

APPLYING THE FIVE CRITICAL TENETS TO WEIGHT LOSS AND BETTER HEALTH

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I find myself among the growing number of baby boomers who are reaching the age in life when retirement is not far off in the future. In fact, a growing number of people my age is already starting to take early retirement. Like many, I find it increasingly more important to do the things that keep my body in shape, so that when I do retire, I can enjoy my life to the fullest. I want to be free to travel and do all the things I couldn't during my working life. Unfortunately, too many of us will reach retirement unable to do all the things we want because of health-related problems.

When I was young and in my prime, I thought like most young people that I would live forever. I had Superman Syndrome. I could run all day and still had energy to burn. As I grew older, got married, had kids, and began my career, a lot of my energy was channeled into these areas. Fortunately, I have a high energy level, but over the years I didn't exercise as much, and I gradually put on extra weight. About 18 months ago, I looked in the mirror and did not like what I saw looking back at me. The person in the mirror was not the person I had been or wanted to be. I decided it was time to change the image and get back into shape. I implemented the Five Critical Tenets that I use in my Management Safety Training Classes. The Tenets are the key steps in making things happen and if they worked in improving a Safety Program, they would work in changing health habits as well.

The 1st Tenet is - **AWARENESS**

* Since I looked in the mirror and did not like what I saw, I was clearly aware of my situation. Many people get to this step. They are aware that they did not look or feel the way they want to, but all too often they either just accept it or are not willing to make the effort to change. The effort is not worth the outcome. This is where the 2nd Tenet is so important.

2nd Tenet is - **WINNING ATTITUDE**

* Whatever you do in life it must be worth winning or you wouldn't do it well. You may start the process, but it is just a matter of time before more important issues divert your attention. This is certainly true when you are trying to lose weight. There is always some type of party, dinner, or event that you must attend. Time is limited so exercising on schedule is difficult at best. Many times, there is not sufficient time for a sit-down lunch so fast food becomes the lunch of choice. These are all obstacles that must be overcome and therefore, the reward, better health, more energy, and better appearance must be constantly referenced.

3rd Tenet is where the rubber meets the road- **TOTAL COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS**

* In anything we do we must be totally committed to success. We need to be on a mission and focused on achieving the desired outcome. There can be no acceptable excuses. Excuses are only justifications for failure. A diet must be established, weight monitoring must be done every day and time for exercising must be set aside. In other words, you establish an Action Plan and stay on it like a laser beam.

4th Tenet keeps you on track- **BELIEF IN WHAT YOU ARE DOING**

* If you don't truly believe in what you are doing you wouldn't do it with passion. Passion is the drive behind successful people. Set yourself a weight reduction target and constantly monitor the results. Success does not happen overnight and takes time. Do not let day to day life pull you off your plan. If you overeat one day do not give up, get back on your plan.

5th Tenet is the hardest of all to achieve and maintain - **BEHAVIORAL CHANGE**

* You must change your day-to-day behavior, and this has to be a permanent long-term change. We can all change our behavior temporarily, but long-term permanent change is hard. This change will only occur if we truly believe in what we are doing, are committed to change, see the real value of making the change and are aware that we need to make the change. It must become a part of your daily life and repeated over and over each day. Since I decided to change, I have reached my targeted weight. I am now in the ongoing never-ending process of maintaining my weight at a level where I feel good about myself, have increased energy and I no longer have that other person looking back at me from the mirror.

I have joined millions of other Americans that have decided to change their lives for the better. It wasn't and isn't easy. There are always roadblocks, but I now stay on my plan. A healthy lifestyle is worth the effort.

Lifestyle diseases are the number one killer of Americans. If you have not already started a wellness program for your employees, please think about it. Encourage proper exercise, diet, and weight control. In the long run, it will save millions in health care costs, reduce many types of job related injuries and increase employee work longevity. All of these are good for your employees and good for your business. In other words, it is simply good business.

If you have any questions about your Safety Program or have any questions, please feel free to call me (Gary Hanson) at 1-800-356-1274.