How Do You React?

When we think of exercise, or even say the word exercise, we may have different reactions. Some people light up when they hear the word because it is a part of their life, it brings them joy and it comes easy for them. Others may cringe when they hear the word exercise and immediately feel overweight. Exercise may be a struggle, painful, and a necessary evil. Others may think of exercise as a should-do activity because they know they need to do it, but in fact, they’d just rather not. Exercise to these individuals is a practice to stay in shape, not gain weight, and possibly to “fit in” with others. There are other individuals who have bad memories of exercise from past experiences. Perhaps they were forced in school to exercise or they were embarrassed due to their lack of athletic ability and they were made fun of. Then there are others who exercise to try to lose weight and no matter how hard or how often they do it, nothing seems to change. This in turn will drive the person crazy causing so much stress that they may turn to more drastic measures.

My vacations usually involve some sort of exercise, such as mountain biking, hiking, downhill skiing or river rafting. When I go on a scuba diving vacation, I usually take resistance bands, jump rope and running shoes so I can get my daily exercise dose because scuba diving is not a vigorous sport. This vacation was very different. I didn’t want to exercise AT ALL; I wanted to do the exact opposite. I was burnt out from my current regime. For me not wanting to exercise for 8 days straight is unheard of. So one afternoon as I was relaxing on the beach, I started to reevaluate my life. I knew that my body, mind, heart and soul were not happy with what I was currently doing. I wasn’t feeling motivated as I usually do and my daily workouts were becoming a chore. So I began to think about the times when my body, mind, heart and soul were happy and what the activities were that made me feel so good. It dawned on me, the times I felt a “high” from exercise, I had a fun and energizing workout, bike ride and/or experience.

The Secret

The secret to exercise and sticking to it, is to move in ways that you love and that make you feel good. If the exercise or movements you currently do make you frustrated or they seem like a chore, then don’t do them. If you are moving or exercising from a place of force, push, self-hatred or self-rejection, this is not serving your body, mind, heart or soul in a positive way.
The Secret continued....
Move in ways that make you smile, give you pleasure and satisfaction. Move in ways that sincerely make you feel good to be in your body. Many people operate under the assumption of “more is better”, however the body does have its limits. There is such a thing as over-exercising. Moderate, consistent exercise boosts the immune system. But when you over train to the point of exhaustion, you are moving the body into a physiologic stress response which increases the stress hormones cortisol and insulin, in turn weakening the immune system. The body doesn’t have time to rest and heal which increases the risk of injury, sickness and fatigue. Also, when these two hormones are secreted in excess, it triggers the body to store weight, store fat and not build muscle. When individuals over-exercise on a daily basis they are actually causing the opposite physiological affect they so desire from exercise. If you are doing exercise that you hate or don’t get pleasure out of, you are still causing the same physiological stress response in the body as when someone over trains.

Move and exercise in ways that have a sense of celebration. Walk, dance, swim, do yoga, hike with your dog, bike, do ANY movement that makes you happy to have a body. After all, the point of exercise is to nourish the body, mind, heart and soul, not to crush it. Removing the goal out of exercise can be liberating so don’t exercise to lose weight or burn calories. Exercise to feel alive! If the body actually has weight to lose, then it will lose it from a relaxed physiologic response.

“Workout because you love your body, not because you hate it.”
QuotesGram

Self-Exploration & Experimentation
For me, being outside feeds my soul. And a couple of my most favorite outdoor activities are mountain biking and hiking which I plan to do more of. I also LOVE to dance! Dancing makes me smile on the inside and out. It is time for me to make the commitment to dance more. I love weight lifting but I know I must keep it in check and not push to exhaustion every single workout. For me, yoga is the cherry on top of an ice cream sundae. It is the final touch that completes the treat.

The body is ever changing, so think of this as an experiment. Ask yourself this question; “If all exercise and movement burned the same amount of calories, what would I truly want to spend my time doing?” Explore new ways to move and exercise because I believe you will have successful results. Celebrate your lives in whatever form of movement or exercise you choose.

The next 21-Day Meditation Experience
Oprah and Deepak are offering another FREE 21-day Meditation Experience. The meditation topic is fitting for this month’s newsletter: Shedding the Weight: Mind, Body and Spirit which begins on March 21, 2016. To register, click on the Chopra Center Meditation.
March Recipe

Are you an adventurous eater and looking for more ways to incorporate more greens into your diet? Even if you aren’t, I encourage you to try this recipe. They may look unsavory, but I think they are super yummy.

**Popeye Pancakes**

**Ingredients:**
- 2 Handfuls of fresh spinach
- ¼ cup Rolled oats
- ¼ cup Liquid egg whites (approx. 3-4 fresh egg whites)
- 1/8 cup Greek yogurt or cottage cheese
- Dash of cinnamon (optional)

Combine everything together in a high speed blender. On medium heat, melt some coconut oil or spray the griddle with nonstick spray. Pour as many as you can fit on the griddle in 2 tablespoon increments. As soon as you see bubbles appear on the pancakes’ surface, gently flip them. Cook for an additional minute or two and serve. Add your toppings of choice, such as chopped pecans or walnuts with sliced bananas or drizzle a little Grade A maple syrup over the top. The possibilities are endless. Makes 8 to 10 small pancakes.

Optional: Add ½ a banana to the mixture before blending.

Recipe from Protein Pow

I usually experiment with the measurements and ingredients to add variety to my Popeye pancakes. Kale gives a bitter flavor in my opinion. I have substituted canned organic pumpkin for Greek yogurt. I have omitted the rolled oats and discovered a flatter pancake, similar to a crepe.