

The Nine Scoundrels

Deanna Reiter

Copyright 2008 by Deanna Reiter. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, except in brief review, without permission of the author.

This book is available at special quantity discounts for bulk purchases for sales promotions, premiums or fund raising. Special books or book excerpts can also be created to fit specific needs. For details, please contact the author through her website: www.dayawati.com.

The information in this book is not designed to replace medical advice and is used at the reader's discretion.

Text design and typography by Joel Van Valin.

FIRST PRINTING 2008

ISBN: 978-0-98003755-5

Exercise

To release the Complacent Scoundrel, set your body in motion. Go for a walk or a run. Do yoga. Go for a bike ride. Join an aerobics or martial arts class. Garden. Swim. Climb the stairs. Clean your home. Play.

Exercise reduces stress. It decreases our negative perception of things. It releases endorphins and physically helps us to feel better. A good sweat will release toxins from our bodies. Our metabolism will rise. Our internal organs will be stimulated. Psychologically, it helps us feel a sense of accomplishment that we have done something positive for ourselves. It also gives us a break in the day.

For Complacent Scoundrels who have been sedentary for years, the idea of exercise may not seem like fun. You may have a preconceived notion of exercise being painful and leaving you miserable for days. But recall the exhilarating moments of physical activity in your childhood, perhaps remembering that feeling you had when you first learned how to ride a bike. Or remember a time when you held a bat or a racket and made contact with a ball in tennis, baseball, softball, racquetball or golf. Remember when you scored for your team. Remember the feeling of running in a tall field or wading in a stream. Remember when you did something amazing by moving your body.

Change your perception from the mentality that exercise is agonizing to the reality that exercise can be fun and rewarding. Embrace the belief that exercise can give you a great deal of enjoyment. Two important keys to making exercise fun are beginning a program gently and discovering what activities you like.

Most sedentary adults who begin an exercise program lack true desire. They believe that they *should* exercise. Many have a weight loss goal in mind as they torture themselves by doing too much, too soon. Many carry shame about being overweight and sedentary and don't ask other people for help. When they don't see the immediate results they had hoped for after a week or two of intense diet and exercise, they become defeated and quit.

The first problem with this scenario is that they are hurting themselves by shocking their physical, mental and emotional bodies with intense exercise and extreme dieting. The second problem is that they want immediate gratification. It is unlikely that the ten or twenty pounds they want to shed will disappear in the first two weeks. The third problem is that they have no desire to exercise - it is merely a thought that they *should*. They may think they *should* exercise because it is supposed to be good for them. Or because their doctors suggested it. Or because friends or family members are concerned about their health. Or because it would make them more mobile in their daily lives. True desire is a key to incorporating a new habit. Without this desire, their internal motivation is low and it places an even greater emphasis on the numbers on the scale. True desire plus unyielding belief gives you the power to climb mountains!

The fourth problem is not seeking a support system. They opt to do it alone. When the going gets tough, the program ends because no one else is there to keep them accountable and motivated. The fifth problem is mindset. They go into a new program thinking it will be hard, perhaps remembering past attempts at starting new exercise programs. They make few, if any, changes from past failed attempts to adhere to a

program. The only thing that might be different than the past, however, is beginning even more intensely, shocking the body even more and increasing the risk of injury.

Here are some ideal ways to begin and continue an exercise program:

- **Begin with five to thirty minutes** of exercise four to five times each week. If you typically don't exercise, aim for five to ten minutes. Walking around the neighborhood is usually the easiest choice for a beginner exerciser. The goal here is to make exercise a habit in your daily life. Don't focus on weight loss at this point.
- **Exercise at a pace that equals a brisk walk.** Aim for an intensity level that feels like you are at fifty to seventy percent intensity rather than ninety or one hundred percent. Start a program gently in both duration (five to thirty minutes) and intensity (fifty to seventy percent).
- **Exercise in the morning.** You will typically have more energy and fewer excuses in the morning than later in the day.
- **Get a buddy.** A friend, family member, significant other, neighbor, personal trainer or group exercise class can all be great sources of support. Have several of these support systems in place when you begin. The larger your support network, the larger your support. As your program gets tougher, you will have people to continue motivating you as well as keeping you accountable to your program.
- **Don't complicate things.** If you are beginning an exercise program, exercise. If you are beginning a diet program, eat healthier. Don't begin both at the same time. It is overwhelming and more likely that you will fail at both.
- **Eat more vegetables.** You don't need to change anything in your diet initially, but if you want to improve it in one simple way - eat more vegetables and your stomach will have less room for junk.
- **Think positively.** Your mind is more powerful than your body. Getting your mind in shape will make it easier for your body to get in shape.

