

## Return to Health, Stay in Health

BY SAUNDRA PELLETIER

**R**eturning to health is really the path of least resistance – physically, mentally and spiritually. Our lives are filled with the negative inundation from radio, newspaper, television and other people – all focused on what we shouldn't do. It is easy to fall victim to "health procrastination" because the majority of us live in a less than optimal state of being. It is easy to be overweight. It's easy to lack mental clarity. It is easy to focus on negative thoughts. However, we can operate effortlessly in this life when we not only return to health, but stay in health.

Those of you who are familiar with my work may recognize one of my most sacred credos, which is, "*Putting yourself first is the least selfish thing you*

*can do for others.*" This is an obvious priority when it comes to our health. In order to give back to the world, our community, our family, we must be functioning at a high level, and without vibrant health, this is impossible.

So getting a thorough annual physical check-up is essential. Be good to yourself and your family and schedule doctor appointments for all. Don't forget your dentist and dermatologist while you're at it. What better way to start the New Year than with a clean slate of health?

Physical exercise is essential. It's important to find that perfect exercise routine that suits your personal dynamic and feels more like fun than work. There is something you can do to get your body in motion that will be pleasurable. Explore the possibilities and choose one activity that resonates with your personality. Make a commitment to stick with it.

Remember the mind-body connection. Do a mental inventory and be honest with yourself about your emotional health. There are so many wonderful habits you can incorporate into your daily routine to get a proper mind/body/spirit balance. Keep your thoughts positive! Right before sleep, do a mental inventory of all that was good about the day. Better yet, write them down. Keep a daily gratitude list. What you think about is what will be presented to you.

Gratitude is a powerful and sacred mindset.

Are you by nature a worrier? This is one mindset that doesn't serve you. Find a way to transmute worry into something more productive. One way to do this is to be fully present in the moment with all your senses. Start with your first activity in the morning and continue throughout the day. When you brush your teeth, be with that activity completely. Don't let thoughts distract you. Continue your morning like this. Make your bed, fix the breakfast, wash the dishes, etc., etc. Be happy and fully present with those activities. Nothing else. Remember those three magic words: "Be here now". Make them your personal mantra. It will take a conscious decision in the beginning to be present in the moment, and then it will become a healthy way of life.

Laughter is truly the best medicine. Medical studies indicate that laughter boosts levels of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, and suppresses levels of epinephrine, the stress hormone. If you can't think of anything to laugh about, you can Google a laugh. Voila: magic. It's that easy! **L**

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