



Your Turn: Gift Yourself with H.E.A.L.T.H.

By Joanna K. Chodorowska, BA, NC, TPTH

So many times, we get to the start of a new year and wonder, “Whatever happened to that getting healthy idea I had last year?” and, “Why didn’t I do anything about it?” Oh yeah, the soccer games, the ballet practices, the shopping and cooking and shuttling back and forth between everything all of the time. The list goes on, and on and on. Well, here is a short list of reasons that can help you choose and do healthy this year for real.

H: Heal yourself so you can take care of others.

You deserve to take care of you. And if you don’t believe that, then consider this: If you do not take care of yourself, love yourself, be at your best healthy self, who, then, will take care of your children or your partner or other family members? It won’t be you if you are the one who is not well.

Taking care of you is not a sign of selfishness. It is a sign that you love yourself enough to be your very best. You are not saying “no” to someone else, you are saying “YES” to you. And when you are at your best, then you can be helpful to others. Like the airplane safety rules: Apply the oxygen mask to you, then assist others.

E: Eat more greens.

Green vegetables are the most overlooked vegetables that contribute the most to one’s health. Yes, there is kale, which is a wonder green, but there are plenty of others also offering phytonutrients to fight free radicals we create from stress. Greens contain calcium and magnesium to help muscles relax (including the heart!). Greens also have very few calories while providing nutrients, so you are less hungry over the course of the day.

A: Ask friends and family for help and support.

You may feel like a superhuman sometimes, but you cannot really do it all on your own. We need to learn how to delegate some of the responsibilities at home (or work) so we can get our needs met. Asking is not a sign of weakness. It takes a team to create, even if you are the leader of that team.

L: Learn to laugh—a lot and often.

I used to read my mother’s copy of Reader’s Digest as a child. There was one section called Laughter is the Best Medicine. Learn to bring laughter back into your every day routine, even if it means to laugh at yourself!

T: Thank others for the good they do.

So often we get criticized for what we did wrong. And for some, it seems that they do everything wrong! But that is not this year. Always look for the positive in a situation. Thank yourself for being patient. Thank a co-worker for helping you with a task. Thank everyone even for a small thing like opening a door for you. Gratitude always brings rewards when you least expect them!

H: Happiness comes from inside out.

Happiness is something you feel on the inside. You cannot learn it from a book. You can only learn how to feel it more often. Find activities you really enjoy – exercise, tennis, golf, playing cards, playing an instrument, meditation, yoga, sitting in nature. Find the time daily to create that time so you can have your happiness haven. Once you find happiness, then others will join you in creating their own happiness. It is contagious!

This new year, try a new way of finding your health. It is not the same journey for everyone, but if you find reasons that resonate with you, you will be more willing to make them your own.

To your health!

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