Reflections

Holiday music, traditional foods and decorations are sure signs that it is December, the last month of the year. And for me, this means more than an annual holiday – it means another birthday. Every year around this time, I look back to reflect on the goals I set last December and whether I accomplished them or not. I also begin to think about what I would like to accomplish this next go-round. With each passing year (and more grey hair), I am realizing that time is moving very fast, which mean there are only so many days ahead of me/us.

I recently read a blog post from a world-class mountain biker who suggested asking a different New Year’s question, “What kind of life do you want to live?” I like questions that make me dig deeper into my soul, so I thought I would ask myself something different this year, too, and see how it serves me.

An assignment I recently completed for the Precision Nutrition Level 2 coaching certification I am currently working on was in line with the new question I am pondering. The assignment asked several questions about what we value in life. Our values flow from our identity – who we think we are.

- What do I want to be?
- Who do I want to be?
- What is important?
- What is “right”?
- What really matters in life?

Values can’t be placed on the shelf to be admired. Values are to be pursued, experienced and lived. For true happiness, we must live in harmony with our most deeply held values. When we go against our values, we don’t feel well. Our bodies and minds fight us which drains our energy and our vitality. Everything seems more difficult and frustrating.

When we live according to our values, we feel good and we are able to fully express our potential. We live and work with integrity and authenticity. Our co-workers, colleagues, clients, and family can tell when we are being authentic or true to ourselves. Our behaviors and actions define who we are and they reflect our character. If our behaviors and actions don’t match our values, then we are not living the life we truly want to live.

As you reflect on your behaviors and actions over the past year, notice how they tell a story - a story of your life. The things you did, or did not do; the challenges you were faced with and how you handled them, or not; your accomplishments, or lack thereof; what you valued most, and what you did not deem worthy of investing in. From this reflection, determine if you are living the way you want to live - authentic and true to yourself. Once you have written down and prioritized your values that are 100 percent true to your heart, you will know how you want to live, and that will inform which actions you take, and which you do not take.
Health and Wellness Newsletter

Goals or Accomplishments

Even though my focus is not on making a list of goals for this next year, there are several things I would like to accomplish that are in line with the way I want to live. Before my list gets too long, I ask myself another question to help keep me on track and accountable for all the things I want to accomplish.

Here is another fun and eye-opening exercise to do called “The 5 Why’s”. It is thought-provoking and really cuts to the core of why we want something. Start off with something you want to accomplish and ask yourself, “Why do I want to accomplish this?” With whatever answer you come up with ask why and repeat for a total of five times. Each “why” builds from the previous answer. Let me give you an example. Here are my “5 Why’s” to the question, “Why am I doing the Precision Nutrition (PN) Level 2 Coaching program?”.

1. I am doing this program because I enjoyed level 1 and I am excited to see the differences between the two programs.
2. I am excited to see the differences between the two programs because I want to add more strategies and knowledge to my coaching “toolbox”.
3. I want to add more strategies and knowledge to my coaching “toolbox” because I want to be a better (more effective and efficient) coach.
4. I want to be a more effective and efficient coach because I will be able to coach and mentor more people in my community.
5. I want to coach and mentor more people in my community because I believe coaching/mentoring is one of my callings, one of my purposes in life. I want to help as many people as possible live healthier lifestyles.

You can see how I was able to get to the core of the original question with each why I asked. I started out with wanting to see the differences between the two PN programs to living my life’s purpose and helping my community.

What kind of life do YOU want to live?

So how do you want the grand narrative of your life to read? Before the New Year rolls around, get curious. Dig deep to answer the five value questions explored in this newsletter. When you begin to make a list of things you want to accomplish in 2017, ask yourself “The 5 Why’s”. These exercises will help you choose goals that are meaningful to you, and you will value your accomplishments more once they are completed. As a result, you will live a fuller, more authentic, and happier life.

Healthy Holiday Breakfast Muffin

(Recipe inspired by Harper in Paleo Grubs)

I found a healthy alternative to the traditional holiday cake or sugary cookie. These muffins are hearty and delicious! Believe me, your friends and family will not be disappointed.

Carrot Muffins

Ingredients

1 cup (firmly packed) ground walnuts
½ cup (firmly packed) almond flour
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp baking powder
1/8 cup coconut oil, melted
¼ cup honey
2 eggs
¼ cup grated carrots
½ cup raisins (hydrated)

To hydrate raisins, place raisins with 1 teaspoon of water in a microwavable bowl, cover with a lid and microwave on high for 30 seconds.
Recipe Continued....

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Line an 8-cup muffin pan with paper cups or spray pan with non-stick spray.
3. In a bowl, mix almond flour, ground walnuts, cinnamon and baking powder. Set aside.
4. In another bowl, beat eggs with honey. Add almond-walnut mixture and mix well.
5. Add carrots and coconut oil and mix.
7. Spoon batter into prepared muffin pan.
8. Optional: sprinkle extra raisins and chopped walnuts.
9. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
10. Cool on a rack, and enjoy!

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