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Hi and welcome to the third edition of the 2009 newsletter.

Isn't the year just flying? Easter has been and gone, winter is knocking at the door and before you know it, they'll be talking about those Christmas in July dinners.

The main article in this edition is about eating anxiety and knowing how to deal with being torn between healthy eating and having a good time. We also have our usual sections where we spend a moment with Matt Ditchfield, deliver sensible health information and let you know what's happening at McAllister's Fitness. We hope to stimulate your mind with our quotes, tips and ideas on how to make healthy living a simple process.

Enjoy the read!

Danny

Quote of the month

Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.

—Swedish Proverb

At McAllister's we believe that living a healthy lifestyle shouldn't be based on ridiculous fads, restrictive habits and senseless exercise regimes. Our motto is, "It's all about the heart" - have heart for what you do, heart for why you do it and a healthy heart to keep you doing it.

Peer pressure anxiety

'What do you mean you aren't hungry—don't you want one of the cakes I made especially for you?' Ever heard that statement before? It's that critical point of do I say no and offend, or do I give in and say yes to avoid confrontation.



Why, when you decide to make some changes in your eating habits, do people make you feel guilty about the food choices you make? You know the scene: you are catching up with friends or family and the food pusher pops up; it's the person who puts pressure on you because you have decided not to have the dessert or that extra serving, slice or drink.

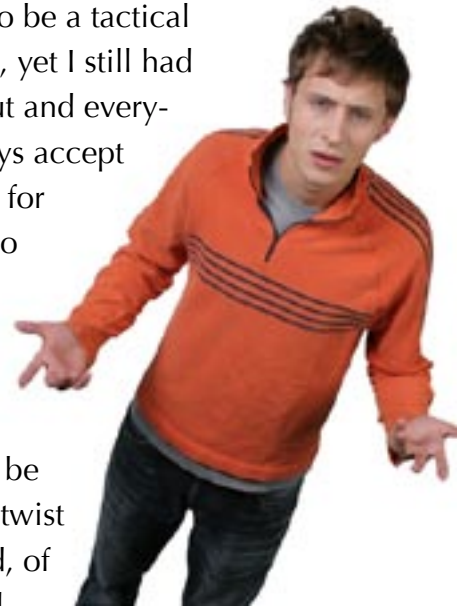
Most times this person means well, but somehow they can make you feel so guilty about your decision. They can make saying no feel like you have ripped them apart, hurt their feelings, insulted them. This is a tough situation at the best of times, but it doesn't have to be if you know how to handle the situation.



The best way to say "no" and not offend, upset or feel guilty is to be honest. Explain that you are declining the offer of food or drink because you are serious about being healthy and sometimes the short-term pleasure isn't as important as your goal. They may not see your point of view, but letting them know you are not declining their offer to offend but to feel better about yourself helps clear the air.

If you know the person or people won't buy into your story, you must be smarter and become a strategic player of the game. For example, when I first decided to change my beer swilling ways at the football club and look after my health, it was extremely difficult. When I went to watch a game and everyone but me was drinking, I copped a lot of flack and I didn't know how to handle it. I still wanted to watch the footy, but I hated being made to feel guilty about my decision to not drink. My choice was to either avoid the situation completely or give in to peer pressure. In the end, I gave in to peer pressure, but ironically, that was the solution to the problem—no, not boozing like the rest of them—in my weakness I bought a beer and as soon as I had a beer in my hand my mates left me alone. I never drank that beer, but the fact that I had it in my hand made them feel comfortable.

The point of that story is that sometimes you have to be a tactical player. In that situation I was no longer saying “no”, yet I still had total control of the situation. Now whenever I’m out and everyone is drinking or eating crap and I’m not, I’ll always accept the food but won’t eat it or I will only have enough for a taste and, funnily enough, they leave me alone. So saying yes to peer pressure doesn’t have to mean losing control, it’s about being a smart player who can use tactics to overcome a situation.



Don’t get me wrong, not every situation is going to be so easy to control; for instance, when your parents twist your arm to eat the food they cooked with love and, of course, it’s your favourite. You know your mum will say things like ‘You are not fat, don’t be so stupid. You look great and, surely, one meal isn’t going to hurt you.’ The thing is she maybe right, one meal probably isn’t going to hurt you, but if you say yes all the time it will. You need to practise the art of saying no and being confident about it, because I can guarantee you that at the end of the day no one else really cares whether you eat it or not. People may carry on about your lack of participation and label you as a stick in the mud, a party pooper or as antisocial but, believe me, they will (if they are real friends) get over it.

