



Make It A Lifestyle!™

By Monica Ganz, PhD

Diets do not work. Now, there is a statement that got your attention. The diet industry is a multibillion dollar industry. How much money have you contributed to it? Are you ready to STOP?

When people talk about lifestyles, what do you think of? Most people will think of the car they drive, the house in which they live, the restaurants they go to and the friends they have. But, we are here to talk about the lifestyle that affects your health.

We are talking about choices; starting with nutrition, movement, behavior modification and yes, even attitude. Obese people have choices; we do not have to suffer in silence any more. It is a lifestyle that saves us, not a diet. We all can benefit with wellness, no matter what our weight.

This is a journey, not a destination. Remember, we are told to be life-long learners. Well, that pertains to your health and wellness too!

Educate and Encourage Yourself

First and foremost, you must surround yourself with a strong support system. This starts with your family and community. Support groups are critical for long-term success. If you have groups available, attend them regularly for the latest weight-loss news and personal support and encouragement. If that is not available to you, go to the Web. There are telephone support groups available also – you just have to commit. There are many great sites with free e-mail newsletters and message boards where you can have questions answered by experts and fellow patients alike. You need to make the first move.

Empower and Engage Yourself

Attend weight-loss and wellness conferences whenever possible. These serve to reacquaint you with the tools you have at your disposal and the many people out there just like you. And if you think you need a little help over those bumps in the road, take advantage of professional resources to get the help you need. Read everything you can. Share information with your friends.

Every morning is a new beginning, and you have a choice every morning of the mood you will be in for the day. Your attitude will thank you for it. Remember that smile you saw or small kindness that made your day. Be the one to make someone else's day. Surround yourself with people who make you happy and think positively.

Exercise and Energize Yourself

Think of movement, and not that nasty four letter word "exercise." Movement energizes you, whether in the classic gym or more importantly in all that you do each day. Take the stairs, park further out, do housekeeping tasks during TV commercials, change your movement routine frequently, walk when stressed and get a buddy to make you accountable for doing things. Turn on the music and get up and dance.

People ask, "What is the best form of exercise?" The answer: the one you will do! Keep your protein intake up and remember to drink, drink and drink (water that is). You need

one ounce of clear, non-caloric, non-caffeine liquid every day for every two pounds of body weight. Eat vegetables and occasional fruits in their raw form to get the fiber your body needs. Make movement fun and you will be more likely to do it. Your newfound energy will surprise you.

Enable and Embrace Your Lifestyle

Be accountable to yourself. After all, you count the most on yourself. Make a log of all of your food in your “planned eating events.” Log your movement and even those behaviors and feelings that thwart you and those that make good things happen.

Record your monthly weight and measurements. Take frequent pictures, either with people you consider “normal” in appearance or in a physical setting with eye-catchers like door frames to help gauge your relative size. Celebrate the changes you see, but NOT with food.

Enjoy Yourself

Eat your food with baby utensils and on eye-catching small plates. If need be, time your bites and put that fork down to enjoy the ambiance and people around you. Make every planned eating event a special occasion. You are important! Remember, your lifestyle must make you happy and healthy.

Making it a lifestyle

is as easy as $F^2 + E^N$. A healthy lifestyle as an F^2 translation, “Formerly Fat” and “Feeling Fabulous,” is yours for the making. E^n means to:

- Educate
- Encourage
- Empower
- Engage
- Enable
- Embrace
- Exercise
- Energize

Enjoy Yourself!

About the Author:

Monica Ganz, PhD, is a behaviorist who has worked with support groups for more than 30 years. She worked as a chef for 10 years and is the author of her first cookbook, From Monica's Kitchen to Yours "Make it a Lifestyle!" She started her journey at 510 pounds and now has maintained a 340 pound weight-loss for more than five and a half years. Monica is a member of the National Speakers Association and the Obesity Action Coalition.

