



Bat-Zion Susskind-Sacks

The art of living well

Newsletter



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""The only reward of virtue is virtue; the only way to have a friend is to be one."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

My body-sculpting competition

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"Can you make me look like this?" is a question I often hear from my female clients when they see my body sculpting competition photos. In December 2002, at the age of fifty, when I first decided to enter my first competition, I had no idea what such a commitment entailed.

However, being the focused and goal oriented person that I am, I decided to follow through and turn it into a successful experience. It turned out to be one of the best journeys of my life.

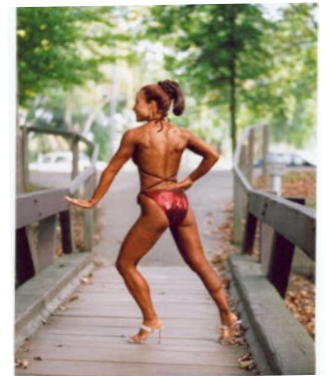
My personal trainer, Shelley, herself a veteran competitor with a few trophies to her credit, assessed me and devised a personal programme to set me on my way towards gaining more muscle mass and reducing body fat. The programme included two cardio training sessions per day, one before breakfast and the other after dinner.

Shelley also modified my diet from the usual three meals per day to six, increased my protein and vegetables intake and modified my training routine. In addition to all that work, I had to practice posing every night.

As time went by, I realized more and more how important it is to have a support system behind me. Training and dieting for a body sculpting contest, where you have to deprive yourself of many indulgences requires much mental endurance and tenacity. It is not only a physical but an extremely psychological endeavour as well.

I also realized that maintaining such a regiment for the rest of my life in order to stay in that kind of physical shape is not only unrealistic but impossible. It cannot be a way of life.

My advice to those who wish to follow such a path is be flexible, be prepared and be committed. Set realistic goals, goals you can live with for the rest of your life and you will get there!



Child Obesity



Obesity is having high proportion of body fat. Child obesity is not only an unwanted phenomenon or merely a cosmetic concern. It is a disease that affects body and soul and whose magnitude has increased significantly over the last 20 years. Contributing factors to this trend are: the worship of convenience, ongoing daily pressures, popularity of fast food and lack of physical activity.

Despite the worrying statistics, many parents believe that the problem will just "go away as the child grows older" and are worried that addressing the issue will prompt "complexes regarding self and body image."

Let's now look at the factors that may pre-dispose children towards obesity, and what we as parents can do to mitigate these factors:

Child Obesity (continued)

Some aspects of the problem:

- The emotional aspect: identify emotional reasons for overeating. These could be depression, inability to handle failure, pressure and worry prior to exams, or boredom.
- Acquiring proper eating habits.
- Parental support:
 1. Change the reward system - if you do not finish the food, you will not get dessert
 2. Stop comparing with friends and siblings
 3. Parents should adopt eating habits they expect their children to follow and act as role models
 4. Avoid negative and hurtful comments.



A word on motivation: A Carrot, an Egg and a Cup of Coffee - a folklore tale of wisdom

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She was tired of fighting and struggling and wanted to give up. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil; without saying a word.

Twenty minutes later, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see." Her daughter replied, "Carrots, eggs, and coffee."

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. They were soft. The mother then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrots went in hard and unrelenting. But the boiling water had softened and weakened them. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water. "Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity?



May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human and enough hope to make you happy. The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way. The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past; you can't go forward in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so at the end, you're the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying.

Yours in Health, Happiness and Success

Batzi

Shana Tova!

Bat-Zion Susskind-Sacks
www.artoflivingwell.net

To find out more about how our team can help you achieve your goals,
please ring us on: 07981-538114 (mobile) or: (020) 8202-6430 (land line) or email me at: batzi@artoflivingwell.net

Newsletter Production: Brian Sacks

Hendon Web Designs

Telephone: (020) 8202 6430

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