



# Mirror of health

by Scott R. Lebin

*Instead of looking at the past, I put myself ahead twenty years and try to look at what I need to do now in order to get there then.*

—Diana Ross

Women's health has exponential benefits for not only their family and careers but also for the community in which they live. All aspects of mind, body and spirit are elements that women must focus on to provide activities related for a healthy routine.

The family has often required the wife and mother to give her attention to the well being of others with little time left for her own well-being. When a career is also a necessity or desired because of personal goals, it too has often required a woman to work in the business without any consideration for her important role in the family. Many businesses have made progress through the use of special accommodations that allow women to focus on the family too.

Programs for sick leave, flexible scheduling, work from home and on site child care have addressed these issues

for women in some companies that understand the value of women to their organization while at the same time giving consideration to the parallel role filled by women's family needs.

Having a plan, a routine, or a process is required to move toward a future goal. Any of these requirements can only be achieved if women allow time to accomplish such a goal. A woman with a career and a family to take care of often gives up time for herself and totally dedicates every waking moment to others. The ultimate goal of helping others may not be accomplished by choosing to focus only on others. "Instead of looking at the past, I put myself ahead twenty years and try to look at what I need to do now in order to get there then."—Diana Ross

It is extremely important for women to be healthy in mind, body and spirit because both family and careers demand

their very best energy possible. An unhealthy spouse, mother or employee might not be beneficial to a family or business that can run smoothly by avoiding unneeded stress in the life of its workers.

It is probably true that a woman who focuses on a healthy life also influences those in contact with her to also lead healthy lives. The person who does the cooking often determines how eating habits will be healthy. Although many more men cook in the home today, women are still the main cooks and the woman who focuses on having a healthy diet has a powerful influence on the health of the whole family.

In the public sector, a woman's access to affordable health care has been an important issue. This has been particularly important to single women who are mothers who are head of the

household. In the past women's health insurance costs were more than that of a man's cost at the same age. Women who are middle or lower income wage earners have even more difficulty taking care of themselves because they avoid tests and health checkups on a regular basis.

The reason for some of this inequality for women is a result of women being under-represented in decision-making at all levels of business and politics. Martha Plimpton, an actress, said "It's long past time we started focusing on the solutions that actually keep woman healthy, instead of using basic aspects of women's health as a tool of cultural, moral and political control."

All these issues seem easy to understand. Even Virgil many centuries ago said, "The greatest wealth is health." We live busy lives and with all the responsibilities that create demand on

a woman's time, it is clear why she may not be able to squeeze time into her schedule to focus on priorities for herself. We should understand that this choice to focus on her own well-being would not be a selfish choice because there are children, spouses and employers that need her to be healthy.

Women need to plan for their own health of mind, body and spirit. They deserve time to exercise, time to meditate or recharge their energy, and time and money to allocate to their own health care. If they focus on their own important needs, twenty years from now their plan to have a healthy life will be achieved and they will have met their long-term planning goal. "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step"—Lao Tzu. Many people will benefit when women take the first step to a healthy lifestyle.

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