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HOLISTIC HEALTH NOTEBOOK

It's a tough world out there



carolSIMONTACCHI
csimontacchi@earthlink.net

It has been a tough year. Several close friends have been diagnosed with serious health problems: cancer, heart disease, kidney failure. It may

be more understandable if these were the very elderly, people in last few years of life. Although that last statement reflects a dismal view of aging. Why should we succumb to health problems as we age? Is disease a natural consequence of the passing of years? We seem to think it is, don't we?

But these friends are young. Some in their 40s, some in their 50s. A child.

We often rationalize illness.

"She smoked."

"He was a junk food junkie. Never ate right."

"She never took care of herself."

"Bad genes."

When we become parents, we believe that if we "raise them right," they will make us proud. If we eat right and exercise, we will stay healthy. Plan carefully and we will get where we want to go.

But life is not linear. It is not a mathematical equation: A+B=C. Life has twists and turns, unexpected alleys and detours. Outcomes are not guaranteed. Life is not safe.

Having said that, however, I am not ready to say that since we cannot control destiny, that we should abandon all reason and live as though nothing matters. Clearly, "it" matters a lot.

This year I am foregoing New Year's Resolutions in favor of establishing Principles of Living. My goal? To prevent health problems, as much as possible. I offer them to you because they are good principles for everyone:

1. I will eat eight to ten servings of fresh vegetables per day. In addition, I will take my fruit and vegetable supplements. You simply cannot get too many vegetables.

2. I will get eight hours of sleep every night.

3. I will cut out sugar. Cancer feeds on sugar. I will avoid soft drinks (easy for me since I never ever drink them).

4. I will drink enough water.

5. I will eat a wide variety of healthy proteins and fats, spaced throughout the day.

6. I will vigorously exercise at least 5 times per week, working on all large muscle groups.

If we all followed these principles, most of us would avoid most health challenges well into our senior years. Guaranteed? No, I'm afraid not. But even the US Government recognizes that if we just made a few simple lifestyle changes, 80 percent of all health problems would never develop.

For more information, call Carol at the Island Nutrition Center (239) 472-4499 or visit www.islandnutritioncenter.meta-ehealth.com. CSimontacchi@earthlink.net ■

— Carol Simontacchi is the owner of the Island Nutrition Center on Sanibel. She can be reached at 472-4499 or on the Web at www.islandnutritioncenter.meta-ehealth.com.

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