

# Excerpts from my Journal to Better Health

## January

Well, I've started my journey to better health .... again ..... but this time, I am committed to doing whatever it takes to change. I've tried this so many times before and just haven't been able to make meaningful and sustainable changes. This time needs to be different and if not now, when? I met Stephanie today and connected with her right away. I love her story and can really relate. She is already an inspiration for what I hope to be able to do, with her support and guidance. I'm really looking forward to this journey!

## February

Okay, so I was pretty naive with respect to how well I thought I ate. In my session today, Stephanie talked about veggies I hadn't even heard of let alone eaten. She also talked a lot about green leafy veggies which I know are good for me but I just don't like them. I'm going to start small with spinach and grow into collard greens and then that vile weed called kale. As of today, I'm off what I call 'The Big Five' – sugar, wheat, dairy, caffeine, and alcohol. I'm thinking – what the heck is left? I guess I'm about to find out. We're starting with a 'nutritional reset' with a list of the 'good' the 'bad' and the 'ugly' of foods. I'm really scared ..... and hungry!

## March

I'm over the caffeine-withdrawal headaches but still have the shakes from no sugar or bread. I didn't think I ate a lot of sugar or wheat until I learned that it's in just about everything. I couldn't give up bread cold turkey so I'm eating gluten-free bread, aka cardboard! Having to eat breakfast is very hard for me. Having to eat protein and greens at breakfast, along with my supplements and fish oil, is making me sick .... really. I threw up the other day after taking my fish oil. I feel like I'm force-feeding myself and I am not enjoying any of it. I'm struggling to eat for enjoyment and satisfaction instead of just nutrition. Will the two even come together again? Maybe I've taken on too much? I just want a butter tart!

## April

My grocery shopping has changed dramatically, both from what goes in the cart but also how much it costs. I paid \$8.50 for a dozen of eggs today! I learned the hens that lay these eggs have a proper diet, get plenty of rest and outdoor exercise and have play dates every Tuesday! And now that I eat more meat, that's really expensive too when you buy 'clean' meat. I shouldn't complain, I used to pay \$4.15 a day for my latte which is \$30 a week so I guess redirecting that money to healthy food is a good investment in my health. Eating healthy certainly isn't cheap.

I've come to realize that having a healthy mind is just as important as having a healthy body. I didn't think I had an ego, until I learned more about what our egos really are. It's helped me to understand what my 'hot buttons' are and how I choose to react vs. how I'd like to react. I've

increased my self-awareness which is helping me to better understand the 'why's' around a lot of things and how I can control more than I thought I could.

Forgiveness is also something I am working on, starting with myself. I understand the concept and why it's good for me, but am struggling with how to do it. I keep meditating on those I need to forgive and know I will be able to do so someday.

### **May**

Part of my journey to better health is about exercise. I have been working with a personal trainer since the beginning of the year and she's helping me to connect my body and mind. Yesterday, she grabbed a muscle in my shoulder and asked me to contract it. I couldn't. I could not tell my mind to connect with that muscle, even when it was being held by someone. What a wake-up call for me. I've spent so many years ignoring the messages from my body that I can't feel things even when I want to.

### **June**

I hosted three meals for special occasions this month. Boy it's hard to watch everyone else have a nice glass of wine while I'm slugging back green smoothies. Oh ya, can you believe it, I'm drinking green smoothies. They're filling and the only way I can get a lot of 'stuff' into me like ground flax seed, kefir etc... I made a very significant move this month. I moved the toaster from the counter to the back of the cupboard and brought out the blender to replace it. Such a small action had a very positive effect on my commitment to better health!

### **July**

Having learned about the toxicity of sunscreen, I've started a bit of an experiment. I've been taking Vitamin D supplements and am now back into the high end of the healthy range. I normally burn to a crisp within minutes of being in the sun but so far this summer, I'm not burning and I'm not using sunscreen. I started off with small amounts of time in the sun and am building up to longer periods. I'm having fun with tennis and golf lessons. It's amazing how much more fit and flexible I am compared to just six months ago.

