

VitalNews

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New Year's Resolutions... Carpe Diem Seize the Day!

WRITTEN BY LAURA DENSON BAUM, M.D.

This powerful dictum always brings me back to Robin Williams' moving portrayal of the beloved and inspiring professor in the film *Dead Poets Society*. It is a call to action, a renewal of the spirit and a return to optimism and determination, like the feeling of hopeful yearning we experience when we pledge those New Year's resolutions. As the clock ticks away the final minutes of

the old year, the excitement can be intoxicating. But so often we fail. After the rush of the New Year's celebration fades and reality sets in, those ambitions can once again seem insurmountable. The truth is we very often unknowingly set ourselves up for failure.

Maybe this year we can keep a few rules in mind: Be realistic, keep it simple, and understand that self-motivation is essential when it comes to making real changes in your life. *You* have to be the one who is convinced you need to make a change. You have to really want it; your desire to make the change has to be greater than the desire to keep things the same. If you've ever spoken to someone who successfully stopped smoking or made any significant and lasting lifestyle change and asked them how they did it, the answer is always the same: "I wanted it and I just did it!"

Be realistic. Create short-term goals and make changes in small steps that are part of longer-term goals. If you need to lose twenty-five pounds, focus on losing five pounds. And instead of trying to lose five pounds in a week, focus on losing one pound a week. Acknowledge and reward your efforts and progress each step of the way, and never abandon your goals because of momentary failure or neediness. Remind yourself where you were last week or last month. If you are doing anything more than before, you have made progress. If you remain on the path you have chosen and your goals remain in view, your chance of attaining them becomes ever more likely.

Don't get caught up in the false hope of quick fixes when it comes to making lifestyle changes. It is unfair and foolish to think that decades of unhealthy habits can be eradicated in a week or two.

Finally, don't fall into the trap that fixing one thing you think has gone wrong is going to change your life. Getting to your ideal weight or driving a fancier car does not equal happiness. It's not about trading places with someone else who seems to be better off than you are, or looking like the model on the cover of *Vogue* or *GQ*, and it's not about turning back the hands of time. It's about striving to be the best version of you at this moment and investing in your future. Health and happiness comes as a result of taking better care of you, inside and out, and requires addressing a multitude of factors every day of our lives. Don't wait for all the stars to be in some perfect alignment; start now in the midst of everything. Today is the first day of the rest of your life.



inside

Make Lifestyle Choices
That Will Tip the
Scales in Your Favor.

SETH J. BAUM, M.D. FACC
Founder
VitalRemedyMD

Intelligent
Indulgences

Did You Know...?

LAURA D. BAUM, M.D.
Editor in Chief

Make Lifestyle Choices That Will Tip the Scales in Your Favor

“Exercise your option to take care of yourself – it is an opportunity we cannot afford to squander.”

We have choices. That's a good thing. But, we are bombarded by a never ending list of possibilities and we often rely on mass marketing for our information. That's not always good. They promise to be all natural, age-defying, energy supplying, or able to create weight loss in no time... it sounds good, and you want to believe. Life is busy and it would be nice to make changes without effort. Wake up! It's not happening. You have worked for years to earn those lines on your face; there is no skin cream that will erase them. Liposuction may help you slip into those old jeans that conjure up years gone by, but you can't escape the truth: you have made lifestyle choices for decades that may have translated into obesity, elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. (No sugar coating from me and I can't apologize for it – I need your attention.) Even if you were “perfect” on the outside (as if there were such a thing) you would still have to deal with the inside.

The bottom line is that we all have a responsibility to take ownership for our health and happiness – it is an opportunity we cannot afford to squander. Exercise your option to take care of yourself. You will feel better from the moment you start and it will show. You will have more energy, you will be less irritable, you will be more productive, and you will be happier. Like a contagion it will spread to every aspect of your life in ways that are difficult to measure. Taking the best possible care of yourself is about making choices that will work to support you – mentally and physically. Simply ask yourself, “does this choice work for me or against me in my quest to be my best?” Be honest and be committed to yourself.

