



ELIZABETH HAMILTON'S

*Best*  
**EVER**  
*You*™

FEBRUARY 2011 • VOL. 2, NO. 6

**SPECIAL EDITION:**  
*Heart & Stroke  
Awareness*

**What is a Stroke?**  
**Know the Signs  
of a Heart Attack**  
**Survivors Tell  
Their Stories**

**Shannon Devine**  
**Mrs. International**

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Heart disease is still the No. 1 killer  
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women each year.

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about the power to save their  
lives at **GoRedForWomen.org**.





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## besteveryyou.com

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February 2011



Every Month Should Be Heart Month

February is American Heart Month, but quite frankly I hope we raise awareness levels to such a point that everyone is paying attention to their overall health on a consistent basis. I'm not a doctor, nor do I play one on TV, but I can say I know far too many people who either have had heart or stroke problems themselves, or else knows someone who knows someone who knows someone.

Please have your heart checked. Know your numbers too.

Our magazine this month is dedicated to fitness, heart and stroke awareness and the MedicAlert Foundation. Thank you to all those who came forward to share their personal stories.

Please pass these stories along. By raising awareness, we save lives.

All My Best,

Elizabeth Hamilton-Guarino  
Best Ever You, Founder and CEO



Photo Credit: Carrie Aube



# Go Red BetterU 2011 Fact Sheet

Although preventable, heart disease remains the No. 1 killer of women in the U.S. This summer, Go Red For Women® is encouraging women to Speak Up for themselves by taking the Go Red BetterU Challenge. The Go Red BetterU is a free, 12-week online makeover that can save lives. Powered by the American Heart Association's research, **BetterU provides guidance to transform overall health through small, simple choices.**

Go Red BetterU is not about fad diets and new exercise trends, but rather a program that focuses on skills and information that help today's busy women lead their own lives, only better. Fewer than half of American women maintain a healthy weight, keep a heart healthy diet and get regular physical activity. Furthermore, millions of women struggle to get motivated to begin a health regimen, feeling they are too tired or just don't have time. Go Red BetterU gives women an opportunity to *Speak Up* for themselves and achieve a noticeably better state of well-being and heart health in just 12 weeks.

Research shows that **80 percent of cardiac events in women are linked to poor choices**, involving diet, exercise and smoking. This means women must make the right choices to live better and longer lives. Alarming statistics on women and heart disease include:

- ♥ Cardiovascular disease kills more than 430,000 women each year, which is **about one every minute**.
- ♥ While 1 in 30 American women die of breast cancer, about **1 in 3 die** from cardiovascular disease.
- ♥ More women die of cardiovascular disease than the **next five causes of death combined**, including all forms of cancer.

Go Red For Women hopes that Go Red BetterU will help connect women committed to making healthier choices every day. The combined effect of even small choices can improve heart health and impact longevity.

To provide needed support for participants, BetterU features the **Go Red BetterMe Coaching Tool** to keep participants on track. To help women meet their long and short term personal goals, the Go Red BetterMe Coaching Tool features:

- ♥ Daily reminders and tips,
- ♥ Interactive videos from real women, and
- ♥ Links to journals and goals stored on GoRedForWomen.org

Additionally, the tool is downloadable to computer desktops, blogs, or even iGoogle personalized home pages for easy access.

Go Red For Women is nationally sponsored by Macy's and Merck & Co., Inc. The Go Red BetterMe Coaching Tool is nationally supported by Ocean Spray.

For more information about Go Red For Women, the Go Red BetterU program or to download the Go Red BetterMe Coaching Tool, please visit [GoRedForWomen.org](http://GoRedForWomen.org).



## I turned 50 this year.

Yes, I admit it. I'm glad I turned 50 – it beats the alternative, as my husband always says. But along with attaining that half-a-century mark, comes the awareness that no matter how many more years I have left to live, the remaining years will number less than those that have come before. This isn't morbidity – this is fact. The average life-span of women in America is 81 years. Do the math – unless someone discovers the Fountain of Youth, the slippery slope has begun. So how best to maximize those remaining years? I want to make these the best years ever – and planning for them has passed me by – they are here now.

