

## Intentional Self-Care Through FIT

In January many people make plans to do better at taking care of themselves such as: losing weight, eating better, or wanting to make family time a priority rather than putting work ahead of family. In other words, to improve their health habits. This translates into what is known within wellness and health promotion as “self-care”. While we know we “should” take better care of ourselves, it is often hard to do. Several barriers include:

- ✿ Knowing you want to change your eating habits and physical activity, but not knowing where or how to start.
- ✿ You have tried before, but have gotten discouraged due to the amount of effort required to keep doing the new patterns.
- ✿ A constantly-changing schedule squeezes both your time and resolve in maintaining your new and improved life-style.
- ✿ The people around you may unconsciously be resistant and/or un-supportive.
- ✿ Your work environment could be detrimental to your efforts in improving your health habits.
- ✿ An unconscious feeling that other persons and their needs should come first and that it is selfish to place my self-care practices/needs first.

If you resonate with several of the above statements, you are not alone. So, how does one go about coping with such barriers? I invite you to use the FIT acronym.

- ✿ **Focus:** Most of us try to do too much too fast. Focus on the **one** change that you really want to do. It needs to be do-able and achieve-able on a daily and/or weekly basis. Use a time frame of 30 days and keep your goal small. For example: aim to eat at least 3 servings of fruits or veggies 3-5 days a week; or intentional physical activity for 15-20 minutes 3 days a week, or intentional family or devotional time 1 day per week. Each month, revise your goal up or down according to what has worked or not worked.
- ✿ **Invest:** Intentionally invest your time and energy in the **one** change that you have decided to do. To be intentional, you need to think about how you are going to adjust your schedule and will need to plan ahead. This means making a shopping list and putting the fruits and veggies at eye-level in the refrigerator. Do you like to exercise alone for meditation or do you need a scheduled appointment with a person or group? What time of day works best in your schedule or personal energy level for your physical activity? Planning and being intentional is investing in yourself.
- ✿ **Tell:** You need to tell another person of your planned change and enlist them as a helpful partner to keep you on track. 80% of us are trying to make a health change, but only 20% of us are successful because we attempt it alone. As you think about your support partner, consider the following; mutual trust and attentive listening is crucial, weekly check-in's are most helpful, you need to be open to honest feedback, and the best person may not be your spouse.

*Let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it, yet. Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it (Phil 3:13-14 The Message)*

I invite you to consider how you would like to change your health habits by the using the above FIT. Let me know how I be of help as you work to embrace a more health-full lifestyle. Bishop Trimble's Thanksgiving blog outlines his FIT goal at <http://goo.gl/6hzpT>. I invite you to respond.

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