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Live Actively Everyday: Build a Heart-healthy Habit for a Lifetime, Eliz Greene, Red Dress Press, 2005, , . .

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Eliz Greene is a heart attack survivor, author and nationally known speaker on a mission to encourage women to recognize heart disease as their most serious health threat and provide down-to-earth strategies for active and healthy lives. Learn more about Eliz and the Embrace Your Heart Wellness Initiative at www.EmbraceYourHeart.com

#5: Wait -- do I have to throw out my Tupperware? No, you are safe. #5 plastic is good for storing solid foods. No soups or sauces. Putting hot food into the plastic container will make it release chemicals -- cool the food first. Hand wash and air dry your containers, even though they may indicate "dishwasher safe."

"One area of insight into our reactions may come from recent findings in neuroscience, research that studies how the brain and body respond to the inputs it receives," Dr. Cantor explains. "For example, research on "mirror neurons" suggests that when we watch other people engage in behavior (even when the other people are on screen), the part of our brain that plans and prepares to perform that same activity is activated."

Start and end the day quietly. Commit to spending the first 30 minutes and the last 30 minutes you are awake without electronic interruption. Read the paper, enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, or talk with your spouse or partner. Keep the television and radio off. Turn off your cellphone, and walk past the computer without checking your e-mail or the news-sites.

Eating and electronics don't mix. Try not to eat and text. Along with being rude to your dining companions, you are less likely to pay attention to what and how much you are eating. Your body will digest what you eat more efficiently if you eat without interruption. We all know family dinner time is a crucial part of child development. Social interaction is also an important part of stress management. Keep the television off and relate to those around you.

Take a break. Pause for ten minutes during the day and disconnect from the computer, phone, Blackberry, television, and all other electronic devices. Sit back, close your eyes and breathe deeply. Take a quick walk. Disengaging will clear your mind, allow your body and brain to quiet, and refocus your energy. If you can't make it for ten minutes without your devices, start with five minutes build your way up to two ten-minute breaks per day.

Most women think estrogen protects them from a heart attack until very late in life, but a study presented to the European Society of Cardiology, indicates smoking takes away the estrogen

advantage. "Smoking might erase the natural advantage that women have," said Dr. Robert Harrington, a professor of medicine at Duke University and spokesman for the American College of Cardiology.

If you live in Wisconsin please join my family in support of the Breathe Free Wisconsin Act. Visit MySmokeFreeStory.com and find out how you can help. (In fact, if you are driving between Madison and Milwaukee during the week of September 15, 2008 -- check out the girls and I on a billboard -- yep, I said billboard, near the Johnson Creek exit) Here's a preview:

Fish is good for you. The American Heart Association recommends eating two meals that include three ounces of fish, per week. Fish is high in Omega-3 Fatty Acids and has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease. In fact, according to a recent study Japanese men, while smoking more than American men, are more heart healthy, due to a fish-rich diet.

Omega-6 fatty acids are not evil. The American Heart Association and the American Dietetic Association agree that, "Omega-6 fatty acids are, like omega-3s, heart-healthy nutrients which should be part of everyone's diet." While there is concern about the inflammatory effect of one omega-6 fats found in high concentrations in farmed tilapia, for people without active heart disease it should not be a reason to stop eating it.

Not all farmed fish are equal. Americans concerned about heart health are most likely to eat farmed tilapia, salmon, and catfish. These fish are inexpensive and available in most stores. The health benefits of farmed fish vary depending on what the fish are fed and the sanitary conditions under which they are raised. Ask where the fish you are buying was raised. When possible, choose fish farmed in the United States in a recirculating environment.

Commonly known as afib, atrial fibrillation is a misfiring of the electrical signals of the heart involving rapid or irregular heartbeats or quivering of the heart's upper chambers. Once considered benign, according to Mellanie True Hills of StopAfib.org, this cardiac arrhythmia can actually lead to congestive heart failure or stroke. One-third of atrial fibrillation patients will have a stroke, and afib is responsible for 105,000-140,000 strokes per year in the United States. Stroke, a top-three killer, claims at least one person every hour and is the number one cause of permanent disability.

