

CHAPTER 3 EVALUATE AND PLAN

Get the Facts

- Sixty-five percent or more of adults in most Western countries are overweight. Close to 30% are obese.
- About 50% of adults take at least one prescription medication. About 50% of seniors take at least three.
- For those who are normal weight, 20% will have some components of metabolic syndrome, precursor to chronic illness.
- It is not normal for our bodies to be sick and need medication.
- There are basic actions that you can take, and using the 80/20 rule (20% of what you do will give you 80% of the results), you can keep your body healthy whether fat or thin.
- It is never too late to start taking action for a healthy body and quality life.
- Health begins and ends with what you put in your mouth with few exceptions.

Understand the Science

What you eat has a significant effect on your weight and health. Do you eat a lot of processed sugar and high-carbohydrate foods? Do you eat too much food every day without ever giving your body a break from food? When you grocery shop, do you buy a lot of processed foods but only a few plants from the produce department? Do you have poor quality fats and rancid seed oils in your kitchen? Do you sit at a desk for most of the workday and sit in front of the TV after the workday ends?

Every single thing listed above significantly affects your health! There is science-based evidence behind all of it, and you'll understand the evidence as you read this book. If you answered yes to any, or especially if you answered yes to most of the questions, the bad news is that you are not doing very well at keeping yourself healthy. The good news is that these things are all low-hanging fruit

issues, and that means you can easily tackle them with little effort and time! To get you started, review the checklist below.

Action You Can Take NOW

Take things out of your diet or lifestyle, rather than putting things in. Whether you call it a simpler lifestyle or diet, a low-hanging fruit approach, or an 80/20 approach, it is all about *less*. It is much easier to take stuff out than to put more stuff in. I'll call it the *take-out* diet!

- Take-out sugar from your diet. Leave in proteins and fats.
- Take-out simple carbohydrates. Leave in good food, not too much, mostly plants.
- Take-out seed oils. Leave in good fats.
- Take-out food products. Shop the perimeter of the grocery store; try to stay out of the centre aisles. Better yet, frequent farmers markets.
- Take-out food from your diet if you are overweight. I recommend the 5:2 diet as a good option because you don't need to change your social life.
- Take-out sitting down for more than 20 minutes at a time.
- Adopt a change management approach to these life style changes and be aware that your mental approach is the primary factor for a healthy body, and ultimately, a healthy weight.

You don't need to jump through a lot of hoops to live a happy, healthy life. In later chapters of this book we will go through these things in more detail and explain the rationale. Just skim these points and think about how you can implement them for weight loss and management, and good health. Or if you want to, jump ahead to the last section to where these are explained in more detail.

The next group is about things that you could do as part of a long term healthy lifestyle as there is some evidence of benefits. The last group is things you can pretty much ignore as a waste of time or money. I try to avoid getting into arguments with advocates for these behaviours: many believe in them with a religious fervor.

Some Value

- Have relationships with others. Health and well-being is associated with having good relationships. Having a partner extends life expectancy. Loneliness reduces life expectancy.
- Reduce contaminants in your life. If you have major contaminants such as smoking or drugs, get rid of those before embarking on the six things above. Health benefits are well established for quitting smoking.
- If you drink more than a 3 or 4 drinks of alcohol per week on average, you will need to adjust your lifestyle starting with alcohol. Don't bother to start the take-out diet unless you have alcohol under control. Check out the chapter on alcohol.
- You can't change your genes. Knowing your family medical history might lead to preventative strategies, or provide incentive to change.
- Trying to change your microbiome (gut bacteria) may help, but the biggest improvement to your microbiome will be taking-out sugars and simple carbohydrates and giving them a little more whole food.
- High salt consumption may be bad for you, but if you reduce your consumption of processed foods (which provides 75% of all the salt you take in) then don't bother to specifically reduce salt. Let it happen as a consequence.
- Don't try to change your meat consumption. There may be some minor risk from processed meat, but the evidence is patchy. Reducing simple carbohydrates and reducing weight provides better health outcomes.
- Exercise. While exercise is of little value in weight loss, exercise is beneficial in a range of processes, and reasonable exercise helps metabolism, improves mental state, reduces chronic illnesses, improves memory and decreases memory loss. Don't change the level of exercise as part of the 12 week program.

Of Little or No Value

All of these below fit with the 80% of effort or cost while providing less than 20% of value.

