



Embracing a  
**HEALTHY**  
*Lifestyle*

Loving ALL of YOU

*A proven  
BIBLICAL guide  
to achieving a  
healthy, active,  
lifestyle*



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Scripture quotations in the text of this manual are taken from a number of versions. These are identified by abbreviations. NIV (New International Version), NJKV (New King James Version), KJV (King James Version), AMP (Amplified Bible), NLT (New Living Translation), NLV (New Life Version), The Message.

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## introduction

*Embracing a Healthy Lifestyle Loving ALL of YOU* is a series of books and journals derived from the Careforce Lifekeys program Healthy Lifestyle, which has been shown to be effective in improving health in women.<sup>1</sup>

This book and journal series is designed to help you embrace a healthy lifestyle; to start and continue a life long journey of improving your health in every aspect, physically, mentally and spiritually. We are complex beings that God created for an amazing purpose, and it is up to us to be proactive in improving our health!

From our experience in health behaviour change, we have seen the effectiveness of journaling. Recording your progress, goals, setbacks and words of inspiration encourages you on each step of your journey towards achieving your health goals. To do this we recommend you purchase the *Embracing a healthy lifestyle, Loving ALL of YOU Journal*.

**To order your copy, visit [www.lovingalloyou.com](http://www.lovingalloyou.com)**

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<sup>1</sup> M. Jorna, K. Ball, and J. Salmon, "Effects of a holistic health program on women's physical activity and mental and spiritual health," *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 2006, 9 (5): 395-401.

Proceeds from the sale of this book will be given to Kiva, an organisation that empowers women to fight against poverty.

Kiva.org is the world's first personal micro-lending website, empowering individuals to lend to a borrower across the globe. Founded in 2005, Kiva.org's mission is to connect people, through lending, to alleviate poverty. Over 560,000 people have loaned more than \$200 million to 525,000 borrowers in 59 countries.

*For more information visit [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org), and to read about the women who now have the opportunity to create better lives for themselves and their families visit [www.lovingalloyou.com](http://www.lovingalloyou.com).*



## medical disclaimer

Embracing a Healthy Lifestyle Loving ALL of YOU contains guidance that relates to health, nutrition, and exercise. Such guidance is general and is not intended to replace the specific medical advice of your medical physician.

Please consult your medical physician whenever it appropriate to do so.



Chapter **ONE**  
*more than a lifestyle*

embracing health



## ***THE PROCESS OF EMBRACING HEALTH***

Thank you for your courage in taking action about your sense of wellbeing. We all value our health. When it declines or is less than satisfactory, all areas of our lives are affected. This book commences a journey that will allow you to embrace health in a new and more effective way. It will transform your future, as you create a new lifestyle for yourself. However you will discover, if you don't already appreciate it, that embracing health involves more than improving a lifestyle, our life itself depends on it.

The information in this book is designed to encourage you to become proactive in managing your health in a holistic manner. It will equip you with current health information, skills and resources that will assist you to make informed choices about your own personal health.

The process of embracing a new and healthy lifestyle is a journey that has many rewards for those who choose to embark on it. Being fit and healthy brings many positive benefits to all areas of our lives – mind, body and spirit.

*Studies done at Ohio State University in the USA<sup>1</sup> found that a person has reduced stress levels, a rosier outlook, more confidence, and sounder sleep after just one workout session!*

### **Benefits of a Healthy Lifestyle**

A healthy lifestyle benefits the body in many ways including:

1. Helping prevent heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure.
2. Reducing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and some cancers.
3. Helping build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints reducing the risk of osteoporosis and injury.

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<sup>1</sup> Ohio State University research website: <http://researchnews.osu.edu/>

4. Improving psychological wellbeing including mood.
5. Improving and strengthening the immune system

*The process of getting ourselves into shape is much like solving a puzzle. Before we can hope to solve it, though, there are pieces that must be found and then put into place.* <sup>2</sup>

This book is about helping you solve that puzzle, and discover ways to embrace health for life and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. As Henry Ford stated:

*If you always do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got!*

## WHAT IS HEALTH?

Health is the measure of the condition of our being. In the past a person's health was defined as the absence of disease. We now know that there is far more to health than this.