More than five million Americans now suffer from atrial fibrillation in which the heart goes out of control with little warning and for no apparent reason. It's a frightening occurrence that will impact millions more as atrial fibrillation overtakes aging baby boomers. The Mayo Clinic estimates that by 2050 at least 16 million Americans will have it.

Pack Snacks: Eating out can derail your healthy eating habits. Take along some whole grain cereal, nuts, dried fruit, cereal, or granola bars to snack on or substitute for restaurant breakfasts. When eating out look for whole grains at breakfast, salads, soups, or stir-fries for lunch, and reasonably sized servings at dinner.

Pack in Chunks: Getting the exercise you need can be difficult on the road, particularly if you are traveling to a business meeting or conference. Two or three "chunks" of exercise (10 to 15 minutes in duration) will go a long way toward keeping your commitment to your health. A quick walk in the morning, even just 10 minutes around the hotel halls, and another at lunch and before bed will keep you on track. Taking a walk outside can clear your head and help digest the information from your meetings. If you are sight-seeing, choose walking tours. Pay attention to the weather, so you don't get overheated, and drink plenty of water.

A study released recently by the American Academy of Neurology indicates the risk of stroke for women who have occasional migraines (less than one per month) increases by 45 percent and risk of heart attack increases by 64 percent. For those who suffer from weekly migraines, the risk of stroke triples due to "profound changes in the brain which diminish blood flow to the brain," said Dr. Richard Lipton, vice chairman of neurology at Montefiore Headache Center in New York City.

Know the whole picture: When discussing your migraine symptoms and treatment options with your doctor, make sure to ask questions about your heart health as well. Women who have migraines should not smoke, as tobacco use vastly increases risk for heart attack and stroke. Oral or other hormonal contraceptives carry increased cardiovascular risk as well. Discuss the risks with your doctor.

Know your triggers: Avoiding migraines is the best way to limit risk, however this can be difficult. Keep a "trigger journal" to help identify what brings on your migraine. List all your activities and what you eat and drink each day. When you have a migraine look back to see what may have triggered it. Over time, patterns will develop which should help you determine what type of lifestyle changes will be effective. Common triggers include artificial sweeteners, changes in sleep and eating patterns, hormonal changes, and chemicals found in processed meats.

Know the symptoms: The key to surviving and recovering from a stroke or heart attack is quick action. Know when it is time to call 911. The Stroke Collaborative just released a new tool to help determine when someone needs emergency care called Give Me 5! Asking if someone can walk, talk, reach, see, and feel is a lifesaving strategy. For more information about stroke and heart emergencies check out this article on taking charge in the ER.

It may be breast cancer awareness month, but it's also time to be planning those heart health events for February 2014 and beyond. I don't think anything does the job of getting the message across; whether it's for breast health, heart health, or any wellness initiative; than a good story, from someone who's walked the plank. Lots of times, it just takes one little thing; a class, a comment, or a tool, like a hula hoop . . . to move a person to step into a practice that leads to better health.

Theresa Rose was like many women who put everyone else ahead of herself. She was stuck. She was an overweight girl who shopped in the husky section of the clothing store, hiding herself with as many layers as possible. Her relationship with her body had always been adversarial, and she took pains to avoid exercise at all costs. Thanks to a lifetime of emotional overeating and chronic aversion to working out, she eventually graduated into an obese wife and mother, clocking in at almost 200 pounds on her "3" frame. Because her body was her enemy, she operated as one big head, thinking her way through life instead of living it. She was stressed out, unhealthy, and overwhelmed.