- Stop consuming vitamins and supplements. I suggest any money you spend on vitamins and supplements is put towards real food.
- Have a lifestyle that tries to eliminate toxins from your body although reducing toxins is common sense.
- Never mind buying organic food. There is little evidence it makes a difference. Organic food alone won't change your health, and don't equate organic food with healthy food. It will lighten your wallet.
- Don't worry about the low GI high GI issue. Just "take-out" eating simple carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates are good, simple are bad.
- Don't worry about eating for your blood type.
- Don't bother to do liver cleanses and detoxifications, or any other well designed scheme to lighten your wallet. Choose to live a healthy lifestyle instead.
- Don't bother to "juice." Recycle your juicer and eat the whole fruit or vegetable.
- Don't exercise like contestants on "The Biggest Loser."
- Don't diet with any of the quick-fix programs which are designed to lighten your wallet unless you need them for social support. Results can be achieved considerably faster and cheaper with more natural steps that include eating real food. However, you may want to do these for a short period of time if you are in a mental state where you want some support and structure around an initial weigh loss program. Just don't do them long term. You will fail.
- Don't listen to your friend. Or the taxi driver. Or the health gurus. You are more likely to get inaccurate information than practical, science-based information.
- Don't listen to the conservative medical industry. Generally, they are uneducated about the latest scientific research, and many of them still support the dogma of "eat less, move more" mindset proven ineffective.

- Don't listen to, and support the big food and big pharmaceutical companies. They want your dollars at any cost. They are very good at emptying your wallet and providing little to nothing in return.

Plan Your Attack

When it comes to taking care of your body, planning is essential. I've helped many people plan their business strategies. In general, businesses are usually short on time and money, and they think they need a plan to increase money. Many want a plan to do more, but fail to see that to achieve more, you have to do less. Time is the one resource most people do not have enough of. Find time by doing less of the stuff that does not give results. Most times a plan turns out to reduce time wasted. Planning won't automatically increase wins, but it generally reduces losses. Most know enough about money to figure out how they can increase their revenue but few recognize that time may be the biggest constraint to successful business. Do fewer things for better results.

Let's use an example from business. A company has ten product lines. Pareto's Principle will say 20% of the lines (only two) give 80% of the profit, but they all take the same amount of time to manufacture. Two lines lose money and six may make a little money. If the business stopped those two loss-making product lines and just two of barely marginal products lines, the business would have 40% more time available. That time can now be used productively, either to increase production of their two profitable product lines, or take time off for leisure, or develop new products. Planning is mostly about stopping unhelpful things, not doing new things. Most are too busy doing things to start new things. Weight loss and health initiatives are no different.

In the business planning process, I get businesses to apply 80% of their time on really measuring what they are currently doing (baseline). I also insist they make no changes in the business until the planning phase is completed. I like to use the Goldratt's "Theory of Constraints" process to pinpoint what to change; what to change to, and how to cause the change. Goldratt promotes the principle there is only 1 constraint, and you need to subordinate everything to that constraint. During this planning and measuring phase, it becomes obvious what needs to be changed, but establishing the right Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is not always straight forward. There is a saying: Measure what is important. The corollary

to this is: What you measure becomes important. If you put in place a measure that does not give rise to improvement, why measure it? This measure could actually change things for the worse.

Why spend so much time on the baseline? Where you come from is usually more important than where you are going. Let's say you are planning a trip to China to see the Great Wall. If you are from an isolated farming community in Australia, speak no Mandarin, have never travelled to another culture, and only like meat and three vegetables, your experience and outcome will be quite different from that of a Chinese migrant from Australia who speaks fluent Mandarin, has travelled extensively, and loves diverse cuisine. If you come from Japan, or Italy, your journey will be much different. You might use a similar aircraft to fly in, but preparation and your experience of the journey will not be the same. Everything we see is viewed through the prism of our experience.

We will discuss change management in more detail in the upcoming section on evaluating your health. In change management you do require some key information.

- Where are you now (the Now)
- Where do you want to get to (the Where)
- What are the reasons to change (the Why)
- What processes to use (the How)

These four key issues are simple and obvious, but few actually follow them, jumping straight to the "how" and then failing.

Normal or Nearly Overweight

If you have a BMI range from 20 to 25 (normal) you probably need to start the process of health improvement. You could be thin on the outside, but fat on the inside, and have as many of the health risks as an obese person. The strategies for improving your health will also result in weight loss. There are really only two simple things to do right off the starting line, but it does take focus to make any change. So consider the changes; read the book and other information to see what actually will work for you.

If one of the goals you set yourself is feeling better about yourself, weight loss may be one of the KPIs so you will need to do all six things. If weight loss is not required as part of your goals, avoid the 5:2 diet until the other dietary patterns have changed for good. The

fewer things you need to do, the higher the probability of success for a lifestyle change. Intermittent fasting does have long term health benefits, and is an effective zero-cost strategy for good quality of life when elderly. But in change management, you want to change as little as possible, to maximize the probability of success. Trying to do too much too often creates stress, and as we will see, managing your mental state is important for success. Leaving the 5:2 for three months is no big deal in a lifetime of eighty years or so.

Overweight and Obese

For the 60% plus of the population who are overweight or obese with a BMI over 25, you have a greater challenge, because your body is almost certainly physically damaged by your past diet. Those past diet and lifestyle behaviours have created a challenging environment for change. Your mind may be somewhat traumatized by past experiences, and you will have to change this thinking in order to meet your challenges for weight loss and wellness. From the physical perspective, you are likely to have many of the consequences of being obese, such as metabolic syndrome, type II diabetes, fatty liver disease, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, just to name a few. More importantly, your appetite and normal diet feedback mechanisms are probably screwed up. It takes time to get them back on track, and there is some evidence they will never get back on track. Sadly, the evidence is that if you don't want to go back to being overweight or obese, you may always have to permanently restrict your calorie intake. You will need to manage all of those legs of that 3 legged stool, and it may be more difficult for the obese than for those in the moderately overweight BMI range.

