



The Pilates Connection Weight Loss Challenge

NEWSLETTER

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THIS WEEK'S TOPIC...

PUT THE "I" BACK INTO YOUR VOCABULARY

Increase Your Chances for Weight-Loss Success

- By Dean Anderson, Behavioral Psychology Expert

Would you believe me if I told you that knowing the answer to one simple question could improve your chances for weight loss success by up to 100%? Well, it's true. Here's the question:

Which of the following is the single most important factor in long-term weight loss success?

- A. Calorie Counting
- B. Regular Exercise
- C. Starting your sentences with the pronoun "I"
- D. Both a and b

The correct answer to this question is: **C—starting your sentences with the pronoun "I"**.

Here's why it's so important:

You already know that to lose weight, you must eat fewer calories and burn more through exercise. But if just knowing this was enough to drop the pounds, you wouldn't be sitting here reading this. You'd be off flaunting your incredible body in that new swimsuit you've got your eye on. Or doing something—anything—but reading about how to lose weight. There's a big difference between knowing *what to do*, and knowing *how to do it*.

People who succeed at doing what needs to be done are people who have mastered the art of defining problems accurately, and choosing (and implementing) effective solutions.

You can master this art by starting your sentences with "I" statements. Here's how this works. If you have persistent difficulty actually exercising like you know you need to, for example, you probably don't describe this problem to yourself with thoughts that begin with the pronoun "I". You may tell yourself that your job or your family responsibilities don't leave enough time or energy for exercise; that the gym is too far away but you don't have the money to buy exercise equipment; or that your body is so large or out of shape that you can't do enough exercise to make a difference.

This is the helpless thinking of a victim, which will get you nowhere fast.

What would happen if you started thinking about the same problems but started your thoughts with an "I" statement? When you say to yourself, "I have made working and family priorities, and I haven't put exercise very high up on my priority list," you define the problem much more accurately. **You also bring the only realistic solution to your problem into sight for the first time.** That solution, of course, is to put exercise high enough on your priority list that it gets the same amount of effort and attention as other important responsibilities in your life. This is something only *you* can do, and starting your sentences with an "I" will help you acknowledge that, and take responsibility for your own decisions and their consequences.

This self-responsibility is the necessary foundation upon which all success is built. Unless you take the time to build this foundation for yourself, your chances of being successful at permanent weight loss are not good. This doesn't mean, of course, that starting your sentences with an "I" statement is going to make all your conflicting demands go away. There may well be days when deciding not to follow your plan is the best choice you can make under the circumstances. And, as long as you know that it is **you** making these decisions—not the job, or the family, or the food—you won't have to worry about falling off the wagon completely. You'll know that it is just one decision, and that you can make a different one 10 minutes later if you want to. That can really help you take a lot of the stress out of difficult situations, because it's usually the feeling of being powerless that really gets those stress hormones flowing. **A key to staying in control is using "I" statements.**

Practicing "I" Statements Every Day

If you're like most people, you probably don't use many "I" statements, especially when it comes to diet and exercise. It may take some time and practice before this becomes second nature for you. Here's what you can do to help yourself out:

Before the fact

Whenever you notice a persistent problem in any aspect of your weight loss program—whether it's related to food choices, exercise, or motivation—try to define the problem in writing. What specifically are you doing (or not doing) that you need to change? Why do you think this keeps happening? What are the major triggers or causes of this problem? Do this writing without thinking or worrying about being "correct" at first. Just write down whatever comes to you when you are thinking about the problem, and don't worry about finding solutions at this point.

Then, go over what you have written with a fine-toothed comb, looking at the language you used. Do those words make it sound like you're in charge, or as if something else is in charge *of you*? Go back through the words you wrote, changing any passive verbs to active verbs ("My lunches are packed by my husband" becomes "I let my husband pack my lunches") and replacing any external forces with "I" statements ("It was too cold to walk outside today" becomes "I decided I didn't want to walk in the cold today"). Once you have done this, go through your problem statement again and see what solutions come to mind.

After the fact

Go through this same basic process whenever you have done something you wish you hadn't done. Describe what happened and why you think it happened, and then put your words under the microscope, as above, changing your words to "I" statements to form solutions.

Try to do this every day, or whenever you are having a problem. It won't take long for you to automatically think in "I" statements, and your odds of avoiding problems and finding good solutions will increase dramatically.

Weight Loss Challenge Winner of the Week:

Cornelia Long is this week's biggest loser. She lost .94%. Congratulations Cornelia! Enjoy your two free classes.

RECIPES

"HEALTHIFIED" SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

- 2 teaspoons canola or olive oil
- 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 small onion, sliced into thin wedges
- 1 cup Progresso® reduced-sodium chicken broth (from 32-oz carton)
- 1 can (8 oz) pineapple chunks in unsweetened juice, drained and liquid reserved
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 4 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 4 cups hot cooked instant brown rice

1. In 12-inch nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sprinkle chicken with salt; cook and stir 4 to 5 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink in center. Remove from skillet.
2. In same skillet, cook bell peppers and onion over medium-high heat 3 to 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until vegetables are crisp-tender. Return chicken to skillet.
3. In small bowl, mix broth, reserved pineapple liquid, vinegar, brown sugar, cornstarch and crushed red pepper flakes; stir into chicken mixture. Add pineapple; heat to boiling. Reduce heat; cook uncovered, stirring frequently, until sauce is thickened and bubbly. Serve over rice.

Servings 5. 350 Calories, 2 Starches, 1 Vegetable, ¼ fruit, 2 oz. Protein.

“HEALTHIFIED” ASPARAGUS-ZUCCHINI EGG BAKE

Great for breakfast or lunch.

Nonstick cooking spray

- 12 ounces fresh asparagus or 1 9-ounce package Green Giant® frozen asparagus cuts
- 1 small yellow sweet pepper, cut into 1/4-inch-wide strips
- 1/2 of a small zucchini, halved lengthwise and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices (about 1/2 cup)
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped bottled roasted red sweet peppers, drained
- 1/2 cup shredded reduced-fat mozzarella cheese (2 ounces)
- 2 cups refrigerated or frozen egg product, thawed
- 1/2 cup fat-free milk

- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried dillweed
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons Gold Medal® all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons finely shredded Parmesan cheese
- Fresh dill sprigs (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly coat a 2-quart rectangular baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
2. If using fresh asparagus, snap off and discard woody bases. If desired, scrape off scales. Cut into 1-inch-long pieces.
3. In a large saucepan, bring about 1 inch water to boiling. Add asparagus, yellow sweet pepper strips, zucchini, and onion. Return just to boiling; reduce heat slightly. Cover and boil about 5 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain well. Stir in roasted red sweet peppers. Spread asparagus-pepper mixture evenly in baking dish. Sprinkle with half of the mozzarella cheese.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together egg product, milk, snipped or dried dill, salt, and black pepper until well mixed. Whisk in flour, making sure it is completely combined. Pour egg mixture over vegetables in baking dish. Bake, uncovered, about 35 minutes or until slightly puffed and top shakes set. Sprinkle with remaining mozzarella cheese and the Parmesan cheese. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. If desired, garnish individual servings with dill sprigs.

Servings 4. 160 Calories, 1 Starch, 1 Vegetable, 2 oz. Protein.

Recipes from eatbetteramerica.com.

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