

What “Healthy” Is

A year ago I decided that I would start being “healthy. At the time, I decided that being healthy meant losing a few pounds and eating strictly “healthy” foods, as well as working out to exhaustion. After a week of my new, “healthy” lifestyle, I stepped on the scale and saw that I had lost a pound! I was exhilarated. However, I didn’t know how distorted this view of health really was, or how it would turn around and hurt me.

As time went on I ate less and less. The number on the scale decided how much I was worth, and counting calories became my life. I exercised at minimum an hour a day, and started making up strict rules for myself, like 30 chews per bite and absolutely no dessert. All of these seemingly healthy habits had turned into a full-fledged case of Anorexia Nervosa, an eating disorder.

I didn’t accept that I was seriously ill at first. Losing 15 pounds seemed perfectly healthy because that’s what most of the influential females in my life were doing. Eventually though, a nutritionist and a counselor worked with me to help me turn my life around.

After months of re-feeding and counseling, I began to finally accept my body and not obsess over the calories in different foods. As I thought about how far I had come, I remembered that this whole ordeal had started because I wanted to be “healthy”. This led me to come up with better, real values of what health is, and how to become healthy.

Becoming aware of what you are really eating is the first step, which can be done by taking an inventory of the food in your house. If you have a lot of processed, packaged foods, and little fresh produce or protein, you may need to work on eating more “real” foods. What are real foods? They are simply the items that God has given us to nourish our bodies with, like fruits, vegetables, grass-fed beef, nuts, fish, and so on. Homemade soups, breads, and snacks are all much more wholesome than a pre-packaged cookie or milkshake, and have so many health benefits including essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.

You’ll also want to find an activity that you enjoy doing, whether it be swimming, running, jumping on a trampoline, or playing a sport. Your body needs to be worked out so that you are fit and strong. Every day you have an opportunity to make small choices that can result in positive changes. For example, you could choose to get up from watching TV to go be active, or choosing to eat a banana instead of a cookie. Choosing to turn off your phone and go to bed at a reasonable time also helps your body recover from the day. Having a good body image can be a choice too, choosing to accept who you are now, but still striving for your own health and fitness goals for the future.

In conclusion, Health is when your body functions properly, because of being well nourished and cared for. It is also loving your body, and accepting that it is what God gave you. It is not striving to be perfect and using that image of perfection to define you. It is also not defined by what or how much you eat and work out. Health is being happy with yourself and giving yourself the whole, natural foods that God made for our bodies.