goal.

### Homework

Record your top three goals and break them down into smaller goals and action steps. For example, if your ultimate number one goal is to complete a half marathon, here's how you'd break it down into smaller action steps.

1. Enroll in the local half-marathon running clinic
  2. Purchase new footwear and clothing
  3. Consult with a personal trainer for 2 sessions to get help with designing my program
  4. Schedule 3 morning runs a week with friends
  5. Register and pay for the local 10km fun run mid-way through my training program
- Register and pay for the half-marathon event

Goal #1 =

Goal #2 =

Goal #3 =

#### Step 4. Obstacles and Strategies

What went wrong? Why did you fail last time?

You have most likely tried to lose weight before. Most people have. They try over and over again. Something like a New Year's resolution, summer, a wedding or a reunion motivates them to try again. Eventually, they fail because they are basically mimicing exactly what they did last time. They decide they will just stop eating breakfast and lunch or they will exercise for 2 hours every day. This represents the definition for insanity – doing the same thing over and over again but expecting a different result. Whatever forced you off track last time, will more than likely surface again.

This time, things are going to be different. This time you are going to be prepared. We are going to develop a strategy for overcoming roadblocks posed by work, kids, fatigue or lack of time. We are going to determine how you are going to balance it all. For example, if previously you found work or family responsibilities got in the way of you achieving your goals, your strategy may be to book your workout appointments into your schedule like you would any other appointment. You would not cancel a business appointment with an important client or cancel your yearly physical with your doctor.

Likewise, you must never cancel your workouts. Another strategy may be to hire a personal trainer which will force you to stick to your exercise appointment or ask a friend to join you in a commitment to walk every day at lunch. Another example may be that at about 2 months into your program, you always get bored with what you are doing and eventually give up. So perhaps you plan to consult with a personal trainer just before this happens so you avoid getting off track. Or you outline a list of new activities you will try every 2 months.

### Homework

Outline any obstacles that have surfaced in the past or that you expect will surface in the future. Once you have outlined the potential obstacles, then you can determine your strategies for overcoming them. You will be prepared - no surprises!

| Obstacle | Strategy<br>(you may find it necessary to outline numerous strategies for any potential obstacle) |
|----------|---|
| 1.       |   |
| 2.       |   |
| 3.       |   |

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 4. |  |
| 5. |  |
| 6. |  |
| 7. |  |

Excuses, Excuses...

Eighty percent of people still do not exercise consistently enough to enjoy any health benefits. Here are the most common stumbling blocks to exercise and healthy ways to overcome them:

*I don't have enough time.*

If you have trouble finding time to exercise, you are not alone. A perceived lack of time is one of the most common excuses for not starting or for quitting an exercise program. But it really does not wash. I have clients who manage large businesses, clients with 6-8 children and clients who seem to do it all. How do they do it? They make health and fitness a priority in their life. When life gets rough, exercise is usually the first thing to

go when, in fact, it should be the last. Exercise is the glue to mental sanity when life becomes chaotic.

Somehow, when others need you, your needs tend to end up on the back burner.

Someone at work asks you to complete a project, your spouse needs your attention, the kids need some quality time, your friends are asking you why you have not called, and you have got a to-do list that extends well into the next 6 months. You can see how easy it is to convince yourself that the morning jog can wait until lunch and then until after dinner. Or maybe tomorrow and finally, "I'll get back on track next month!"

Commitments, responsibilities and the demands of work, family and social life are always going to be there. When you allow yourself to put your own needs second to everything and everyone else, you will end up the loser.

Research, in fact, shows that people who exercise are more productive at whatever they are doing. Translation: You will be able to do more when you are in good shape. As for believing exercise is a huge time commitment, even 10-30 minutes a day, if done consistently, can result in health benefits.

Make an appointment with yourself, just as you would for your doctor or dentist or a meeting with your boss. That way, when someone asks if you can meet at 5, you can honestly say, "Sorry, I've got an appointment. How about at 4:00?" Scheduling fitness into your life is why personal trainers have become so popular. Now, you are accountable to your trainer as well as yourself.

