

Living a new way – one day at a time

By Katy Yoder
Columnist

On December 25, I completed a two-month cleanse. For 60 days I lived without gluten, dairy, sugar, alcohol, caffeine and most fruits and meats. When Christmas morning finally arrived I found myself less excited about my food-freedom than I'd expected. Sugar and "heavy" foods had lost their allure. I liked the way I was feeling and didn't want to return to my former state.

I did have a few sips of a Bloody Mary, complete with a splash of vodka. It didn't take much to make me feel tipsy, so I didn't finish it. There was a pecan, pumpkin and apple pie and a decadent flourless chocolate cake to cap off Christmas dinner. But the thought of letting sugar back into my body seemed like a dangerous choice. So instead I ate a "snap" of my stevia-sweetened chocolate bar so I didn't feel left out. That night I went to bed feeling satisfied and not overstuffed — another first for a Christmas celebration!

I'm finding that remaining on most of the cleanse guidelines isn't as hard as

I thought. With health-oriented businesses in town like Melvin's and Angeline's I'm able to purchase food that is healthy and still delicious. Going forward I've decided to do a 90/10% ratio of eating a vegan diet with little or no processed sugar.

When Gary and I celebrated our 25th anniversary, I splurged and enjoyed an amazing flourless chocolate cake complete with peanut butter ice cream and caramel drizzled across the plate. We shared it, and just a few bites was all I needed. For a girl who can eat a whole pint of ice cream on her own, that felt great. This new way of eating seems to have "cleaned out" my compulsion to finish everything I'm eating without thinking about it.

When I spend the time to make my own food with ingredients I know are healthy for me, I seem to be more mindful about my diet. Having started and failed many diet plans in the past, I'm under no illusions that I'm "cured" and won't have to deal with addictive tendencies toward food. I know there's still some deep grooves that could catch me

up and send me right back into repetitive behavior that doesn't serve me.

Now I'm working on my lack of discipline when it comes to exercise. I usually show up at the gym once or twice a week. There's always a good excuse — work gets too busy; I have our dog and don't want to leave him alone for an hour; or I simply forget to go. But there's also a subconscious component that acts as a repellent: Fear of pain and injury.

Since I don't go regularly, it's harder on me when I do show up. My body protests with achy joints, pain from scar tissue and radiation and my ever-present sore feet. As my hubby points out, once I go, there's usually that great endorphin-rush released from exercise. I'm working on remembering that positive outcome and forgetting the pain that may or may not happen.

I've got a list on the wall above my computer designed to keep me on track. It helps me to minimize the fear I have that cancer may come back. I needed to find a way to deal with that fear before it grew any larger. There are times when anxiety creeps in,



PHOTO BY GARY YODER

Katy feeling good after climbing the dune at Cape Kiwanda.

especially when I feel pain. A sense of doom hijacks my thoughts and before I know it depression gains a foothold. That's when I have to take control and remember, I'm healthy right now and these fear-based thoughts are not true. Sometimes I'm actually afraid of the fear I'm feeling because I know negative thoughts produce stress which is not good for my health.

I've realized that when I'm doing everything I can to be healthy, I worry less about reoccurrence. Some of my directives include: Listening

to my inner voice; taking time to meditate and journal and exercise. I added some photographs of me having fun and living my life to the fullest. It's so easy to become sedentary and lost in my own head, especially when it's so chilly outside!

But excuses don't serve me, so I'm choosing to look at my plan for 2016 every day and remember the guidance I've given myself to follow. There's always something to tackle, so I'll keep moving in the right direction and see where I end up.

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