Don't expect to make immediate sweeping changes, but endeavor to incorporate positive choices at every turn that will add up to overall benefit. We coined the phrase *Intelligent Indulgences* to emphasize the inclusion of tasty and healthful ingredients in our recipes for eating, but the same

philosophy can be applied to how we live each day – include salutary and enjoyable elements of exercise, stress reduction and social interaction – all of which promote health and happiness.

EXERCISE is the addiction we all need. Increasing your physical activity will help you in countless ways. Exercise improves function, strength, endurance, flexibility, balance, energy, tolerance to stress and depression, and helps maintain a healthy weight. It decreases resting blood pressure and LDL cholesterol and raises beneficial HDL cholesterol – all risk factors for diabetes and heart disease. Be creative, vary types of exercise, join forces with a friend or a personal trainer, and use upbeat music to fuel your enthusiasm. Anything more than you did yesterday is a start.

EAT WELL. Don't skip meals; eat smaller meals and eat more frequently. Learn about foods (the information is everywhere) and eat a varied diet that will give you a full range of flavors, colors, vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that will help reduce your risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and atherosclerosis. Avoid instant foods, overly processed foods, and refined carbohydrates such as white flour, sugar, and rice, all of which have a high glycemic index that raises blood sugar and insulin levels. Include numerous and varied fruits and vegetables, legumes, complex carbohydrates high in fiber, omega-3 fortified eggs, fish, organic meats, nuts and seeds.

REDUCE STRESS. The daily stresses imposed by relationships, work, and lifestyle are a major factor in aging and the development of disease. A constant state of mental agitation keeps cortisol levels high and alters metabolism, leading to weight gain and other metabolic disorders. Stress interferes with memory and our ability to focus. Make an attempt to manage stress and you will be making a choice in your favor. Start by slowing things down, letting go of the cosmic to-do list, taking a “time out” from the cell phone and laptop.



Intelligent Indulgences

- Exercise
- Eat well
- Reduce stress
- Keep an active mind
- Connect with others



Mindful Moderation

- Sun exposure
- Alcohol
- Chocolate / Caffeine
- Supplements



Absolute Avoidance

- Driving without a seatbelt
- Trans fats
- Smoking

intelligent indulgences

A Recipe to Quit Smoking

First understand this:

- Nicotine is highly addictive.
- Quitting is difficult.
- Relapse is common; don't give up.
- Many people try repeatedly before finding success.
- Each time you try to quit, you are more likely to succeed.

There are many good reasons to quit smoking:

- You will enjoy a longer and more healthful life.
- Your family, especially, your children will be healthier.
- You will be more energetic.
- You will find it easier to breathe.
- You will save money.
- You will smell better.
- You will lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, osteoporosis, macular degeneration, prematurely wrinkled skin, etc.

Create a plan:

- Talk to your doctor and set a formal quit date.
- Discuss possible medications to assist in quitting smoking including: Varenicline (Chantix), Bupropion SR (Zyban), nicotine gum/ inhaler/ nasal spray/patch.

Helpful Tips:

- Put it in writing. *Write down your reasons for quitting so you can refer to them when you are tempted to smoke.*
- Keep a journal before you quit so you can identify feelings and circumstances that trigger your cravings for nicotine.
- Dispose of all cigarettes and ashtrays.
- Get support from those who care about you.
- Avoid areas where smoking is permitted.
- Stay busy.
- Reward yourself frequently for your accomplishments.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Exercise and take steps to reduce stress.
- Eat a healthful diet and drink plenty of water.

Readjust your expectations and you might realize that you are creating much of your stress. Pick two or three things off that never ending list of tasks you thought you might accomplish today and appreciate what you did instead of what you didn't do. Give equal opportunity to a good night's sleep, time to read, a hobby or craft, listening to music, spending quality time with your self or a friend. And give yourself permission to be in the moment.

