



How Coaches Can REDEFINE HEALTHY

By Christine Egan

My definition of what it meant to be healthy went out the window about five years ago. As a Certified Health Coach with a thriving private nutritional coaching practice, I was someone who was leading a healthy lifestyle that included yoga, smoothies, and meditation. I thought I was doing healthy right... until I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

The moment I received the phone call from my ob/gyn telling me the dreaded news I was shocked. But I also made an instant decision that although I was diagnosed with this horrible disease, I wanted to maintain feeling healthy. Healthy and cancer don't go together right? Let me explain.

We are all taught that if we eat right, exercise, and get to bed at a reasonable hour we will enjoy healthy lives. I did all that and still was diagnosed with cancer. I don't mean to be all doom and gloom, but I needed to learn to feel healthy despite having cancer. I had to dig deeper, which lead to me Redefining what it meant to be Healthy.

I soon discovered there were other things things that I could do to feel healthy everyday.

SELF CARE, FOR REAL

One of the most important "things" I learned was how to give my body self care.

I knew about the concept of self care, but I didn't allow myself to fully indulge in it until I was diagnosed. For me self care included resting, surrounding myself with positive people, not sharing my cancer diagnosis with lots of people, and daily walks in nature. I also let laundry pile up and allowed myself to get massages on a weekly basis.

When I started giving myself permission to only do the things in my life that lifted me up, the important things in life revealed themselves. I created super close relationships with my three children. We spent lots of time cuddling, watching comedies on television, taking nature walks with our dog, and talked honestly about things in life that were important to us.

PLEASURE, PLEASE

Pleasure soon became my mantra. Each day, I would ask myself, "How can I make every activity more pleasurable?" This eventually led me to leaving inspirational quotes around the dressing room (for the next person) when I was undergoing radiation treatment. It became my mission to get more pleasure into my life everyday. I learned how to say yes to things that made me feel pleasure and no to the things that didn't.

I started saying yes more to having sex with my husband. In the beginning I started saying yes because I was afraid I would be

too sick to have sex, so I should have it now while I was feeling good, but the prolonged sickness never happened, so we kept having sex! Whenever I wasn't really in the mood, I would ask myself, why are you saying no to something that you know will make you feel good? I realized I started feeling sexy and loving my body more and more. My relationship with my husband got better and better. We communicated on a much deeper level probably because we were forced to think about life without each other.

FIGURING OUT FOOD

Along with the self care and creating more pleasure in my life, I found more food that was right for my body. You know plenty of people will tell you broccoli is good for you, but have you ever stopped to check it out for yourself? How does it make you feel?

During my cancer journey, I really started to incorporate foods that are known cancer fighters, like more greens, and shallots, and yes, less cookies. Sugar is a cancer no-no. And diet is one of the few places where we can greatly impact our health without much risk.

I was already eating a healthy diet, but I really took nutrition to another level. By tuning into what foods felt good in my body, I learned to include more of the good stuff and crowd out the foods that left me feeling bloated or tired. Now, I still enjoy a

good cookie every now and again, but I eat it with much more awareness and love.

SHED THE SHOULD

Cancer allowed me to slow down my life. I got rid of the TO-Do list. The only thing on my list was to get better and I didn't need a list for that. The karate classes, dance classes, and my social activities were all still attended, but on a minimal level. I realized family time was one of my greatest joys. So I focused on those people in my life and stopped trying to be everything to everyone. Did I lose a few friends? Probably, but I gained a lot of fulfillment too. When I looked at what mattered most to me, it was easy to shed the shoulds.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Since receiving a cancer-free diagnosis, I've realized that there's so much more to being healthy than morning green smoothies. (And I still have mine!)

We can find health in the most unexpected and delightful ways if we are willing to take the journey.

When you look at these tips, don't you just think these are things that we could be doing on a daily basis to help us all feel healthy? Don't wait for a horrible diagnosis to snap you into life. You can Redefine what it means to feel Healthy today too.