*Our health and wellness are outcomes of many and complex interacting factors.* <sup>3</sup>

Or as the philosopher Emerson put it, *The first wealth is health.* <sup>4</sup>

The biblical perspective is that we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This image involves a mind (or soul), a body, and a spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Therefore we need to look at all three of these areas, and their interactions with each other when evaluating the state of our health. **Health is about the whole person.**

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2 M. Gerrish, *When working out isn't working out: A mind-body guide to conquering unidentified fitness obstacles* (USA: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

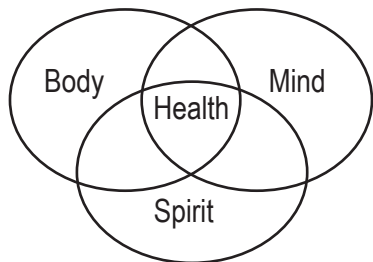
3 F. Allen, *Health psychology: theory and practice*, (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998).

4 R. Emerson, *The conduct of life*, (USA: 1st World Library, 2004).

*Our success at seeing this happen doesn't hinge on us just making physical changes to our lifestyle. It involves us making changes in all areas of our being: mind, body, and spirit.*

**It involves us embracing the process of change.**

Consider for a moment the definition of “embrace.”



**Embrace: [ em brayss ] verb**

- to adopt or take up something, especially a belief or a way of life
- to get into one's head
- to get hold of an idea
- to include something as part of the whole
- to hug somebody in your arms fondly

## ***THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WHOLE PERSON***

Let's look at how interactions of our mind, body and spirit can affect our health.

While holistic medicine was commonplace in the 1800s, only recently has there been a resurgence of interest, whereby a new body of evidence has emerged, researching the connection between spiritual, mental, and physical health. Literature showing correlations of health benefits and greater longevity with spiritual practices like attending church and praying have been well documented. A large portion of this literature focuses on recovery from acute and chronic life-threatening diseases, and links between coping mechanisms, physical health, and spirituality.<sup>5,6,7,8</sup>

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5 H. Koenig, "Religion, spirituality and health: an American physician's response," *Medical Journal of Australia*, 2003, 178 (2): 51-52.

6 K. Mullen, "Religion and health: A review of the literature," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 1990, 10 (1): 85-96.

7 L. Powell, L. Shahabi, and C. Thoresen, "Religion and spirituality. Linkages to physical health," *American Psychologist*, 2003, 58 (1): 36-52.

8 T. Seeman, L. Dubin, and M. Seeman, "Religiosity/spirituality and health. A critical review of the evidence for biological pathways" *American Psychologist*, 2003, 58 (1): 53-63.

*Additionally, people who internalise biblical teachings, believe they have a close personal relationship with God, pray frequently and practice what they preach have been shown to have a higher satisfaction in life, happiness and sense of well-being.<sup>9</sup>*

**In summary, positive interactions between religion/spirituality and physical health have been shown in the following areas:**

- Longevity
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved surgical outcomes
- Shorter hospital stays
- Improved mental health
- Better coping mechanisms
- Overall well-being

Getting healthy and fit doesn't just happen. Changes need to take place and an appropriate lifestyle created, if health and fitness are to be maintained.