Before You Start

Spend 80% of your time in planning, and 20% in doing. Planning gives the best outcome. Understand your personal reasons for desiring change. Good health or avoidance of illness may be stronger than looks, but whatever pushes your buttons! Monitor what you eat. Keep a journal as though you are a careful scientist. Be accurate and be consistent. You can use online systems like MyFitnessPal, Lose It, Cron-O-Pal, Fitday, or any of the other dozens of sites and apps. If you can, find a buddy to monitor and check your progress and share the journey with. Not everyone's experience is the same. Understand that you need to have a twelve-week plan and will have to track your measurements and what you eat for a period of time. Don't guess! Be accurate in your record-keeping.

Read, and try to understand, as much as you can about how your body works. Compare your research with what is actually happening in your body. Keep notes. Do the exercises such as the Food Lovers sacrifice food questionnaire. Do research to find answers.

Deal with your mental state. Prepare yourself for the challenges that are associated with changing your eating style. You know your strengths and weaknesses; use them for success in your plan. Give yourself self-talks in whatever way works for you. Don't ignore your brain; it plays a huge part in your weight loss and health. You can use your brain for an edge and advantage in your program. Visualize how much better you will feel when you lose weight and diminish your risk for disease. This can be powerful motivation for adopting a healthy eating style. Hypnotherapy or other techniques may help you adopt a healthier eating and fitness style. Research in quitting smoking showed going "cold turkey" was predominately the most effective. Trying to give up smoking slowly is ineffective and it doesn't take long before you are back on the habit.

Don't Stop Before You Get Going

Twenty percent will stop a diet within two days of starting a new plan. Forty percent will have stopped within the week. Only 20% of those who start a diet will remain on it for a year. For many, this path to health is very complicated, and most of all it is about Change Management. You *must* want to make a change. Even when a change is relatively minor it can be extremely difficult. During the course of writing, and experiencing first hand, my own journey, and from my experience in the field of change management, it is pretty evident that this degree of change is very substantial. Substantial dietary change, substantial personal change, and living in a society where this degree of change has a great deal of consequences, is challenging. That's why everyone is looking for a simple solution like swallow a pill once a day and everything will work out. There are some recent diets such as No Sugar and others that have a simple message. While the message is simple, the change is complex and there's plenty of evidence that these will also fail long term.

This makes it even more important that the changes we make are as small as possible and the gains are large. Old habits can be extremely hard to change, and new habits will take effort and time; just ask a smoker. Changing food habits can be compared to alcoholism. Alcoholism is a choice, day by day. Accept that you have to make food habits that last forever. This is not about your willpower, overcoming gluttony, or being a sloth (not doing enough

exercise), but because the society we live in is geared to the overweight or obese. Every shop, every restaurant, and every activity is geared to our consumptive overweight society. It is so pervasive that most just don't see it, and it may take decades to change if ever. Now that I am on this *take-out* lifestyle, I find that when I go to a coffee shop there is never food in the counters that meet my new criteria of no added sugar, no simple carbohydrates, and no seed oils. Most seem to have very little whole food. The only place I recently saw whole food was a gas station that had a bowl of apples. The apples were next to a special on chocolate bars and Coke and shelves of packaged potato crisps. The "healthy choices" displayed can be the worst offenders. Large smoothies, flavored coffee or juices are heart attacks in a glass. Coffee shops, for me, are now a place for black coffee only.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the decision to make a dietary change for a gain in health and associated weight loss is a major change management process. A dietary change has ramifications across biochemical, hormonal, mental, and social interactions. You have to know why you want to change. As well as a sense of purpose, you have to know where you are now, where and why you want to change and how to change. While some would say don't start unless you are committed to continue, I think that is defeatist. Rather, I suggest the principles in business Change Management proposes a significantly different approach and it is worth starting on some changes to get some of the benefits.

- Start with the assumption that you only will change the least amount of things in your lifestyle.
- Adopt an 80:20 approach.
- Change Management says don't try to go from Sinner to Saint. Instead of trying to do more, do less.
- Don't try to eat "healthier" but do adopt a *take-out* approach. Take-out sugar and simple carbohydrates and replace them with more of what you already eat.
- Do not add things into this change by doing extra exercise, or many of the other things advocated from doctors to charlatans.

- Take-out one thing that will make you feel better. It might be sugar. It might be the 5:2 or a kick start diet to shed some weight. Then add in some of the other take-out actions.
- It is ok to stop. You do not fail if you do the first 20 days and then stop. Change management says this approach is a valid "plan and evaluate" process. Stop. Assess. Amend the plan. Restart.

References

- a. Goldratt, E. (1992) *The Goal: A process of ongoing improvement.* pp384 North River Press. ISBN-13: 978-0884270614