

CREATING OUR REALITY IN HEALTH AND FITNESS

“I think, therefore, I am”

“As a man thinketh, so shall he be”

“You are what you eat” (or believe to be true)

“Self-fulfilling prophecies”

“Careful! Your face will ‘freeze’ that way!” (Or your body will!)

WRITTEN BY **NITA KEESLER**

Essentially, what all of these familiar quotes are saying is that we create our own realities. We act in accordance to our core belief systems, and then attract to us that which we constantly think about. We can believe that we will always be sick, stay in pain, aren't intelligent enough, will get decrepit as we age, will remain over/under weight, not make enough money, never find love—or that it will surely end in heartache if we do. If this is what we tell ourselves or believe to be our destiny, it becomes our reality, and our body pays the price.

However, we can choose to believe we are or can be healthy, fit, always in abundance (of money, love, work that we enjoy, etc), have brilliant/creative ideas, will grow old with grace-dignity-and strength. Then we will make a more concentrated effort to take better care of ourselves. This gives us the confidence to reach our goals. What we focus on, we attract.

This is a universal principle. Conceive, believe, achieve. It is important to take responsibility for our own choices, health, and lives rather than giving away our power by placing blame on other people, 'life', genetics, or even 'bad luck'.

For our purposes here, I will primarily focus on the health and fitness aspect of this attraction process.

If we are trying to “lose weight/fat”, we are usually focusing on the fat itself. Since this is where our attention is, we attract the very thing we are trying to lose, especially when we begin to fear it, or feel hopeless.

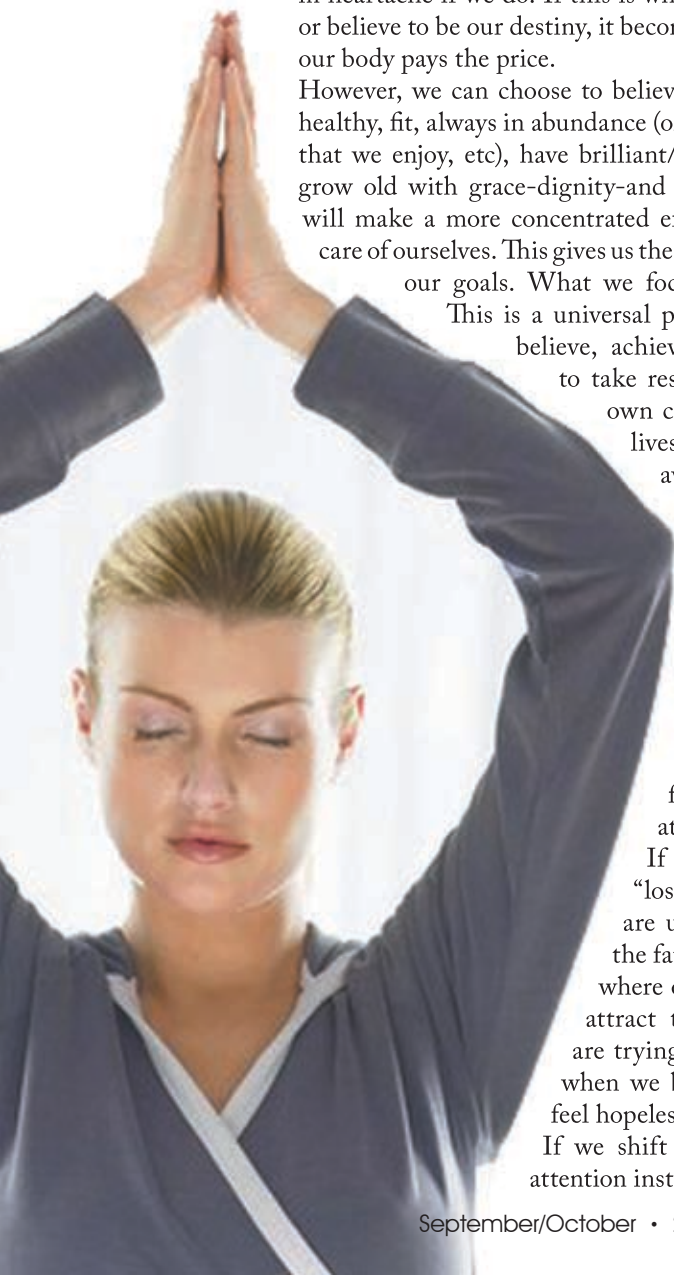
If we shift our intention and attention instead to being fit and

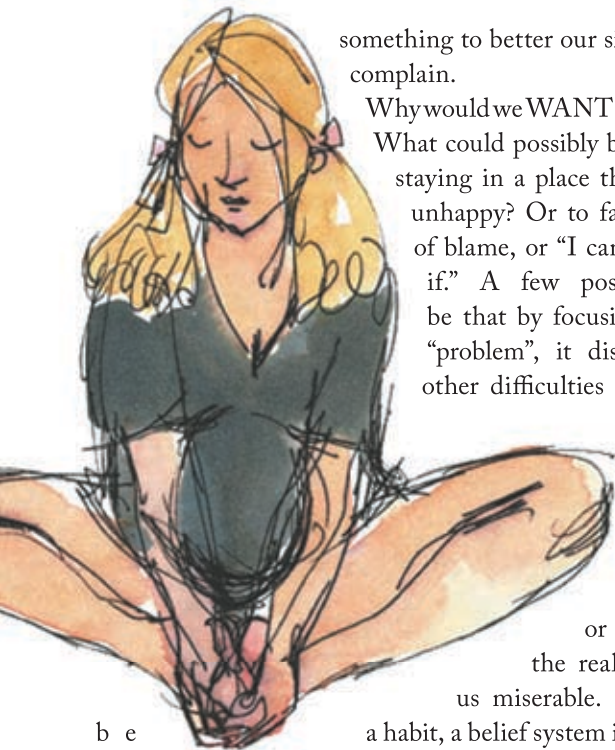
healthy (or even the possibility of it!) we will act in accordance to this. Have you ever noticed when you first fall in love, or get absorbed in a special project, or join an athletic team for the sheer joy of playing/sense of community that the extra weight seems to go away almost effortlessly?