Thanks to this humble plaything, Theresa has transformed her life, both inside and out. Not only has she lost fifty pounds and kept them off, she has also healed long-standing wounds of self-worth and body acceptance. She has discovered that joyful movement is the key to making truly sustainable lifestyle changes which in turn promote weight management, heart health and stress reduction. Today she brings that experience and message into her motivational speaking.

Despite her self-described forty-something mom-curviness, Theresa boasts some serious moves with her hoop both on and off stage. At home in Minneapolis, her favorite pastime is to spin her hoop on the banks of Lake Harriet, one of the most beautiful lakes in the city. As you can imagine, she gets quite a few comments from onlookers ranging from "That looks like fun!"; to "That must be great exercise!"; to "Wow! How did you learn how to do that?";

Now you need to understand that Theresa may not just be hooping around her waist as these passers-by are catching the action. She has learned to do fancy stuff like hooping around her chest and legs or tossing the hoop high in the air. Better be careful, you might be asked to join her: she often has extra hoops with her just so people can join in on the fun. (That's true at events, too!)

While Theresa is an accomplished businesswoman with an enviable resume; former senior manager of marketing and product development for a Fortune 100 company, management consultant, alternative healing professional, award-winning author and successful entrepreneur; she loves nothing more than working with women to help them move into their BIGNESS.

Â She believes that women have the capacity to blow the doors off of their potential, and she uses her hoop as a metaphor on how to engage, empower and expand into their magnificence. In her keynotes, she shares some hilarious “hoopisms” to help deliver her message in a fun, visually compelling way. (“Dropping the hoop is encouraged” is one of her favorites.) In fact, she has given herself her own superhero name: Hoop Woman!

In 2012, Theresa had the great honor of presenting a TEDTalk at a TEDx event in Sarasota, Florida. Â What was her one idea that was worth spreading? The hoop, of course! Sharing her passion about the transformative power of joyful movement, she created a TEDTalk called “The Hoop Revolution” where she hula hoops through most of the talk. There are lots of great speakers out there who speak about health and wellness, but there aren’t too many that I know who can do it while hula hooping! Take the time to watch her performanceÂ on our website. I think youâ€™ll enjoy it.

Theresa is all about energy, and her electrifying performances attest to that. The stage is Theresa’s natural habitat, and her sparkly hoop is her co-facilitator. Clients and audience members see her more as a fun girlfriend than as a speaker.Â She has a way of sharing the struggles that we all have while presenting tangible, real-world solutions to help women move out of smallness and into their magnificence. She lights up the stage, both literally and figuratively (she’s got a light-up hoop too!).

I think it takes a lot of courage to step out and try something new. First, thereâ€™s Awareness — I need to make a change, do something new. Then comes Exploration — finding it, whatever and wherever it might be. Then Anticipation — which can include excitement, fear, and dread. Then Showing up — in a state of excitement, fear, and possibly dread, all at the same time. And finally, Satisfaction — I did it, I tried something new — and whether I liked it or not, I stepped out of my comfort zone. In my book, thatâ€™s worth applauding.Â But chances are that Iâ€™m on my way to a new habit, at least thatâ€™s how it usually works with me.

Iâ€™m writing this after my Tuesday evening Nia class. We just started a new session, so there were several people who had never done Nia before, and I could see a bit of trepidation on their faces — What will this be like? Can I do it?Â Will I like it?Â For those who may not know what Nia is, itâ€™s a mind-body-spirit workout done in bare feet, and itâ€™s just plain different than any other exercise. When the music starts, my body melts, and my psyche says, â€œIâ€™m home — letâ€™s dance!â€•

I remember my first time; it was such a powerful experience for me. I had been a hard core Jazzerciser for years. My friend Winalee Zeeb had posted notices for Nia classes at our church. At that time, it was also called Non-Impact Aerobics. I couldnâ€™t imagine that could be a good workout. Boy, was I wrong. I went to a free Sunday night session — with all of the trepidation that the new women in my class Tuesday were feeling — and that was it. I was hooked! I immediately signed up for the summer session at the local community college.

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