

PREFACE

I think it is hard to stay fit. Most days I spend way more time talking myself into working out than the actual time spent exercising. The level of excitement I have on some days to lift weights or stretch seems about the same as making an appointment for the dentist.

I love food. Diving into a pool of chocolate and eating my way out sounds very appealing. Besides a hot shower and a nap in the sun, I don't know of many things that I like better than Ruffles taking a Diet Coke bath in my mouth. What about you?

But here is the problem. I also love loose pants. I love tight abs and strong arms. I love feeling attractive to my husband, Tim. I just love to feel fit and free! I love the challenging game of honoring my food boundaries and making my mileage goals. Biking 20 miles per hour through the woods thrills and energizes me. I am beyond happy because the payback for all my hours logged walking and running, lifting weights and stretching is being able to live vibrantly and wildly with family and friends. I shut my eyes and have awesome memories golfing, tubing, whitewater rafting, skiing, rock climbing, zip lining as well as scuba dives with sharks, dolphins, rays and whale sharks three inches from my body! And I want more.

But, like I said, I think it is hard to stay fit. And for all its rewards, I feel that it is getting harder as I get older. Is it hard for you? Do you struggle with this? Are you with me in that there are many days that you just want to say,

“Forget it”

“I'll do it tomorrow”

“Everyone else is eating”

“I had a bad day”

“I'm just too tired”

“Oh just lighten up with all your goals and take it easy. Life is short?”

I am with you, sister! It is very tempting at this moment to just go out, share our troubles and sink our faces into the nacho dip. But I am also here to splash water on your face and say, don't give up! It is possible to get and stay fit through the generations. You can overcome that seemingly insurmountable mountain of, "I don't feel like it," and be beaming proud of yourself because you did. Your efforts can motivate and inspire your loved ones and countless others who are watching, to great health in body, mind and spirit. Many people break free and live great health and we are going to meet them.

Hang on to your socks because I have a bad visual coming your way. The idea came for this book as I was sitting on the toilet. Yes. It's true. I wish it was somewhere more motivating like running up the stairs of the Lincoln Memorial or gazing upon the Lombardi statue at Lambeau Field. But it was the toilet. I looked down and saw my gut and it was like it was on the gymnastics team doing some kind of forward roll. I grabbed it with two hands. The eye of my bellybutton rolled upward and engaged me in a stare-down. After several moments, I blinked. I let out a big sigh and said, "What are you doing here?" Thankfully, it didn't answer or I would be in a counseling office right now instead of writing this book. But truthfully, the moment frustrated me. What I perceived as all the hard work that I was doing was starting to not hold me even. I was losing ground. Can you relate?

I remember shaking my head in quiet despair and wrestling with the question of "How on earth am I going to stay fit through my 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's? What is it going to take?" Sitting there staring at my gut eyeball started me spiraling into negativity:

"Oh, just get bigger pants."

"You, have been fit long enough. . .just get fat."

"Look at all you do, and it's just not enough. Forget it. It's not worth it"

"Enjoy yourself. Everyone else is."

"You are stressed. You deserve chocolate. Go eat!"

Does your mind chatter like this? What an energy drainer. Luckily, I realized what was happening and flushed those nasty thoughts. On my walk, where my better ideas tend to surface, I thought again of the question, "How am I going to stay fit through my 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's?" I asked myself:

- What stirs in me that I would want to fight for?
- What does the research say it will take?
- Who do I know who is living great health?
- What do they do?
- What is the gap between what they do and what I do?
- What adjustments can I make to stay fit and free for life?

So here, before you, is the delving in to those questions. I searched and found some wonderful women in their 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's who met my criteria of being

- Fun
- Positive
- Fit and free and with loose pants
- Persistent. Fighters. They do what it takes versus what they feel like.
- Uplifting. Those I admire and look up to.

It is my hope for both of us that somewhere in these pages we wake up our vision for great health and how good it will feel to be fit and free in body, mind and spirit for a lifetime. I hope we are reminded of our great strengths that have helped us overcome obstacles in the past and how we can use these strengths to fight for our worthwhile goals. I hope the “Hall of Fame Habits” of these wonderful women give us a spark of practical ideas to incorporate into our lives. I hope that we just get it over with and press forward through the slug pit of starting. I want it to be said of me and of you that we overcame the vomit of negative mind chatter, staked out a goal worth fighting for, and failed forward day in and day out toward victory. Now that is inspiring! I want your kids to brag you up. I want to create a huge wave of great health in body, mind and spirit for the glory of God. He thinks I'm worth it and you're worth it. So do I. Let's go get it done!