KEEP AN ACTIVE MIND. Slowing things down will help preserve our nerves, but as we age, we need to keep up the mental exercise as well as the aerobics. Adults who stay active mentally continue to build brain cell connections which may help retard loss from cognitive diseases. Continue to learn new things, challenge yourself with word puzzles and games, read poetry and Shakespeare, enjoy novel experiences, and discover a new hobby.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS. Family, friends, and community ties build resilience, offer emotional support, and foster a sense of well-being. Staying connected through social activity as well as engaging in productive activity, like working, volunteering, and gardening has been shown to increase longevity. Find someone to love, help someone less fortunate than you; consider the companionship of a dog or cat – all shown to benefit health.

MODERATION is the key when it comes to some choices.

- If you choose to imbibe - red wine may be the most healthful choice - drink responsibly and in moderation.
- Dark chocolate is rich in antioxidants but fattening: Caffeine is a stimulant—enjoy both in moderation.
- Fresh air and sunshine are gifts from nature, but don't forget to stay hydrated with healthful fluids and protect your skin and eyes from damaging light to help prevent skin cancer and macular degeneration.
- Nutritional supplements abound; take them with care and the consultation of your physician. Start the day with a multivitamin that can provide a solid foundation of the essential vitamins and minerals upon which you will add a healthful and varied diet. Supplement calcium and vitamin D according to your age requirements, and consider purified omega-3s, DHA and EPA, which may help prevent Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, heart disease, and myriad other conditions. Antioxidants are advised based on individual need as indicated by blood testing and then only in a *balanced* formulation since antioxidants can themselves become free radicals when taken inappropriately.

Absolutely avoid all choices that have been identified as harmful to your health and destructive to your reaching your goal. A few universal warnings come to mind:

BUCKLE UP! It amazes me that some people get in a car and don't immediately put on a seat

belt. As a consequence, sadly some of these people are no longer here to warn.

AVOID TRANS FATS, or *partially hydrogenated vegetable oils*, used in baked products and packaged goods to extend their shelf life - they increase harmful LDL cholesterol, decrease beneficial HDL cholesterol, and promote inflammation – all of which endanger the health of your heart.

STOP SMOKING! Tobacco use is the chief avoidable cause of illness and death in our society, causing cancer, heart disease, stroke, complications of pregnancy, macular degeneration, osteoporosis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to name a few. If you are a smoker, ask yourself if you are ready to quit now. If so, get help; you need to have a plan and you need support. Understand that quitting is a process and relapse is part of the process. If you have tried and failed, try again. There are more people out there who have successfully quit smoking than there are people who still smoke.

Did You Know...?

our MISSION
is to enable your
doctor to provide
you with the best
and most appro-
priate nutritional
supplements.

Heart attacks have been linked to diet, smoking and obesity but also to less obvious risk factors such as:

- **Weather:** Researchers have found that exposure to frigid temperatures can trigger heart attacks as well as angina and strokes.
- **Gum Health:** Studies suggest that if you have periodontal disease, your heart attack risk nearly doubles. Bacteria may enter the blood and promote atherosclerosis.
- **Body shape:** Being overweight is bad enough, but if your fat lies more in the abdomen than the hips, you are especially prone to heart disease.
- **Day of the week/time of the day:** Cardiac events tend to occur most often between 4 and 6 pm and on Mondays and Fridays.
- **Attitude:** Optimism has been linked to better immune function, lowered levels of stress-related chemicals, and a lower incidence of heart attacks.

To learn more about our products please ask your physician, or visit our website at www.vitalremedymd.com.

AntioxidantBalance® • Daily2Tab • DailyMultiple • HomocysteineFormula • Dialysist® • RetinGuard®
JointFormula • N-AcetylCysteine • CALRemedy® • StatinGuard® • Vital4Cholest™ • VitalOils™

Telephone: 561-347-6446 or Toll Free 800-770-4360 Outside Florida



6401 E. Rogers Circle, #4, Boca Raton, Florida 33487