Stop putting it off! "I'll start exercising right after New Year's...in the spring...right after I'm finished with this huge project...once the kids get older...once the kids leave home...after I've retired...Stop making excuses. Now is the time to start because there will always be things competing for your time. You can choose to make exercise a priority in your life now or wait until you're forced to make it a priority. Have you ever heard of the saying – People who cannot find the time to exercise, will be forced to find the time for illness? We take our health for granted until we get sick. People who swear

they do not have a minute to exercise, then find themselves hospitalized for bypass surgery and out of commission for weeks, soon recognize that the extra time taken to exercise would have been well worth it! The message is clear. Unless you take care of yourself now, one day you may find yourself unable to take care of your business, family or any of your other interests.

Another helpful strategy for overcoming the time obstacle is to sit down and record how you spend your time in a typical day. Then go through the list and identify any time wasters. It could be the television or computer or perhaps there is someone at work who constantly interrupts you making you less efficient. Now determine how you could eliminate some of these time wasters. For example, if someone at work takes up a portion of your time, make it known that from 10:00 until noon you are not to be interrupted so you can focus on some important projects. I think you will find that you do have time to exercise – you just need to restructure your schedule to make sure you have time for the important things in life.

### *I have no energy*

Those who exercise regularly know from experience that exercise actually leaves you with more energy! Some helpful strategies for overcoming this obstacle are to schedule exercise when you are less likely to feel exhausted from a long day at work or with the kids. Get up 45 minutes earlier than everyone else and go for a walk. It will start your day off on a positive note. Keep your fitness gear in the car so that on the way home you can stop at the gym for your workout. If you go home first, the couch and TV may be too tempting after a long day at work. Or if you do find yourself skipping out on your workouts because you've got no energy, schedule in with a trainer or a friend. Whether you are tired or not, you still have to be there because they are waiting for you.

### *I'm too old to start exercising*

No, you are too old not to exercise! Every decade a 30 year old sedentary individual will suffer from a 10 percent decrease in muscle mass and aerobic capacity and a reduction in flexibility. Bone density deteriorates starting at age 35. By the time you are 68, you will have experienced an 80 percent decrease in strength. By age 80, an individual will have lost half of their muscle mass. The good news is that if you exercise, these statistics will improve dramatically. Even people as old as 90 have experienced the positive benefits of exercise, so it is never too late to get started. The Surgeon General's Report indicates that 30 minutes of activity every day is enough to achieve various health benefits. The level of activity is equivalent to gardening, performing household chores or light walking or cycling. Consider enrolling in a line-dancing or ballroom dancing program. Perhaps Tai Chi or Yoga is enticing. It doesn't have to be intense, but you do need to start doing something!

### *I Hate exercise*

In the beginning, exercise may feel like a chore but eventually it will become a physical and mental health need. It is important to find activities you enjoy doing so that you will participate in them regularly, see the results and get hooked. Use music, try hiking or walking and add variety to your program to make it more fun. Exercise with friends. Studies show you tend to achieve better results that way because it will become more difficult to skip workouts. There is also no evidence to suggest that exercise needs to be painful. If it hurts that much, you may be doing too much, too soon. While exercising, you may feel some discomfort, muscular fatigue or a burning sensation near the end of a set or an exercise bout. These feelings are normal. However, while performing an exercise, you should not feel sharp pain. This is not normal and you should stop the exercise immediately and consult a sports physician or physiotherapist. All of us have experienced muscle soreness after a new activity or highly intense workout. Remember the feeling after your first day of skiing, first aerobics class or the first run of the summer? This sensation is referred to as delayed onset muscle soreness because it usually takes one to three days after the workout to kick in. Many participants rate the effectiveness of a workout by how sore they are afterwards. But if you are training

appropriately, there is no need to be sore. It is okay to think "Hey, my muscles feel like they had a great workout yesterday." However, if you have a problem getting out of a chair, walking, or even just moving, you are training too hard - and not very sensibly. To reduce the likelihood of extreme muscle soreness from training sessions, always warm up, cool down, stretch and progress slowly. Once you have established a consistent exercise routine, there are no extra health benefits from pushing yourself to be extremely sore. Remember – pain is a warning signal that your body has done too much too soon. When you experience extreme muscle soreness or pain, back off on the intensity of your program and progress more slowly. "No pain, no gain" is a myth. Pain is not necessary to improve your fitness and get results.

### *I'm too out of shape to exercise*

One survey found the top reason why people choose not to join a gym is because they want to get into better shape or lose weight first. This backwards approach may never get you to your goals. Find a gym that is not intimidating and where members seem comfortable going at their own pace and wearing whatever they want or workout in the privacy of your own home or neighbourhood.