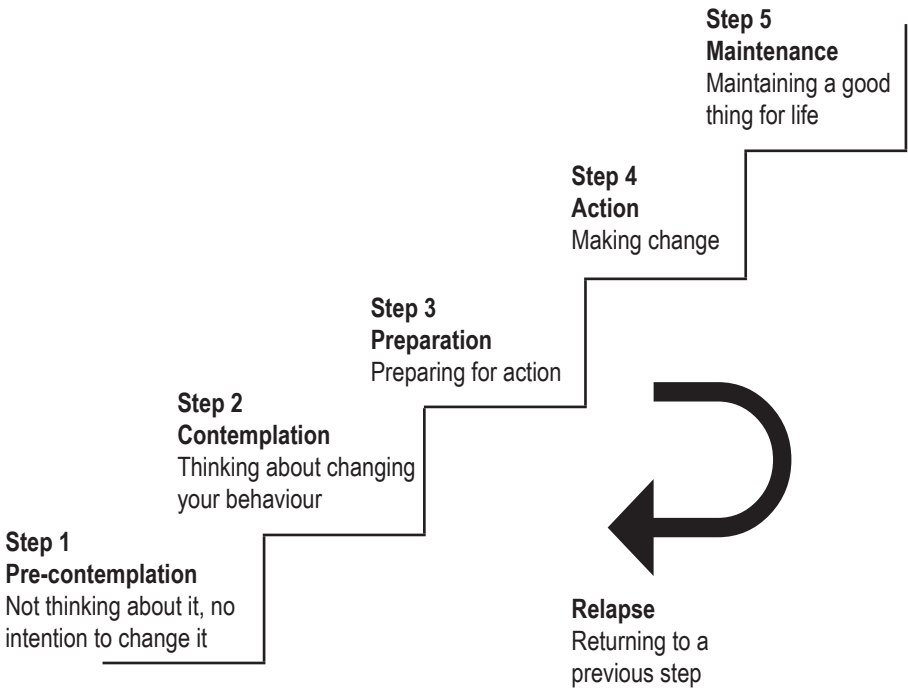
*In facing the challenge of embracing a healthy lifestyle we first need to get in touch with some truths that relate to ourselves and the process of change.*

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9 W. Larimore, *10 Essentials of highly healthy people* (USA: Zondervan, 2003).

# WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF CHANGE?

## The Steps



This model of behavioural change is a psychological theory called the ‘*Transtheoretical model*’ and can relate to many different health behaviours.<sup>10</sup>

Change involves effort as represented by climbing the steps.

*If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably won't lead anywhere - Anon*

10 R. K. Dishman, *Advances in exercise adherence* (Champaign, IL, USA: Human Kinetics, 1994), -

## **THE JOURNEY SO FAR – STEPS 1, 2 AND 3**

### **Step 1: Pre-contemplation**

Step 1 or pre-contemplation, describes the group of people that know they need to change to increase their health, but are not yet even thinking about it, nor have they any intention of doing anything about it in the near future. You may know a friend or family member who this relates to. Encouraging people in this category to ‘think about it’ or contemplate change, by talking about the pros and cons of change, is a good starting point for progression to the next step.

### **Step 2: Contemplation**

Contemplation is the stage in which women accept that they should be more physically active, or eat healthier, and are seriously thinking about it, but have not yet made a commitment to take action.

What were the main reasons for reading this book? Was it the mental, physical or spiritual benefits you think or know you will experience when your health is improved?

Think of things that may have prevented you in the past from even picking up a book on health. What were those reasons or barriers?

A lack of confidence or ‘self-efficacy’ also holds many people back at this step. How confident do you feel that you can get yourself to take up the challenge of improving your health? Discussing the reasons with a friend that you lack confidence in making a particular health change is an important process to make it to the next step. Being emotionally honest is a major part of your inner journey.

Social support through talking with someone who can encourage, support and counsel the relevant issues may help here.

*Be aware that despite having moved beyond this step in order to be physically reading this book, there will be times where life may throw you back momentarily to this point. The challenge will be to recognise it, and proceed quickly through the steps using your past victories to encourage you.*

Identifying benefits, barriers and potential goals boost confidence and therefore encourage you to move to the next step. However, the benefits need to be clear and the barriers addressed, if goals are to be both realistic and appealing. We will address goals later in this chapter.

### **Step 3: Preparation**

Turning the desire to be healthy and fit into a reality in our everyday lives is our challenge. The preparation stage is characterised by experimenting with small changes, and collecting information about change. Congratulations, by reading this book, you have officially moved into this stage, the challenge now is to move beyond preparing and to take action!

*Good preparation pays dividends, as a hasty start will almost certainly result in failure to maintain the change in lifestyle. Thoughts by this stage are no longer about change being a good idea; they are constructive in how the change will occur.*

#### **Example:**

What changes do I need to make, in order to prepare for a more active lifestyle?