Change this thought:

*"Diets don't work for me."
"I hate exercise."
"My metabolism is slow."
"This is hard."
"I hate to sweat."
"I'm not flexible."
"I'm tired."
"I can't do this."
"I can't do this for the rest of my life."
"I'm not as young as I used to be."
"This isn't worth it."
"I can't lose weight."*

To this thought:

*"This plan is working for me."
"Exercise is enjoyable."
"My metabolism is getting faster."
"This is getting easier." "This is easy."
"Sweating is good. It releases toxins."
"I am getting more flexible every day."
"I have energy to do all that I need to do."
"I can accomplish anything."
"I can do this today."
"I am capable in this moment, at this age."
"Every healthy step I take reaps benefits."
"I am my ideal weight." (visualize it)*

- **Get rid of options.** It is not an option to drive a car and never fill it with gas or get it serviced and maintained. Treat your body like the most precious

machine on earth. Just because cheesy, salty snacks exist does not mean you need to put them in your body. Just because no one makes you sleep eight hours or drink water does not mean you don't need adequate amounts of both. Just because no one makes you exercise does not mean it is optional. It's not. Your goal is to move thirty minutes a day, six to seven days of the week.

- **Get rid of excuses.** If you want something in your life and it's for your highest good, make it a priority to go after it. Going out to dinner, to a movie, to a bar or watching television are not good reasons for not exercising. Neither is being tired. Formulate and commit to your exercise plans. Eliminate excuses.
- **Setbacks are a key to change.** When one happens, get back on track without burdening yourself with shame, guilt or judgment. Also, do not shame yourself when you are unmotivated to exercise. Every week, it is okay to take a day or two off or allow for a shorter or less intense workout. But make a pledge to yourself that the next day you will work out. Have a plan that you will execute the following day. Be consistent with your workouts. Stay with the present moment and the healthiest option for you right NOW.

It is much easier to adhere to an exercise program when you find something you enjoy. This may take a while, even up to a year or more, so in the beginning, choose activities that are at least tolerable to you. Remember to get rid of excuses and options.

Joining a class or a group that meets on a regular basis is a great way to stay accountable during the early stages of an exercise program. A class can help to distract you from being bored and can help to motivate you when you know other people in the class. It is also much harder to quit during a session when you are in a group setting.

If nothing physically active sounds like fun and you feel intimidated about being in a group setting, choose a simple activity like walking or biking. If you haven't exercised for years, start with a five minute walk once a day. Every day, no matter how much you don't want to go for that walk, find it within yourself to *begin* that walk. If there happens to be a day where you could not find it within yourself to go on a five minute walk, accept that you had a setback. Forgive yourself. Be certain to go for a walk the next day.

After two weeks of consistent five minute walks, try ten minutes. Increase your time and your intensity when you feel you are ready. Don't go too fast or too hard, but don't stay with a slow, easy five or ten minute walk forever, either. Find a nice balance that gets your heart beating faster and puts a smile on your face.

You can also add in a component of joy to exercise:

- Visualize yourself doing the activity with joy. Stay positive in your thinking and see yourself enjoying the activity.
- Add in a joyful component to the activity. Use the time spent exercising to listen to music, walk a dog or spend time with a child. Take advantage of the quiet time to meditate, solve a problem or talk to a friend.
- Make a conscious choice to be happy and enjoy the activity. Sometimes the only thing standing in our way from being happy is our belief that we're unhappy. Switch to the belief that you are happy. Let your mind dictate your mood.