### **August**

We went on our annual family vacation this month. When we are all together for an extended period of time, it can get pretty intense and can highlight the dysfunction we enjoy! The work I've done over the last several months on 'how' and 'what' I think has really paid off. Having a better understanding of my ego helped me manage my emotions and reactions so much better. I'm able to show more compassion (with myself and others). I can see that what I put out into the universe is what I get back. Powerful!

### **September**

This was a big month for us. We celebrated our anniversary with our very good friends and went to France for two weeks. I spent months planning the trip, down to every last detail. Given my control issues, I even pre-booked some of our excursions. The new me made a

point of preparing myself for how I would react when things didn't go as planned. And sure enough, that happened. Instead of being angry or disappointed, I chose to view it as what was meant to be and to enjoy the experience we were having vs. the one I had planned. That was huge for me.

I wasn't sure how I could spend two weeks in France and not enjoy cheese, baguettes, croissants, wine and coffee. So, I was careful but I splurged on all of those great things (not on the same day), was able to hear my body as it responded, and adjusted accordingly. That's the kind of control I'm happy to have.

## **October**

I've always enjoyed long walks – usually as a means to relieve stress or to walk off an argument. And, I always have a headset listening to very loud music as I walk. In an attempt to live more in the moment, I've started walking with intention. So no music and more of a focus on trying to feel every step I take. I play games like challenging myself to identify my five favourite fall smells and sounds. I even practice walking meditation (eyes open of course). My walks are now much more meaningful and enjoyable and I feel more connected with nature.

This month's purchase was a slow cooker. It's very helpful in making large batches of food for leftovers and freezing. Another first for me!

## **November**

So this was a fun month. One day I was looking for something formal to wear to a special event. I've been in yoga pants and hoodies for so long that I forgot what it was like to get dressed up. I put on and took off two closets of clothes and put 80% of them in a bag for Goodwill. Nothing fit me anymore. I had pants on, zipped up and could pull them down over my hips without undoing them. I haven't had this much fun in a very long time. Needless to say, I had to go shopping!

## **December 31**

Pinch me – I must be dreaming! Today (New Year's Eve), I reflected on where I was at the beginning of the year and where I am now. I eat only healthy, clean, nourishing foods 95% of the time, and enjoy it. I look forward to my green smoothie and almonds as my afternoon snack. Kale is now my friend. I don't worry about planning every meal with the rigour I used to. Pulling together a healthy meal comes more naturally to me now. I even cooked my first completely 'clean' meal for company this month, and they all enjoyed it without knowing it was clean. I have chosen to stop drinking, because I want to, and don't miss it. The sugar cravings have stopped and when I do indulge, I feel it as my body detoxes (not in a good way). I have lost 35 pounds without measuring anything or counting one single calorie.

I have more and better energy, both physically and mentally. When I connect with people I haven't seen in a long time, they are so complimentary on how good I now look, which is nice to hear. Someone commented that my eyes are clearer. I know that it wasn't the kale, it's the pathway to my soul which is so much more in sync with my mind and body. I'm meditating regularly and have learned how to quiet my mind. I am more in touch with my body and I can hear it when it talks to me.

While I'm really happy about my weight loss and how I look on the outside, I'd have to say that just as important is how I feel on the inside. I am a completely different person – inside and out – and love the new me more than I ever have before, which makes it so much easier to love others. If anyone had told me on January 1 that I'd be this new person, I don't think I would have believed it was possible. But it was possible, and if it can happen for me, it can happen for anyone!

### **January**

So here I am, putting my goals and objectives together for the new year. I keep thinking it will be hard to top last year's accomplishments so I have focussed on building on them.

My greatest accomplishment from the last 12 months is that I've truly changed the way I think about my health as it relates to my body, mind and spirit and I've made permanent changes to my life to support the new me. In the past, the changes have been temporary but now I feel that there is nothing that would allow me to go back to my old ways. I look forward to accomplishing even more this year!

**Connie C. Oakville 2014**