- Buy some sneakers/ sports shoes
- Book in for advice from my GP
- Find out more information
- Organise baby sitting
- Organising a buddy to do it with you

*If this stage is where you are at, be encouraged that you are not alone, but are indeed in the right place! From this point on you will be encouraged to track your progress, so you can look back on your achievements and realise how far you have come.*

#### **Where do we start making deliberate and purposeful change?**

*Change – real change – comes from the inside out. It doesn't come from hacking at the leaves of attitude and behaviour with a quick fix personality ethic technique.*

*It comes from striking at the root – the fabric of our thought, the fundamental, essential paradigms which give definition to our character and create the lens through which we see the world.*<sup>11</sup>

What follows are some issues that get at the root; that will help us prepare to embrace a healthy lifestyle and be able to maintain it.

*The human heart intuitively knows we should be healthy. You can get hurt or wounded without trying – but getting whole and healed requires meaningful and purposeful actions.*<sup>12</sup>

***What are some of the things that can motivate us to go from thinking to taking action?***

**1. The pain is no longer just a discomfort, but motivates us to action.**

It becomes clear in my mind that it is better to risk trying to find a better way than to stay the way I am. If I don't try, then I will have to live with my choice of staying in that place and always wonder if there was something better; that I never took that risk, or challenged myself, or had the courage to try.

What are the consequences for me, my family and the future if I continue without change?

**2. Hope is based on a choice.**

Looking ahead into the future I challenge myself, "Do I want to be like I am now, or can I be different?"

What are the consequences for me, my family and the future if I make excuses for staying the way I am?

**3. Our body can only do so much without the participation of mind and spirit.**

When we get an injury, our body automatically seeks to heal

<sup>11</sup> S. Covey, *The 7 habits of highly effective people* (USA: Simon & Schuster, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> A. Meyer and H. Meyer, *Search for Life* program manual (Melbourne, VIC: Careforce Lifekeys Inc., 2006).

itself, and often it does. Cuts will heal. The body seeks to regain health and wholeness, even if scars or weakness remain. How can I help rather than hinder my body's health? I've been healthy before, what is different now?

What impact are my thoughts and feelings having on my body? Do they need healing too?

**4. Others have pioneered a way that I can follow and be encouraged by.**

Other people provide examples of possibility and success. "If she can do it, so can I!"

Who inspires me?

**5. We are encouraged to glorify God in our body; He will help us. (1 Cor 6:19-20)**

In the Christian faith we see time and again examples of healing, and encouragement to seek healing and wholeness in our mind, body, and spirit. Therefore we can say with confidence that to significantly improve our health is *not* just a dream, it *can* become a reality.

Do I feel alone or in partnership with God?

*We need to harness all these different facets of our being that are working in our favour and use them to launch us on our quest for health. Journaling our thoughts on the above aspects may help us to identify these benefits, barriers, and self confidence issues.*

Let's begin the journey to a healthy lifestyle together.

## DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN - STEP 4

### Making it Personal

*It may not happen over night, but it will happen.*

We've all heard this phrase. You are probably picturing someone wanting to have beautiful hair right now. Nothing that is worth anything is ever easy. That is why it is worthwhile, because you have to work to get there!

*The action phase of behaviour change involves taking direct action towards achieving a goal. Embracing health is not an easy task. It requires tenacity, focus, honesty, and commitment to create a suitable lifestyle.*

### Commitment

To get the most out of this book it is vital that you read it entirely; you need to have all of it.

- **Yourself**

Firstly, you will need to make a commitment to give yourself the chance to complete this book, and take a long hard look at yourself, even if it gets difficult along the way. Remember, nothing worthwhile is easy. But *you* are worth it.

- **The journey of behaviour change**

Secondly, you need to make a commitment to the pursuit of a healthier lifestyle, making changes to your current habits. The steps may be small and one at a time, but you must step out of your comfort zone and try new things. This means scheduling in the time necessary to be active and time to reflect on and evaluate your progress. **You cannot get more out of this journey than you are prepared to put into it.**

*Commitment may be viewed in terms of faith that what you do in the present takes you closer to what you aim for in the future.*

To commit does not require great faith, it only requires **some** faith and hope - no matter how small.

