

## ~ *Best Shape of Your Life* ~ Challenge!



### What Do YOU Believe In?

**When it comes to success in any aspect of life** – ie health and wellness, finances, relationships - so many times we blame outside forces for our lack of success. But truly, if you're not successful, you need to start with the most primal, but often hidden factor of your life – your beliefs.

Beliefs are subconscious, for the most part. Like an iceberg, you may not even understand that they're running your life. Buried deep in the oceans of your mind, you have set patterns and beliefs about food, love, relationships, exercise and more. The successful person questions them all the time, to see if they 'hold water'. Do you really need that belief? (Principals are different, like charity, honesty – they never change).



By far, belief systems are, in my opinion, the biggest determiner of creating a successful, lasting exercise and eating routine. I've always said health and wellness is an inside job. And I had to go through years of being overweight until the light bulb went on.

**My old belief systems:** I was competing in my first bodybuilding contest at the age of 30. Prior to that, I was a 'meat and potatoes' girl from a traditional family, one that said girls were second-class, girls should conform and not take risks, and we were supposed to cook, clean and get a nice office job. After years of conforming and doing what I was 'supposed to do', I was miserable, tired, fat and hating this thing called life.

**Then I found bodybuilding** – that one thing that let me buck the system and do my own thing. I loved the freedom and creativity I had, and I loved busting the female-gender-stereotypes right out the door. It was what I needed to get me out of the status quo and thinking and living for myself.

What I didn't realize at the time was how much my beliefs had held me back. The beliefs I had were subconscious, beliefs about family, expectations, life! And these were hand-me-downs. There was no real basis for them at all in my life. And *they* were running *my* life!

### What do you believe?

Why is it that one person can be successful in maintaining an eating and exercise routine, but the other can't? Is it genetics? Thyroid condition? Lack of time? Lack of access? Lack of money?

Nope. The answer, I believe, more so than anything, is an underlying *belief system*. Some common ones I've seen over the years:

- If you believe that hunger pangs are negative, or painful, then you'll never lose weight and keep it off.
- If you believe exercise is something you have to do rather than something you *get to do*, you won't stick with it.
- If you believe healthy eating is about denial and not having fun, then you'll never stay lean.
- If you believe you won't succeed, then you won't!

## The Dog Whisperer - Breaking the Pattern

I love watching Caesar Milan, TV's renowned dog whisperer, whip even the most frenzied, uncontrollable dog into shape. Why? Because I learned one of the most valuable lessons from him – break the pattern, and start a new fresh pattern with a changed energy.

That's what he does when he undertakes a trouble dog – he breaks their current behavior pattern, quickly, before the dog can react, and puts a new one its place. He breaks the 'Pavlov's dog' thing. The dog can no longer to *react* to that which is no longer there. (Ever wonder why the dogs sometimes look confused or de-fused when he's around? Because they're on new territory, and the rules have changed.)

## Beliefs versus Willpower – no Contest

Let's talk nutrition here. By far, the most powerful ways to end emotional eating are increasing your awareness and establishing a belief system that short-circuits eating for the wrong reasons while triggering eating for the right reasons. Belief is a thousand times stronger than willpower because belief uses the unconscious mind to create behavior change *with automation*, while willpower uses the conscious mind to create behavior *with force*. Temporary change (diet) versus lasting change (lifestyle!)

## Make Food the solution

When it comes to food, I've discovered that fit, lean and healthy people have a unique set of beliefs about food and a distinct set of metaphors they use to describe food and what food is for:

- Food is fuel
- Food is my medicine
- Food is quality construction material for my body
- Food stokes the fire of metabolism
- Fruit is nature's candy
- Not feeling full is healthy and honours my body and its cells.



I've never met anyone who talked about food with this type of language exclusively who had a challenge with inappropriate eating or excess body fat. Think about that. When you look at it this way, food is no longer the *problem*, food is the *solution* and you become driven to eat the right foods.

### For me, my beliefs, and therefore my life, changed in two distinct moments:

- 1) When I started welcoming *small hunger pangs*, especially at night, as a cue that my body was burning fat and cleaning the cells. Being slightly hungry was not the enemy, being stuffed was!
- 2) When I *stopped eating bread*, crackers, desserts and any man-made products as they left me feeling depressed (that I had eaten them), bloated, and I viewed them as erasing all my hard work (and they were!). There truly was life after sandwiches!

Today, the last thing I would do is want to erase all my hard work. I'm worth more than that, so I say no *with pleasure* to man-made stuff! It's not a hardship! I have a different set of eyes, I wear *different glasses*, and hopefully now so will you!

You don't have to live in denial or in pain anymore. Shift your beliefs and you change your life! I promise!

## What do YOU believe in?

Write down your **currents beliefs** about health.

Example:

When I feel hunger pangs, it's uncomfortable, unnatural.

I don't want to train because I hate feeling sore all the time.

### **YOUR TURN....**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

Now **re-write** them.

When I feel hunger pangs, it's telling me my body is burning fat, and I'm getting more lean every day!

When I feel sore, it means I'm shaping and toning my muscles, and I'm revving my metabolism by adding lean muscle. The soreness will decrease with time.

**Print this off and share it with someone!**

**Re-read the RH column every morning and evening!**

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**Change Your Story** – did you know we create our own reality by the stories in our heads, those hamster-like stories we replay over and over again....they're not reality, they're our stories.

Several years ago, my husband and I were struggling with issues in our relationship, and it's no wonder. I unconsciously rehearsed in my head all the ways he upset me. Let's see... he was / harsh / critical / overbearing / silent .... Or how about this... he never listened to me / wanted to talk / appreciated all I did... Sound familiar?

**It wasn't until I learned to *change my inner story*** that our relationship truly transformed. Instead of looking at the negative traits, I reminded myself how kind / funny / handsome / supportive he was. Pretty soon, everything started to shift. And I realized I hadn't married the wrong person at all. In fact, he was the man of my dreams. I was just focusing on all the wrong stuff!

**You can do the same with training and healthy eating.** But you must dig down, and take responsibility for *everything* you learn and see (own it!). And remember this is *your* journey, *your* work, no one else's. This is you changing YOU because you care about you. Pretty soon, you're shifting will start others shifting as well, like a hanging mobile with different parts moving about, you can't move one part without others being affected.