The hardest thing about these situations is our perception: we often blow it out of proportion because we know what we are doing needs discipline and, like most situations, we expect the worst and we anticipate negative responses in our heads. I’ve had many clients who have spoken to me regarding a function they were going to and thought about missing it to avoid confrontation—avoidance is not the answer you still need to be socially active and having a plan will put you on the front foot and in control.

I think I can safely say that most of you reading this would like to be a little fitter, leaner, confident or in control of your health, but still want to eat out, order the dessert or have some take-away. Somehow, whenever people decide to change their eating habits they think they must suffer and go without, this is not the case. Going out is a huge part of our lifestyle and whether you are at a restaurant or having a take-away meal at home you need to keep things in perspective and under control.

People who are dieting often get into a panic when they have been invited to eat out: they get anxious and worry about blowing their regime. Keeping things under control isn't that hard if you adhere to some rules, so instead of getting anxious and in a panic, set some ground rules to play by, for example:

You never blow the diet or destroy all your hard work, it's just a setback and you move on.

- Eat something before you go out so you aren't starving.
- Call the restaurant prior to find out what they have on the menu, in other words, pre-select.
- With buffet or all-you-can-eat restaurants have a small plate and choose the healthiest options—avoid deep fried, battered and creamy foods.
- Eat slowly—put your utensils down between mouthfuls.
- Opt for the low-fat, low calorie choices.
- Request sauces, oils and dressing on the side—that way you can control servings.
- Control your portion sizes—some restaurants will serve huge meals; you don't have to eat everything on the plate (yes, do think of the starving children but, believe me, they won't get your left overs).
- Opt for a coffee or hot drink rather than dessert.
- If you must have dessert, split it with someone—that helps control portion size.



Eating out is great fun and we should all be able to enjoy it. The trick for success is to be smart in your approach, not to avoid it. The more you set your rules and play by them, the greater your chances of success.

Learning how to deal with people who give you a hard time about your new health regime is another problem often faced by dieters. Whenever you decide to change your body shape you are bound to encounter confrontation. Your enthusiasm will be high, you'll be excited by your results and highly motivated and you just want to tell everyone about it.

Telling people is great, it helps keep you accountable, but beware of who you tell. As much as you want share your excitement with friends and need support from those close to you, they can be the very people who won't get excited for you and can at times sabotage your attempt at creating the new you.

When you decide to change your health you have to start thinking differently, you have to make some serious life changing decisions. These decisions may upset those close to you because they may feel like they are losing control of you. It's like the drinker who decides he doesn't want to live his life boozing anymore; all his drinking buddies may find this hard to take and may give him a difficult time. This happens because they aren't comfortable where he is and start to feel intimidated by his actions or feel as if they are losing a buddy; therefore, they're just not as excited by his decision as he is.



Spotting sabotage or confrontation may not be as easy because you think of these people as your close friends and no matter what happens you believe they will stick by you. This can be quite a difficult situation to deal with because you want to change and they want you to remain the same.

NO

It becomes a game of purpose: once you have decided to make the change you have to be strong and stick to your guns. You have made the decision for a reason, and yes, there will be hard times, but if it was that easy I think we'd all have the health and body shape we desire.

The take home messages are: stop worrying about offending someone when you say "NO", stop worrying about what others are thinking and make smarter decisions when selecting what you eat. Food anxiety can be an issue if you let it, the more you use these rules the better are your chances of succeeding.

Feeling healthy is a phenomenal feeling. Speaking from experience, it's amazing that you didn't realise how poorly you felt until you experienced good health, and this can inspire others to be healthy too.

Next time you feel threatened by food anxiety or its various forms, use positive thinking—there is only short-term discomfort in saying no: people will get over it and so will you. Enjoy your food, keep the process simple and don't let the external factors surrounding food control you or your thoughts!