## Support Network

Even with faith and hope, it is a huge challenge to our lives to make changes to live a healthier lifestyle and maintain commitment, so having a support network in place is crucial to ongoing success.

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, [her] friend can help [her] up...*  
(Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; NIV)

We need all the support we can get to help us through the times when we want to quit. We need someone to remind us why we started, and to help reignite that passion we had when we made the decision. As we commence this journey pursuing a healthy lifestyle, we embrace change. Hugs are a powerful indication of support. Allow the idea of 'embracing' to include the support that is offered, as well as the commitment you are making.

It is important to make sure you have adequate support. Take the time to arrange support from others who interact in your world. Try some of the following:

- Ask someone to pray for you, specifically in relation to your health
- Set up a mailing list or website/blog and update each week to record your progress
- Tell your family what you are setting out to achieve
- Ask a close friend to be your buddy to give you specific support

Please note that while it is good to have your partner's support we suggest that your partner is not always the best person to be your buddy, as it could have a negative effect on your relationship. Do you really want your partner telling you that you should not have that piece of chocolate? It is often easier if it comes from a friend.

*To build on your faith and commitment, even with a support network, it will require an action plan. An action plan is a personal strategy pursued with a clear objective in mind.*

## **Performing a Values Check**

*Success is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice.*

*What causes you to make this choice?*

In order to turn desire into the reality of living a healthy lifestyle, we need to have a value system that positively promotes health and wellness. It is out of these positive healthy values that we will make the everyday choices that will affect the state of our health. Those choices will see us move toward a better state of health and wellness.

*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. (Proverbs 23:7; NKJV)*

*When we examine and define our values we can develop a clear picture of where we want to go, and what it might take to get there.*

## **Developing a Vision**

Who are you really? What lies within, perhaps hidden or damaged? What dreams have you had that have been destroyed, buried, or no longer seem feasible? Why has the lid been placed on your potential? What are you really capable of if you were given all the resources you need? What are you prepared to do about it? What difference would creating or regaining a vision make to your life?

*Where there is no vision the people perish..." (Proverbs 29:18; KJV)*

*Let your eyes look straight ahead,*

*And your eyelids look right before you.*

*Ponder the path of your feet,*

*And let all your ways be established. (Proverbs 4:25-26; NKJV)*

We have been created with the most incredible capacity to not only

see with our 'physical eyes,' but with our 'mind's eye.' This idea has been expressed as, *Beginning with the end in mind.*<sup>13</sup> We need a personal vision for our health.

### *What is a vision for your health?*

Visualize your optimum health and wellness. See it, feel it. Go for detail. Remember, it is not just a picture of how we would look and feel physically – but about inner strength, vitality and joy!

*Rather than striving for perfection, consider how you may excel with excellence instead. Set yourself up for success by going for excellence rather than perfection.*<sup>14</sup>

Vision is expressed in terms of faith and hope, of seeing beyond the physical evidence. -

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* (Hebrews 11:1; KJV)

Vision empowers. During times of challenge, setbacks and difficulties, if we have set a vision before us we can be encouraged and empowered to continue our journey. It can release us from feeling trapped by our circumstances.

*Use of a Vision Statement provides clarity and focus for your future.*

### **Example; (Author's own)**

*The vision I have for my health includes a maintenance of a healthy body weight, a fitness level where I have energy to spare at the end of the day, an absence of constant stress, hope for a positive future, a growing relationship with God, and maintenance of my muscular strength and emotional resilience through the course of my life.*

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<sup>13</sup> Covey, 97.

<sup>14</sup> Covey, 106.

## Developing a Personal Mission Statement

What is a mission statement?

*It is a declaration that focuses on what you want to be (character), and do (contributions and achievements) and on the values and principles on which being and doing are based.*<sup>15</sup>

A mission statement is different from a vision statement. The vision is pursued through continually acting in accordance with the mission statement.

