

How are you doing on your New Year's Resolution (NYR)? Research shows 80% of NYR never see the light of day. So why do 50% of us still make NYR? I believe it is because most people want to improve their lives and expand to become a better version of themselves. This may include their professions, income, friends and experiences, as well as physical, mental-emotional, and spiritual health.

Statistics show 3 of the top 10 NYR are related to health yet only produce a 20% success rate. Health goals are no different. They need to be realistic and possible. There are 4 areas to address when implementing a strategy to attain health goals. The **right motives**, **proper direction** and an honest look at **self-awareness** and **self-responsibility**.

**Motives** are not will power. They are having a big enough reason to do what you are setting out to do, and a big enough concern to continue on a plan of action to reach your goal(s). I believe that if a health goal is realistic, it can be accomplished if there is a big enough reason or a big enough concern. Unfortunately, only you can determine if you have a big enough reason or concern to change the path you are on toward a healthier lifestyle.

**Proper direction** can be complicated. This results from differing thoughts, beliefs and false and/or misleading information on the Internet regarding health. What works for one person may not work for another. This is due to our unique genetic makeup, our diet and lifestyle choices or limitations and our mental-emotional state. All of these, at some point in life, will have an effect on one's health and well-being. An accomplished, experienced practitioner can help you navigate these obstacles and determine the best course of action for your unique, individual needs.

**Self-Awareness** is the state of being aware or conscious of all parts or aspects of yourself; mind, body and spirit. Most of us perform daily tasks unconsciously, such as eating, without any understanding that outside factors can cause them to experience a wide variety of symptoms. Most people just want to stop any symptoms they are experiencing without trying to determine what the cause(s) could be. Fortunately, there is a cause and effect with everything we do. It is possible to know and understand how something we may be doing may be causing our symptoms. A typical example of this is how milk and cheese products affect me. I grew up with chronic sinus infections, tubes in my ears and had my tonsils and adenoids taken out. In chiropractic school, I realized that milk products could be causing my sinus issues. I gave up all milk-based products and within 30 days my sinus pressure and discomfort began to ease. Over the next several years,

when I would occasionally consume a small amount of milk or cheese, my nose would start to run within 5-10 seconds. It would last for days. My motivator was the pressure and discomfort I had my entire young adult life. It took 5 years of completely avoiding all milk products to rid myself of symptoms. To me, it was an easy decision. Avoid milk and cheese and be symptom-free. Now, I can sparingly use cheese products (once a month) without symptoms. Unfortunately, many symptoms can be a tricky thing to understand and tend to have very subtle layers and levels. The culprits can be any one or combination of things. Diet can be one of the biggest offenders and is always the best place to start.

**Self-responsibility** is getting yourself involved in the process, as the practitioner can't do the work for the patient. Most practitioners, both medical and alternative, do not have any conversations with patients regarding what they are doing that may be contributing to or causing some or all of their symptoms or health problems. My clinical experience has shown the more a patient is involved in following a practitioner's recommendations, the better the outcome will be. Patients that don't want to change some or many of their unhealthy habits will never fully recover their lost health. This may mean changing diet and lifestyle, following temporary, unappealing recommendations and being completely truthful and honest about **what** you are doing, **why** you are doing it and **how** it is affecting you. There are no shortcuts to this process. The what, why and how you do things are critical aspects to moving forward with your health.

You have two choices; you can get advice where you can and work through the process yourself or you can find a practitioner to help you with your specific needs. Below are some guidelines for working through the process yourself:

1. Be prepared to write throughout the process. Keeping written records of what you are doing is essential. DO NOT DO THIS BASED ON MEMORY; this is a recipe for disaster. I have created *Patient Focus Workbooks* that I use with my patients for keeping daily records. This makes the process simple and easy.
2. Find a motivator or big enough reason to start and write it down.
3. Make short-term dietary changes following the **Modified Page Food Plan** and **Concepts for Health Food Plan Explanation** for a minimum of 30 days. I start by removing the 3 biggest offenders: sugar, wheat and milk products from my patient's diet. This is critical. Do not start if you do not have the motivation to make these changes for 30 days. This is essential as it can take up to 30 days (and

sometimes longer) to begin to see changes in your symptoms after the offending foods are removed from your diet.

4. Spend some quiet time daily to check and see how you are feeling. Notice if anything is different, no matter how subtle. Are your symptoms reducing or increasing? Are your symptoms shifting or moving to other parts of your body? Write these things down or use our journal to help you track your progress.

When you begin to notice changes in your symptoms, congratulations! You have taken the first step to becoming self-aware and taking responsibility for your health. This is just the beginning of the process of achieving your health goals. In coming months, we will continue to provide deeper insight into healthy, practical thoughts and strategies for achieving optimum health.

I have *Patient Focus Workbooks* available to make it easier for you to track your diet and lifestyle habits for 60 days. They are \$10 plus shipping or can be picked up at either of my offices. I am also available via email ([drart@conceptsforhealth.com](mailto:drart@conceptsforhealth.com)) to answer any questions you may have.

Yours in Healing and Health,

Dr. Art