

# Move Forward

Some women (and men) are turning to lifestyle coaches to find support, focus and encouragement in their pursuit of dreams and goals. » **SUSAN CANTWELL**

## Welcome to the Canadian Lifestyle Coaching Column

Active Women Canada is pleased to announce that, starting with this issue, Susan Cantwell will be contributing a regular lifestyle coaching column. Susan is the president of the Lifestyle Coaching Institute which provides training for lifestyle coaches as well as individual, group, and corporate lifestyle coaching. She is also the mother of four children.

Ever had a fitness-related goal and, even though you started to exercise, knew you really weren't committed?

Linda Remmer, a 53-year-old therapist from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, found herself in this situation. For years Linda worked with a personal trainer to improve her fitness, but her daily habits and lifestyle needed an overhaul.

Six hours of sleep and a busy schedule had Linda drinking up to 12 cups of coffee and three to five chocolates a day.

When she called me for lifestyle coaching, she had a lot of general goals. They included losing that last five pounds, having more energy and reducing her stress level – goals that are familiar to many people.

After Linda talked about each of her

goals she got to the crux of what she thought was holding her back: She had committed to train for and run in her first 10k to support a friend who was running the race. When her friend was injured, Linda's commitment and desire to run came into question. With so many

goals—some clear and some not so clear—Linda felt that she was pushing herself to do something she wasn't sure she wanted to do.

### Defining and rating the goals

The first thing that Linda and I worked on was clearly defining each of her goals. Then we rated the importance of each and the impact reaching each goal would have on her life.



Illustration: Stephanie Carter

We started with the first goal of losing five pounds. "What would change in your day-to-day life if you lost those five pounds?" I asked. After a slight pause, Linda responded that there would be no significant changes for her; she rated that goal low. Having more energy and less stress rated much higher for Linda. She was still unclear about whether she wanted to run the 10k. So we began to explore her eating habits, schedule and sleep patterns.

Linda committed to keep a food log, listing what she was eating and drinking,

## Is Your Body Sending You Signals?

- » Do you feel tired when you wake up?
- » Do you crave fatty foods?
- » Do you drink more than two caffeinated drinks per day?
- » Do you frequently get colds or flus?
- » Do you feel aches or pain in your body?
- » Do you have a hard time falling asleep?
- » Do you feel tension in your body?
- » Do you have frequent headaches?
- » Do you feel lethargic during the day?
- » Do you experience an upset stomach more than once per month?

If you answered *yes* to two or more questions, it may be time to evaluate how well your lifestyle is serving you.

and what time she was going to bed and getting up.

After several weeks, a pattern began to emerge. A lack of sleep had Linda turning to coffee and chocolate everyday, masking the real message her body was sending her. Six hours of sleep and a busy schedule had Linda drinking up to 12 cups of coffee and three to five chocolates a day. Linda was surprised; she thought that six hours was all she needed.

In Linda's case, she was tired at various

times throughout the day, sometimes short on patience, stressed, and generally feeling out of sync.

Through the process of coaching, Linda changed her diet including slowly cutting down on coffee and chocolate and adding more fruits and vegetables. She also started to increase her consumption of water, gradually increasing it to eight glasses a day. She also created more free time in her schedule. The result of the changes was more energy and less stress. With that under control, Linda then wanted to determine if she really wanted to try to run the 10k. During a coaching session Linda had her breakthrough moment.

### The breakthrough moment

"Linda," I asked, "Can you see yourself running this race?" After a moment of silence, Linda responded: "Yes, yes I can." She sounded surprised.

"How do you see yourself doing that?" Linda described how she could run the race and then what she thought she needed to do to accomplish her vision. With this newfound clarity, Linda focused on her training. We used part of our coaching sessions to work on visualization: picturing herself running the race, how she would pace herself, and her strategy for the race. She picked one hour as her goal for running the race and now felt excited instead of reluctant.

As the race drew closer, Linda's commitment didn't waiver. The results were extraordinary: she placed first in her age division and 33rd of 200 women, with a time of 58 minutes. She had a better race time than many women half her age.

The key to Linda's success was commitment. Once she sorted through her goals and was able to prioritize them, she gave herself a starting point. Once she had a clear vision of herself running the 10k she was able to commit to turning the vision into reality. Now, as a trained lifestyle coach herself, she helps others to do the same.

Linda has this advice to share with others: "When you're clear about a goal, only then can you truly commit to it. My goals weren't clear at the beginning and I had a hard time committing to preparing for the



RACE DAY: Linda Remmer

race by eating properly, getting enough sleep, and setting boundaries on my time. I always tell my clients that it's never too late to rewrite your own story; you can become the person you have always wanted to be by changing your attitudes and habits."

Linda is scheduled to run four more races in the next four months. She now knows that, with the experience of running that first race, she can only get better. «

## Be Your Own Coach

If hiring a personal coach isn't an option for you, try the self-help section of your library or bookstore. Here are three books we recommend:

*The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari: A Spiritual Fable about Fulfilling Your Dreams & Reaching Your Destiny*  
Robin S. Sharma  
HarperCollins Canada

*The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom*  
Don Miguel Ruiz  
Amber Allen Publishing

*Life Strategies: Doing What Works, Doing What Matters*  
Phillip McGraw  
Disney Books (Little Brown)

## Need a Coach?

Do you have an unfulfilled fitness and/or lifestyle goal? Could the support of a coach help you reach your goal?

Over the next few months, *Active Woman Canada* will be selecting readers to work with Susan. Our readers will share their experiences in future issues.

Tell us your story. Contact us at editors@activewoman.ca or Mill Pond Publishing, 30 Mill Pond Drive Georgetown, ON, L7G 4S6, Attention: Coach Cantwell. Include your name, age, city, and contact information. Deadline for submissions is November 1, 2003.