Spotlight on Matt Ditchfield

Matt's is such an inspiring story—he has turned his life completely around. Matt was overweight and unhappy with himself when he first came to McAllister's Fitness. After deciding to change and make being healthy part of his life, his waist went from 99 to 83 cm. Matt has been involved with McAllister's Fitness for nearly six years, first as a client, then he spent some time as a personal trainer. Matt likes to train hard but he will be the first to tell you the process of change isn't that hard—if you keep it simple. Matt is an extremely modest person who seldom talks about his many achievements. His dedication to maintaining his fitness is second to none and he has inspired many other people to feel the same.



What hobbies, sports or interests do you have?

Cycling, running, basketball and keeping fit

What special feats or accolades have you achieved from training at McAllister's?

I have competed in many fun-runs, triathlons, and since taking up competitive cycling I am now racing at "B" grade level.

Why do you train at McAllister's?

The friendly environment and to keep fit

10 Turbo Questions

1. What's your favourite song?

"Fishes" – The Cat Empire

2. What's your favourite childhood TV show?

"Gilligan's Island"

3. What's your favourite movie?

"The Life of Brian"

4. What's your favourite food?

Bananas

5. Where's your favourite holiday destination?

Noosa

6. What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

You have to work hard to get the things you want.

7. What's your favourite thing to do on a rainy day?

Cycling on the wind-trainer

8. What really annoys you?

Not exercising

9. If you could possess a superpower, what would it be?

To swim under water like Aquaman

10. Whom/What inspires you?

Lance Armstrong's story, and my friend, Sue, who has leukaemia and was told she would not see her kids reach year 4—they are now in year 9.

Tip of the month

Beware the soup diet

Now that we are moving towards winter there will no doubt be a resurgence of the soup diet – most likely under another name. The soup diet seems to reappear every year and is always given extra attention from one of the current affairs shows banging on about its miracle weight-loss claims.



What is the soup diet?

It's a diet that allows you to eat as much soup as you like every day. The soup is usually home made vegetable soup consisting of cabbage, onions, tomatoes, cap-sicums, carrots and mushrooms. The diet specifies the quantity and type of foods you may eat.

To a certain extent, the current affairs programs are right—you will lose what may seem like miracle amounts of weight in the short term, but short term is the operative word—that weight-loss will only be short-term.

Why is the weight loss short term?

These diets don't include an adequate amount of protein, carbohydrates or essential fats. These are the primary sources of energy the body needs to function efficiently, and when the body lacks these it's forced to go into starvation mode, which slows your metabolism and encourages your body to hang on to its fat reserves. In a nutshell, you will train your body to be a fantastic fat-storing machine instead of a fat-burning machine.

Verdict: not a good plan.

There is a good side to the diet though: if you use it in conjunction with a healthy eating plan and have it for lunch or a meal at night it will complement your weight loss campaign nicely.

Conclusion – Used on its own, you will lose weight quickly on the diet, but it will only be fluid and muscle tissue loss, therefore the weight you lose will be regained along with some more when you return back to “normal life”.

Solution - Stop looking for quick fixes for weight-loss and start to be smarter about how you eat: use the soup as a substitute meal, but never as the only meal.

What's on

Group programs

The sessions will be as follows:

Tuesday 7 pm (30 minutes) Pedal "N" Punch, commencing 19 May
Saturday 8 am (45 minutes) Alfresco fitness, commencing 13 June



- All sessions are for a six-week commitment.
- The 30-minute sessions are \$75 or \$15 per session.
- The 45-minute sessions are \$90 or 17.50 per session.
- Six is the minimum number of people needed to start a group.
- The card purchased cannot be used in conjunction with any other session.
- There are no refunds or catch-ups for any missed sessions.
- Bookings are essential.

More information

Personal Training course

McAllister's Fitness has just become the Melbourne campus for the Australian Institute of Personal Trainers (AIPT) course.

If you have ever thought of becoming a personal trainer or know someone who is interested, call us on 9877 0572 to enrol in the next course commencing in June 2009.

If you want to find out more, book a place for information night on the 27th May. We are passionate about raising the standard of personal training, so if you want to become an excellent trainer this course is definitely for you!

More information

The final word

No matter what you're trying to achieve there will always be set backs and hurdles whenever you decide to change, but remember, anything worthwhile in life doesn't come without a struggle. Persevere and be patient. Good luck!