Prioritizing Your Well-being: A Step-by-Step Guide to Achieving Your Health Goals

BY - DR. DENISSE PRIETO

According to the World Health Organization, health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Furthermore, statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2021 indicate that diabetes was the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. This finding is based on 103,294 death certificates where diabetes was listed as the underlying cause of death. In 2022, high blood pressure was the primary or contributing cause of 685,875 deaths in the United States.

The importance of this article is to recognize chronic degenerative diseases as leading causes of death in the U.S. and to understand that these conditions can be preventable by prioritizing our health with habits that enhance our physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

It is essential to remember that to live a healthy and fulfilling life, we must first take care of our health. Due to our daily obligations—work,

home, school, and children—we often neglect our well-being and prioritize other aspects of life that negatively impact us in the short, medium, and long term.

What good is having everything around us if we cannot enjoy our health?

Below are some simple steps you can start implementing this year to improve your health and live in harmony. During consultations, I like to call them "baby steps" because they are easy to understand and apply.

Remember that every new habit requires time and patience, and it is nearly impossible to achieve them without building them gradually. Change happens through small actions we take every day.

Plan Your Week in Advance. Keep a journal nearby where you can write down, identify, and frequently review the changes you want in your life. Whether it's becoming more active, exercising, losing weight, or improving your emotions and relationships with family.

Write Down Your Daily Goals and Work on Them One Day at a Time. "Just for today, I will try to be more optimistic." "Just for today, I will drink more water." "Just for today, I will improve my diet." It is important to work on "baby steps" because they help you live in the present. Taking small actions to change habits gradually will help you become more consistent and disciplined while reducing procrastination.

Talk About Your Emotions with Someone You Trust. Seek Help. We are social beings by nature and need our environment to grow. Being heard allows us to gain a different perspective on our situation and view things more positively. Keep this in mind: every time you listen to someone else, you grow. You grow because you have the willingness to listen and change your way of thinking. You can free yourself from stigmas and paradigms.

Commit to, Respect, and Love Your Body. Have you ever heard that during an emergency on a plane, you must secure your own oxygen mask before assisting others? The same applies to your body. How do you expect to help your family and those around you if you don't start by taking care of your physical and mental health?

You are your priority; you come first above all else. Your body deserves to be treated with love. Start by taking care of your physical and mental health—respect your sleep schedule, your diet, your company, and your physical activity.

Remember that you have goals to achieve, and that requires a healthy body. Engage in physical activity regularly. A daily walk or 20 minutes of your preferred physical activity will improve your physical health, help you lose weight, and manage metabolic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Keep in mind that your daily activities do not count as exercise. Dedicate time to yourself! Also, practicing daily meditation is rewarding. Allow yourself to be in total calm and reflect on your life. Meditation or prayer can be a moment of peace for you. Meditating can positively impact your mental health, helping you identify what makes you feel good or bad and how to change it.

Visit Your Doctor at Least Once a Year. Simply due to the normal aging process, humans can develop various diseases. Remember that most of these can be prevented with proper medical guidance.

Enjoy Your Life, and If You Fail, Start Again. Life is not just about following rules, having a plan, and being strict. Enjoy your friends, your loved ones, and life in general. As long as you have someone to love and who loves you, learn to live in harmony, ask for forgiveness, and enjoy each day as if it were your last. Finally, all human beings make mistakes—learn from them, move forward, and remember that every new day is a chance to try again.