A mission statement:

- Is what you believe, why you believe it, and what you're going to do about it
  - A statement of intended action put into words
  - A point of reference for our lives, as we journey and progress along the road of life
  - Keeps you grounded in the midst of change
  - Reflects the uniqueness of you and your journey
- Each person is given something to do that shows who God is.*  
(1 Corinthians 12:7; The Message)

*Our mission statement is a compass, a direction finder in our lives, and empowers us on our journey.*

A mission statement will inspire you to act, fuel your motivation, and determine your behaviour.

Finding your own mission statement is a process that unfolds and is shaped over a period of time. It involves investing time to reflect upon your life and its meaning. It takes courage, being real and honest, and some determination to be able to clearly state your mission. It may also change over time, as your life situations change.

### **Example: (Author's own)**

To be a woman of integrity and honesty, that achieves her

God given purpose in helping women of all ages increase their health in all areas; spiritually, mentally and physically. So that more people will come to have a growing relationship with God, practice a healthy way of life, and are empowered to make positive changes to their own lives and those around them.

## Goals and Goal Setting

*A goal is a dream with a deadline. It is a planned step on the road to achieve what you desire.* <sup>15</sup>

Goals require you to take action to achieve them.

*Goals and action plans flow from the strategies used to accomplish your mission, as you push toward your vision.*

The following guidelines on goal setting will help you take action and meet your goals.

- Set both long (6+ months) and short-term goals (daily, weekly and monthly)
- Set *performance* rather than *outcome* goals  
e.g., “I want to do more exercise and eat less food that is high in fat and sugar.”
- Set SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-framed)
- Your goals need to be specific and measurable  
e.g., “I want to walk briskly for 30 minutes 3 days a week.”
- Goals must be achievable. You can always adjust your goals if you’re not getting where you want to go. It may take some fine-tuning along the way.
- Goals need to be under your personal control if they are to be realistic. Only set goals for behaviours that you can control.  
e.g., “I will choose salad instead of chips to accompany my meals when I eat out.”
- Goals without a time constraint or component are not really goals

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<sup>15</sup> R. S. Weinberg and D. Gould, *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology*, Third Edition (Champaign, Ill. Human Kinetics Publishers, 2003).

- Develop a strategy for achieving each of your goals. Do what you **NEED** to do, not necessarily what you **WANT** to do e.g., “I will walk an extra kilometre for every alcoholic or sweet drink I consume”
- Evaluate your goals and your strategy on a regular basis. Take the time to review your progress with someone familiar with your goals and your abilities.

Goals need to be reviewed and changed at appropriate stages. Use the following information to help you do this.

*The top 10 questions to ask of your goals*<sup>16</sup>

**1. Do I really, really want this goal?**

It may sound nice, it may be something I should have or might enjoy, but do I really deep in my soul, want it - or not?

**2. Is the goal actually just a means to some other goal?**

Is my stated goal really a way to look good, or to please someone, or a handy excuse to work on something that sounds wonderful, while I avoid something I don't want to do?

**3. Is this goal consistent with my morals and values?**

Often there is a subtle, almost unnoticed conflict between our stated goals and our values. For instance, the concept of “fair profit” may be causing confusion, or we may be caught between our goals of building a business and our values of spending more time at home.

**4. Is this goal consistent with my beliefs about my abilities and myself?**

Watching the Olympics, the training and commitment is only possible if the athlete profoundly believes they have the potential to succeed. Doubt about what is “possible,” or belief that life is unfair and therefore cannot change, will undermine performance every time.

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<sup>16</sup> Author unknown.