### *The Gym scene is not my thing*

Sorry this will not wash. There are literally hundreds of things you can do at home to get in shape. Your local bookstore will have books on designing your own program. Rent a fitness video. Hire a personal trainer to come to your house and design a program for you.

### *My knees hurt so I can't exercise*

The health benefits of exercise often outweigh the risks. Certain conditions may make exercise more difficult but you can work around most problems. Consult with a professional who can design a program that addresses your specific concerns. For

example, if you do have knee problems, there is no reason why you can't work on your upper body and abdominals while you rehabilitate your knees.

### *I can't see any results*

One of the biggest hurdles new exercisers face is that the effort often does not match the result. They have been exercising religiously for five weeks and jump up on the scale. Ugh, no change! They feel the program must not be working and give up. Unrealistic expectations can be a real downer. Instead of measuring your success by the scale, measure it by your energy levels. Monitor how many more repetitions you can do of a particular exercise. Keep track of how many more minutes you can do of a given activity. You may be making more progress than you think.

Sticking to an exercise or nutrition program takes a lot of discipline

Sometimes wanting to do the right thing can slip us up if we have the wrong attitude about it. Do you see yourself in any of the following scenarios?

### *All or nothing*

You are scheduled for a 90 minute workout but something comes up and you cannot get to the gym for the allocated time. You scrap the workout and decide you will try to fit it in tomorrow. You have decided to eat healthier but one day you slip a bit at lunch and have a chocolate bar. You decide that since you have already failed for the day, you might as well throw in the towel and indulge in a few cookies, a bowl of ice cream and a bag of chips. Tomorrow is another day. Can you see how this "all or nothing" approach works against you? Wouldn't a 30 minute workout have been better than no exercise at all? Wouldn't a single chocolate bar have been better than an all-out binge? Sometimes, striving for perfection is what leads to failure. The trick in trying to stick to a long-term

plan is to learn to compromise. When it comes to nutrition, for example, focus on the 80/20 rule – 80 percent of the time you eat really well and 20 percent of the time you indulge a little. No going overboard, though. When it comes to exercise, remember that any activity is better than nothing.

### *Let's Go Back Home*

Imagine this scenario. You have scheduled a two-week vacation and have decided to drive to your favourite holiday destination. You get half way there, get a flat tire and turn around and go back home. Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But this is exactly what happens when most people start exercise or nutrition programs. They are on their way to their goals and they slip up. Instead of "fixing the flat" and continuing on toward their goal, they give up and return to old habits and patterns. We know that 70 percent of people who start an exercise program drop out within a matter of months. And most people who lose 10 pounds gain them back. So how do you avoid being one of the failures? It is important to accept that there are going to be obstacles, challenges or perceived failures along the way to any goal. Those who succeed learn from the challenge and get right back on the exercise track.

### *The Here and Now*

So many of us fall prey to the lure of immediate gratification. The chocolate cake staring us in the face is too great a temptation compared to future weight loss. We would rather experience the pleasure now and worry about the consequences later. A binge today simply means tomorrow we will eat better or we will work out twice as long or hard. There is always a way to justify a lack of discipline. Discipline and will-power are perceived as deprivation - we are sacrificing or losing something. But if you can imagine that each time you work out, stick to a nutritional plan or decide not to indulge in a less-healthy choice, you are actually giving yourself something – spiritually, emotionally and physically. Sticking to an exercise or nutrition plan is the same as practicing discipline when your kids are driving you nuts. You would like to scream, shout and lose it but

instead you count to 10 and choose your words more carefully. There is no doubt that practicing this type of discipline makes you feel better about yourself. It is the same with exercise. Your body deserves to be treated well. You deserve to eat well and exercise regularly. Many athletes think of their body as a temple and so should you. Think of that the next time you notice yourself grabbing for a piece of cake a little too often. Push it away and think of it as actually giving something to yourself rather than taking something away.

#### Homework

List how you have been known to sometimes sabotage your efforts.

**List how you will commit to changing your approach so your behaviours will support your efforts.**

You should be very proud of yourself! By taking the time to answer all of the questions in this section, you have set up a framework for success. It is so much easier to get to your destination if you have got a map!