Quite possibly, this is due to a shift in focus. Less stress? Less mindless eating in an effort to overcome boredom or distracting ourselves from issues we don't want to face? A common theme I hear is that the reason someone is not flexible or strong, has excessive weight, have certain illnesses, etc., is due to “age”. I believe it is more of the sense of “use it or lose it”, and that defeatist attitude. If we believe we have some degree of control over our aging process, have physical activity that we enjoy, and eat well without totally denying ourselves then there is no reason why we shouldn't have vibrant health as we grow older; or at the very least stay strong and agile. I grew up with parents who were both physically very strong, especially for their size; which was something that even at a young age I always wanted to emulate. I assumed it would be true because it did not make sense for me to think otherwise. This has helped me tremendously in many aspects of my life. In addition, it can be very amusing to watch peoples' reactions when they underestimate my strength!

At age 70, my Mom had tried lifting something she had not lifted in quite a while, and was sore the next day. Her response? “I have to remember that I'm not 60 anymore!” I love it! What she lifted was something many women of 30 would have difficulty lifting. However, it has also made me sad and even frustrated when I have seen older women who cannot lift anything heavier than a quart of milk, or who are so inflexible they need someone to tie their shoes. While there may be exceptions, we can have optimal health and wellness if we just alter our mindsets, along with a bit of discipline, a true desire to be fit and healthy, support from those around us, finding others who have similar goals, and educating ourselves.

As for 'genetics', there is also the issue of nature vs. nurture. Is the weight issue or illness actually in one's genes? Or does the individual have the same poor eating habits and sedentary lifestyle as their family members.? Something to think about. Sometimes we seem to stay in that one spot where instead of doing





something to better our situation, we just complain.

Why would we WANT to remain stuck?

What could possibly be the payoff for staying in a place that makes us so unhappy? Or to fall into the trap of blame, or “I can only be happy if.” A few possibilities could be that by focusing on a weight “problem”, it distracts us from other difficulties in our lives; by placing blame and making excuses we will not need to take responsibility or look within at the real issues making us miserable. It could simply

be a habit, a belief system inherited within your family, or friends circle. For some, I am quite sure; it is the pure joy of complaining!

These attitudes will certainly have a cumulative negative impact on our bodies, mind and spirit. The good news is it can also be prevented and even reversed by first becoming aware of our attitudes, thoughts, choices, actions and even posture [particularly important for the aging process and self esteem.] Then we can create a more positive attitude, a sense of meaning in our lives, take responsibility for our choices, focus on our strengths and joys, and turn any challenges and difficulties into opportunities. For each ‘excuse’ you make to yourself, you can come up with 2-3 good reasons to get rid of it. Look at your own life. What are YOUR core beliefs in general? Specifically about health and fitness? How do you act on them? Do you believe it’s an “age” issue? That you will never get rid of the ‘love handles’ anyway? That exercise is a foul word, or is boring, tedious and something

you only do as a means to an end of getting in shape? Do you believe ‘diet’ equals deprivation? Or in order to enjoy company that the focal point needs to be around food? That in order to be considered attractive or even acceptable you have to compete with the physique of professional athletes or overly thin models (rather than striving for your own level of fitness and excellence)? Ladies-do you believe that once you bear children you can never be in shape again? That ‘thin’ equals ‘healthy’? That you are ‘weak’? If you lift weights, you will get a man’s physique? Or perhaps that your friends will be jealous and not like you if you begin to succeed at your efforts? (Who may also subconsciously try to sabotage your efforts?) This is just a starting point. I am sure you can easily come up with a dozen more.

It is quite possible to turn all of this around. It may take some excavating to get to the root of where these beliefs began, or you may never know and that is fine. Just being aware of it is the key to begin making the changes; even small changes can be very profound. Something as simple as rephrasing “diet and exercise”, which sounds undesirable to many folks, to “nutrition and physical activity or movement”. Then, find an activity that you truly enjoy, (there has to be one or two!) If you are having challenges fitting everything in your life, find some activities you can do with family or friends. Play with having gratitude for being able to move. Make a list of

"These attitudes will certainly have a cumulative negative impact on our bodies, mind and spirit."

some nutritious foods you love and how you can make less nutritious foods healthier.

Be sure to allow for special treats. Decide if those last 10 lbs. are really bothering you or are you able to accept yourself as you would your best friend. Brainstorm your own creative ideas. Finally, enjoy the challenge and freedom of being able to create your own reality. Your own destiny.



Nita Keesler is the owner of Back In Balance-Massage and Wellness. She has been a Nationally Certified Massage Therapist for over 10 years, and is also a Massage Therapy Instructor. She has had the honor of being voted “Best of Phila” in Philadelphia Magazine, and is now practicing in Bucks County. She has an integrated approach with a focus on helping to create balance in each individual’s body and in their life, and helping each person achieve a sense of empowerment for their own health and wellbeing. Contact NitaKeesler@phillyfitmagazine.com