5. **Why do I want this goal?**  
Having many solid, vitally important reasons for our goals will drive us more powerfully than anything else. “I want to be a doctor to save lives,” is a very different reason to stay up and study all night than, “Because being a doctor gives me status.” Why do you want it?
6. **Who else wants me to attain my goal?**  
Knowing that family, friends, business partners, or the entire world is cheering for us and supporting us is critically important. Who else knows and wants you to achieve your success?
7. **How, specifically, will I benefit from achieving my goal?**  
Being clear and specific about the benefits that will come from completing our goals is a powerful motivator. “Reducing my blood pressure and losing weight will let me live to see my grandchildren,” is very different from, “If I do this, my doctor will stop nagging me.”
8. **What one critical step can I take today that will move me toward my goal?**  
Some goals are so large or so far off that they are really just dreams or fantasies. A useful goal is one you can work on today. Make an appointment, open a savings account, eat a salad for lunch, tell your spouse you love them – whatever your goal, find a specific task you can do today, and then just repeat it a few thousand times!
9. **Are there smaller projects that will both lead to my larger goal, and give me pleasure in the meantime?**  
If the goal is to run a marathon, train for a local fun-run first! If the goal is to be a millionaire, getting the first \$10,000 in the bank is a worthwhile and useful start.
10. **Depending on your answers to the first 9 questions, the 10<sup>th</sup> question is:**  
“Is there a different goal that is more important, or another version of this goal that is much more do-able?”

If the first 9 questions haven't motivated you to action and created tangible, specific results, then ask number 10. People naturally seek and want to accomplish big goals. We do best and can succeed when the goal is tailored to our values, priorities and personal situation.

## **MAINTAINING A GOOD THING - STEP 5**

### **A Change for Life,**

Maintenance of a particular behaviour is defined as continuing for longer than six months.

Why do we not always see a thing through to the end when we are fully committed at the start? The way we think tends to dictate our long term success or failure.<sup>17</sup>

This is essentially the thought reflected in the verse,

*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.* (Proverbs 23:7; NKJV)

*In other words our thoughts and attitudes determine our behaviour. So in maintaining behaviour our choices will help us discover and understand our attitudes.*

### **What is an attitude?**

The dictionary defines an attitude as: condition of the mind, position, mode of thinking, philosophy, and frame of mind.

*The last and greatest of all freedoms is the right to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance.* <sup>18</sup>

The right to choose our attitude allows us to determine our behaviour. Each of us has our own prevailing attitudes, and consequent behaviours, that we have developed over our lives in regard to our

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17 B. Greene, *Get with the program* (USA: Simon & Schuster, 2002).

18 V. Frankel, *Man's search for meaning* (USA: Pocket books, 1959).

physical health. Some are good, but there are others that are negative and need addressing.

Consider the following:

*The longer I live the more I realize the impact of attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do.*

*It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we take and embrace for that day. We cannot change our past, we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have and that is our attitude.<sup>19</sup>*

*I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. – Anon*

### ***Turning desire into reality***

As you move on to consider some of the things that may hinder your progress, consider these **positive attitudes** taken from the Bible (Matthew 5:1-10) necessary for a healthy lifestyle<sup>20</sup>:

#### ***Attitude # 1: HUMILITY***

*“I admit that I am not perfect and I can’t fix myself in my own strength. I need God’s help.”*

You will never overcome something that you claim you do not need help for. You will never change what you are unwilling to acknowledge. You must take the responsibility yourself.

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19 C. Swindoll, *Great Attitudes! 10 Choices for Success in Life* (USA: J. Countryman, 2006).

20 A. Meyer and H. Meyer, *Search for Life*, program manual (Melbourne, VIC: Careforce Lifekeys Inc, 2006).

### ***Attitude # 2: BEING REAL***

“I won’t ignore or pretend that I don’t have emotional pain – that I may be hurt or broken. I will feel my pain and admit to my heart’s condition.”

Until we acknowledge the pain and the shame, we are in denial and we can’t move forward. True growth and God’s healing begins when we acknowledge the truth of what is really going on in our hearts. We can choose appearance management or we can allow ourselves to express how we feel and start the process of change.

### ***Attitude # 3: TEACHABLE***

“I am prepared to receive the information I am reading. I will be open to considering new concepts.”

It takes a heart of gentleness to be able to read and apply challenging reflections without defending ourselves. Without teachability we close ourselves off from the possibility of change.

### ***Attitude # 4: DETERMINED TO CHANGE***

“I’m sick of going on in the way I am. I want to change and I want more than just to cope through life. I’m determined to pursue being healthy; mentally, physically and spiritually.”

Are you prepared to make the choice to have a go in order to be a healthy human being? Engage the process by being proactive and God will help you.

