

Redefining Healthy

6 WEEKS OF SIMPLE STEPS TO BIG CHANGES IN YOUR HEALTH, HAPPINESS, AND LIFE

WEEK 1 WORKBOOK: HOW TO BECOME THE CEO OF YOUR BODY



The very first step I'd recommend on your health journey is this:

Make the decision to become the CEO of your body.

Just saying the word CEO evokes a role of power; someone who is in charge. It's an important role to take on whether you're having a major health crisis, a minor one or none at all.

Think of it like this: a CEO doesn't just step in when there is a PR crisis, right? A CEO is calling the shots when times are good and bad.

That's the same mentality I want you to take on as it relates to your body. You are the CEO of your body. You're the person in control of the food you eat, the medications you take, and you alone have the power to say yes and no to things.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer over 6 years ago, I was devastated at the options my doctors gave me in order to get well. I couldn't wrap my head around the idea that treatments were going to make me sicker in the name of getting healthy.

It was difficult not to just let the medical establishment lead me in the direction they wanted me to go. I've read numerous studies that when people go into a doctor's office, they revert to childlike behavior. I can attest to that. I am a highly intelligent woman who doesn't go into things blindly, and I found it difficult to navigate the medical community by myself.

You are not alone if you feel nervous walking into a doctor's office, even if it is just for a teeth cleaning! There are actual "white coat syndromes" people experience -- actual physiological changes when they walk into a doctor's office, such as high blood pressure.

By becoming the CEO of my body, I took responsibility for my body and my treatment. I took it upon myself to become the chief medical researcher (of cancer material), a healthy chef (for myself and my family), and a great interviewer (of doctors).

I never left any decision to be made solely by a medical practitioner. I did research, asked questions, said yes, said no, and when I needed to -- kept my head down to get through what was needed to get well.

The type of health care we have in America is not health care, it is sick care. Think about it -- we only go into our doctors' offices when we are sick! In traditional Ancient Chinese medicine, a Chinese Medical doctor was paid a retainer to keep their patients healthy. If a patient became sick, the doctor would not get paid until the patient's health returned.

Today's health care system today does not have our best interests in mind.

Whether you're on a major health journey, you're a caretaker of someone on a major health journey, or you're just trying to feel less like a patient at your next physical, becoming the CEO of your body will help empower you.

Taking control and stepping into the role of CEO is a new muscle for us to practice and that is exactly what we are going to do in the exercises below.

ACTION STEPS

HERE ARE MY THREE TOP ACTION STEPS
FOR BECOMING THE CEO OF YOUR BODY:

ACTION STEP #1: CHANGE YOUR MINDSET WHEN YOU WALK INTO THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE.

In order to transform from helpless patient to empowered person you need to change your mindset.

Instead of feeling fearful, or like your destiny is in that doctor's hands, think of it like: *I'm going to interview this doctor to see if they're worthy of being on my health team.* You have the right to interview a doctor (that goes for a regular general practitioner to gynecologist to dentist!)

It's time to empower yourself and know that you have a choice to make decisions that are best for your health.

Think of it like this: **all we're doing at a doctor's office is fact-gathering and that's it!** This reframed mindset around your doctor's visit puts you in a powerful position. One of my favorite things I remind myself before walking into an appointment is: **"No decision has to be made right here right now."**

The idea that no decision has to be made on the spot lessens the magnitude of the office visit and reminds me that I am just here to gather information.

From there, I can go home, think about the information that was given to me, research on my own, discuss with the other people on my health team, and check in with my intuition before making a decision.

BABY STEP #1:

This week, make the declaration: “I am the CEO of my body!” Put together your “Board of Directors.” Who are some people and resources you trust to help you make decisions about your health and body? Write them down below.



ACTION STEP #2: CREATE QUESTIONS PRIOR TO YOUR APPOINTMENT

Before my visits to the doctor, I would sit in the car and write down 3 questions on notecards that I want answered in my doctor’s visit.

For example: “What are my test results?” “What side effects might I see from the test/prescription?” “What happens if I wait and watch?” Getting clear on what I wanted to get from the doctor’s visit empowered me to feel like I was playing an active role (creator) during the appointment, versus feeling helpless (victim mode).

No doctor -- or even non-doctor, for that matter -- can tell you what to do.

The doctors serve as the reference guides. Each one has a piece of the information, but it's up to you to gather what you need from each one and decide which course of action is best for you!

BABY STEP #2:

Brainstorm some questions for your next visit with a health care provider. Think back to some of your health goals you brainstormed in our first week. What are some questions related to those goals?

For example, maybe your goal is to get off blood pressure medication. Your questions could be: what foods can I eat that can help lower my blood pressure, or are there any studies that show that exercise can affect my levels?

Write down three questions you want to ask your doctor at your next visit:

- 1
- 2
- 3

ACTION STEP #3: RE-FRAME YOUR THOUGHTS AROUND YOUR DOCTOR

Think of your doctors as reference guides -- not “be-all-end-alls.”

One of the most important takeaways I had after dealing with a year's worth of doctors was to think of my doctors as handing me a piece of my puzzle, not the whole puzzle. Each doctor contributes a different piece of information.

Keep in mind that doctors are usually trained in one specific area or specialty. (For example, the general practitioner might not know what supplement to take to help muscle fatigue after a hard workout.) They are surrounded only by what they are trained in—even the alternative doctors. Think of your doctors as reference guides -- not “be-all-end-alls.”

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When a doctor gives you advice, take time to think about how their advice resonates with you. Maybe you'll need to wait a week before doing what the doctor recommended, as you take your time to think about. Maybe it's something you want to seek out another valued opinion about.

Most patients forget they have the right to choose whether or not to take the doctor's advice.

Remember: It's your body and you get to choose!

BABY STEP #3:

Be mindful of your doctors as reference guides, and be respectful of their background and training. **Assemble a list of the people who could help you achieve your health goals**-- some examples are: nutritionist, chiropractor, or dermatologist, acupuncture, specialist.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

FINAL THOUGHTS

This week isn't meant to evoke feelings of doom and gloom. It's meant to put you in the driver's seat of your health. These are guidelines or gentle prompts to remind you that YOU ARE IN CHARGE.

We become in charge of the "CEO of our body" by asking questions: coming to the doctor as an informed consumer. We are consuming information for our bodies!

The doctors serve as the reference guides. Each one has a piece of the information, but it's up to you to gather what you need from each one and decide which course of action is best for you!

For more on this topic, check out Chapters 2 and 3 of my book, *The Healthy Girl's Guide to Breast Cancer*.