

2011 is the beginning of a completely new decade. What are you going to do differently this year? What goals will you make for your health? And how will you ensure that you actually follow through with your goals? For starters, life changes begin with bite-sized steps towards health; you don't have to change everything in one day!

All of us want to be at our best, most happy and healthy selves, yet it can be a tough challenge to put our dreams into action.

A vision board is one fun and practical tool to set your intentions and remind yourself to put your goal into action. The power of building and nurturing what you want and need for your health is in your hands, heart and mind.

## Ways To Build 'Vision For Your Health'

One of the simplest ways to get started is to think and then write down in a little booklet that you can keep in your bag or office, your achievable, concise smart health goals, as well as the actions you will take to achieve them.

If you have the time, be more creative! Use paint, paper clippings and other items to craft your personal 'totem' or vision board of health! Draw and make incisions in your booklet. Make use of any magazines, images and art and craft supplies you might have. You may want to use a notice board to create your vision on. Ikea sells good notice boards!

## Getting Down To It

There are 2 factors you may want to constantly focus on whilst creating your vision for health:

**Why:** Understand the reason you are determined to start a vision for your health.

**What:** Understand what your goals are. Ask yourself what are the things you really want and need. For instance, achieving good health in order to gain balance in your life and work (Health influences our family life and business, our performance and productivity levels, our physical energy and thinking processes, communication levels and relationships).

I believe understanding 'why' is important because it gives you the motivation to stay focused, maintain discipline and achieve your goals. Understanding why also helps us surrender to change things like our daily habits that have become near impossible to transform!

The 'what' is also crucial. Understanding what your goals are will help you understand yourself better. It will encourage you to go discover yourself and take responsibility for what is it that you need to achieve and do regularly and consistently during the year in order to maintain a positive state of health.

## Your Vision Board – A Mental Or Physical One?

Why do we all need a vision board? Be it a mental one or one that you can hang in your kitchen or bedroom, a vision board gives us direction and serves as tools that

remind us to remain positive even when things do not go the way we expect.

One of the things I always teach to my students in workshops: we can control only 10 per cent on what happens around us but at least 90 per cent of what happens in us. For instance, if one is diagnosed with a severe disease, a vision for health can help the person to refocus continually on the positive side of the situation and motivate the person to endure, keep going, take responsibility and transform certain habits that could have contributed to his state of health.

In my work, I motivate people to build vision boards and to have fun in doing it. You can involve your family members, even your kids too. Creating vision boards can bring out creativity in a child, and it can be a healthy family activity to take on before celebrating the New Year.

To me, a visual vision board hung up on the wall in the house or even inside a wardrobe is better than a mental one. I can look at it every morning and that action alone can remind us and develop our self-discipline. It helps keep our intrapersonal communication alive even when we are driven by fear or disappointment.

If your health is truly important to you, why not make use of this simple and useful habit for 2011? Yes, a vision board - for good health and inner communication. Improving your internal communication and health also means getting results in many other areas such as family relationships, work and career, money and success!

A healthier year ahead

By Elisabetta Franzoso

# Vision For Your Health



# 6

## Centenarian Practices That Will Help You Live To 100

Start small! Start with choosing 3 simple yet life-changing practices to be your goal this 2011. The trick is to be consistent and work your way up, slowly but steadily.

### 1 Breathe your way to 100

In many cultures that have large numbers of centenarians, it is a custom to practice meditation and other special breathing methods every day. Breathing correctly is important for dispelling the toxins and wastes from your body. In fact, it is estimated that we expel only about 30 percent of toxins in our bodies through defecation, urination, and perspiration - the rest is respiratory. Unfortunately, many of us have forgotten how to breathe and take shallow breaths from the top of the lungs. Practice deep, slow, rhythmic breathing daily to detoxify and de-stress. Do three times a day, close your eyes and breathe slowly for 10 counts.

**Go big: One of the most effective ways to reduce stress, protect your heart, and lengthen your years is to meditate. Find a meditation practice that works for you and begin with 5 to 10 minutes a day.**



### 2 Take a 15 to 20 minute walk every day

Aside from the proven benefits to your heart, walking is the perfect yet gentle exercise for improving digestion and encouraging cleansing of the lymphatic system.

**Start small: Start with just 5 minutes and build your way up to 20 minutes or more.**



### 3 Stop eating when you are three-quarters full.

Something that almost all centenarians have in common is that they eat less. Many centenarians had very modest means and thus, eat less than an average person. They often stop eating once they are three-quarters full.

**Start small: Follow the three-quarters rule for just one meal a day. You will notice a difference.**





## 4 Eat vegetables of 5 different colours daily.

Countries with the highest number of centenarians generally have very little meat but more vegetables in their diet. Numerous studies show that the different pigments in the skins of vegetables make up powerful antioxidants that are crucial for maintaining health, preventing cancer and protecting against environmental toxins. Insufficient whole plant fiber in diets has also led to an estimated one-third of all cancer patients.

**Green: Broccoli, brussel sprouts and dark leafy greens like Kale**

**Dark colors: Eggplant, seaweed, and black mushrooms**

**Yellow/orange: Carrots, squash, pumpkins and sweet potatoes**

**Red: Red peppers, red bell peppers and beets**

**White/light: Cauliflower, onions**

**Start small: Start with just two different veggies a day, learn some recipes and before you know it, you'll be up to eating five different coloured greens a day.**



## 6 Commit to a regular cardio workout.

In many years of clinical practice and research, I have never met a centenarian that lived a physically inactive life. Cardiovascular exercise is critical to attaining your health goals and the key to a healthy heart.

**Start small: Begin by exercising only five minutes a day, but do it every day. Increase the time by five minutes each week. By the sixth week, your exercise routines will be up to 30 minutes.**

## 5 Drink 2 cups of herbal tea a day.

In addition to being a delicious and low-calorie drink, tea is the beverage most commonly enjoyed by centenarians around the world. To maintain optimum health, drink decaffeinated tea with herbs that help support your liver, lymphatic system, bowels, urinary tract and skin by cleansing and preventing a buildup of toxins and wastes in the body. Green tea has many health benefits, and even with its caffeine content (which is much less than coffee), is still an excellent choice.

**Go big: This being a relatively simple practice, you can take on a bigger challenge – start drinking tea instead of coffee.**



For 2011, I wish all of you a balanced life, one full of renewed energy. May you also be strongly motivated from the inside out, with the use of your vision board for health! **ehb**

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