- Reward yourself with something that makes you joyful. Enjoy your reward after you've exercised for the day or the week. This should be non-food related, like reading a book, watching a movie, taking a bubble bath or getting a massage. Extrinsic motivators can be as helpful as seeing and feeling the internal health benefits.

The first program with which I stayed consistent was running despite many grueling months in the beginning. In fact, I struggled most of the first year. But at some point, I found the runners' high. I realized that running is not merely physical; it is an activity that positively shifts the mind, body and spirit by connecting to the Universe.

Although the beautiful, enjoyable feelings that running brought me did not occur in those first few months, something in me trusted that the difficult stage would pass and great rewards awaited me on the other side. So I kept running.

There were many days in the early years that I did not want to exercise and I honored that for a day or two, but I refused to give myself an option or an excuse beyond that. My health and the joy of moving my body gracefully became too important to dismiss.

While exercising, believe that exhilarating moments await you. This does not mean that you cannot experience them through meditation. That is another way to enjoy the bliss of being in the Universe. But we are physical beings. Our bodies are temples. We must treat them as such. Find whatever physical activity is the most tolerable – or even enjoyable – for you and go do it!

Recognize and credit yourself when you seize the motivation and reap the benefits of moving your body divinely.

Nutrition

Processed, high calorie foods are more visible to us than in the past. There are numerous coffee shops and convenience stores lining the streets, more vending machines in buildings and more food options at businesses that have no focus on food, such as gas stations and pharmacies. Healthy convenient foods, such as apples, oranges, bananas and baby carrots are not items placed at eye level in checkout lanes. Rather, candy bars and bags of chips are stocked near cashiers, ready to be impulsively purchased.

So, is this the reason why people have become collectively obese?

Certainly that is not the only reason. Along with a greater visibility of high calorie foods, there has been an enormous increase in the quantity of food served, an increase in consumption of sodas, juices, caffeinated and flavored drinks and a general exodus from natural foods to processed ones.

Less exercise, especially in jobs which require minimal physical labor, combined with quantities of high calorie foods, contributes to obesity. There is no riddle to be solved here. No more studies need to be done. It does not really matter how or why humans have become so grossly overweight.

The questions that do need to be answered now are: How do we, as individuals, move into patterns of eating healthier? How do we get back to the basics? How do we release our Complacent Scoundrels that are okay with eating whatever is easiest, most convenient and tastes the best, to eating the very best for our bodies' needs?

As people begin to value themselves more and find fulfillment within themselves rather than in food, they move away from eating "junk." Once this mindset has changed, it typically is solidified for life. Stress is one of the few things that can upset a balanced, mindful diet. When we fall out of harmony within ourselves, we again look to external fixes to regain internal balance. This never works. A piece of chocolate cake will not resolve a bad day at the office. Exercise, conscious breathing, meditation, spending time with the elements, journaling and direct communication with other people are far better options to dealing with stress. We want to avoid having an unhealthy, adverse relationship to food where we abuse our bodies to deal with emotional distress.

Get rid of the idea of "dieting." Make healthy changes that can be supported for life. Avoid the "should" mentality. Avoid the scale (unless you use it as a biofeedback tool and not as a way to linger in self disapproval). Two individuals with completely different body types can step on the scale and weigh two hundred pounds. This is because lean body mass versus fat mass is not considered on most scales and the ones that have a fat reading are fairly inaccurate. Instead of hopping on the scale, look for cues that say, "I'm fit. I'm healthy. I'm strong."

We need to ask our bodies what they want. We can no longer eat with our minds, our memories, our taste buds or our emotions. We need to make plans and prepare food in advance, so that we have healthy snacks and meals available. We need to eat in the present moment, slowly and consciously. We need to savor the foods we love with joy rather than guilt and shame. We need to eat on a regular basis, so we are not starving ourselves at any point in the day, putting us at the whim of eating convenient, processed food or binging to counter our hunger pains.