How can I be proactive?

- By reflecting on each chapter
- By doing the homework
- By keeping a journal
- By maintaining physical activity
- By analysing and asking questions

### ***Attitude #5: HONEST TO YOURSELF***

“I will stop playing games and be real and pin-point my motives and behaviour. I want to find every unhealthy way within me and face it.”

What drives me? Why do I do what I do? I must move beyond the outward behaviours to the motives that undergird my actions.

You cannot get healthy simply by adopting new behaviours, you need to also address the reasons for the things that you do and replace unhealthy motives with healthy ones.

### ***Attitude # 6: COURAGE***

“No matter what the cost, I’m going to go after wholeness and what is right. With or without the approval of others, I am determined to keep moving forward and do the right thing. I am not going to be knocked off track by emotional pressures, spiritual pressures, or the pressure of others who want me to stay as I am.”

Improving your emotional health can be painful and it takes courage to start the journey. Not everyone appreciates what you are doing and it is rarely pain free and trouble free. Emotions can surface that you would rather not feel. Issues may emerge that you would rather ignore. Situations may require action, which you might have preferred not to handle.

Do you have the courage for the journey?

God expects us to embrace the pain of change and the challenge of becoming well, because he knows we can. He wants us to develop the character that comes with embracing the challenge of change and growth.

The starting place is inside our hearts and minds. We need to start by having the courage to take an honest look at how what we think and believe affects our health.

*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. (Proverbs 23:7; NKJV)*

## **REALITY AND RELAPSE**

Life happens! There will be times when our goals slip, times when we just do not feel able to maintain our new lifestyle, times when life just gets in the way and makes it all too hard. It is important to put such occasions in perspective, and not spiral downwards through negative self-talk or feelings of guilt. It is better to focus on the 'getting up' rather than 'the fall,' and use our action plan and support system to get back on track. We will unpack motivation and how to develop a personal motivation plan in chapter four.

## **CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**

*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

*You have made known to me the path of life. (Psalm 16:11; NIV)*

*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32; NIV)*

*So much to learn throughout the course!  
Lots of challenges and new ways to look at things!  
I pray in this time that You would mould my thinking.  
Help me to embrace healthy concepts and give up unhealthy ones.  
I want to know the truth about my health, so that I can live an abundant life!  
Thank you that this is Your plan for my life. I choose to embrace it!  
Amen*

## **RECOMMENDED READING/RESOURCES**

For full details refer to the *bibliography*.

1. *10 Essentials of highly healthy people*, by Dr. Walt Larimore.  
*Handbook of religion and health*, by Harold Koenig & Michael McCullough. John 10:10; NKJV)

## PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Take some time now to ask yourself the following questions, and note your reflections in the *Embracing a Healthy Lifestyle Loving ALL of YOU Journal*.

1. What is your drive or main reason for reading this book?
2. Where do you see yourself in the process of change?  
Step 2: Contemplation - thinking about it  
Step 3: Preparation - preparing for action  
Step 4: Action - making change  
Step 5: Maintenance - maintaining a good thing for life!
3. What might be a challenge for you? Journal any reservations, fears, hopes, etc. that you are conscious of.

### 4. Developing an action plan

#### 1.1. *Your support network.*

Write down something that you are going to do in the next week to set up a support network around you. This may need to be your first goal!

#### 1.2. *Your personal health values and vision.*

What comes to mind when thinking about what you value when it comes to health? Do you already have a vision for your health? You may need to spend time thinking about this during the coming weeks.

### *1.3. Your personal mission statement*

What aspects of the personal mission statement (character, specific contributions and achievements, and/or belief systems) stand out to you as something you might include in your personal mission statement? Note these down in your journal as a starting place.

Your personal mission statement may take some time to develop. Spend some time this week in thought over this area, and journal those ideas.

### **5. Goal setting**

At the end of each chapter you will be asked to set a SMART goal. In chapter two we will look at setting physical activity goals.

### **6. Reflection**

Set a goal to spend some time reflecting on your health values, vision, personal mission statement and Bible verses.