In order to make it to that benchmark of 81, and beyond, life changes must occur. Protecting my heart is first and foremost – getting in shape, eating right, creating a life with minimal stress is what the experts say will prolong life. Oddly, there are calculators online that will factor your lifestyle and give you an idea of what certain adjustments will do for you in terms of prolonging your life. One such calculator is found at: <http://gosset.wharton.upenn.edu/mortality/>.

It appears my work is cut out for me. As an overweight, somewhat sedentary, female with a fair amount of stress, I have shaved about three years off my life span, based on the above calculator. If the stresses were removed, along with removing a substantial amount of weight, and adding exercise, I would gain back those three years, and most likely, the intervening years would be increased in quality, which is really what it's all about.

Last year, I "committed" to the Best Ever You Fitness Challenge. That didn't fly so well, and only because of my own lack of commitment. I get that – but I need to get things back on track. I did lose about 11 pounds in the last year, but there is so much more work to be done. My commitment needs enforcing, and I am aware that my life, and the quality of the remaining decades, is now held in my own mortal hands. So, here's the plan:

**Stress** - Baby steps . . . I will start with the stressors. Financial issues, career, family dynamics . . . all create stressors that may not be able to be removed, but perhaps they can be better coped with. Finding an inner serenity that will help me flip the stressors off like an annoying mosquito – that would work for me. I am blessed in that I am surrounded with access to a network of individuals that do this for a living – I need to reach out to them and learn what it is that I can do to cope better with the stressors that are inevitable in my life.

**Diet** – I'm not saying I will go on a diet. After about five attempts at Weight Watchers, an attempt at South Beach, etc, I know better. I need to treat food as though it were a prescription, not an illegal substance. Planning is my downfall, and my goal is to create a plan that needs to be followed daily. Not left to chance, compliance is more likely.

**Exercise** – I have begun swimming, but not regularly. And frankly, (see item A) finances are not conducive to funding a membership. I have to work with what's available to me, without a monetary cost attached. Walking is free and available, but not my first choice in sub-zero weather. This is a plan that still needs work. (I welcome help!) But awareness is the first step.

**Finances** – See Item A . . . the bulk of stress in this economy is based in income . . . finding several streams of income is the way right now. This, at least, is something that is falling into place, but it is also the one I am least able to control.

Experts tell us that the first thing to do when reaching for a goal is to write it down. As I edit this magazine, I've seen it over and over again, from people that have made goal-making central to their lives. These are successful people, so there has to be something to it. Consider this my goal statement: In the next 12 months, I will (note the word WILL) seek support to find ways to deal effectively with life's stresses. I WILL be a more effective planner in regards to food, home, and finances. I will, as a result, lose weight. I WILL NOT place a number on the weight loss, as I am certain to sabotage it if I do – instead, see the goal statement regarding planning. I WILL reduce my need for blood pressure meds by attaining the prior goals. . . I WILL gain back the 3 years that have disappeared off my life expectancy by attaining serenity, and removing chaos.

Now, to stick to the plan – that's the difficult part.

## What's YOUR plan?

*Liz Foley, Editor-in-Chief*





nourish.

YOU  
are like  
no one else. . .

*"I cannot place a value on my sessions with Sara. I learned so much and feel as though I have new found clarity when it comes to food and well-being."*

*- B.G., Falmouth, ME*

. . . from the way you think to the way you digest your food. So a one-size-fits all approach to getting healthy, probably won't fit you very well. My programs consist of a balance of education, modeling, guidance, and emotional support. Breaking bad eating habits is one of the most challenging things that one can face. Together, we will replace bad habits with good ones. You will develop habits that uplift your spirit and bring you happiness through fitness, good health, and mental clarity.



Sara Sullivan, BA, CN, HHP, CH  
Nutrition Counselor  
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# Respectful Romance

How civility can add sizzle  
to your relationship



*Here are 4 ways for you to let  
your lover know you value them:*

When I was in elementary school, Valentine's Day was a special celebration. Whether made from cinnamon or paper, hearts abounded. I can still vividly remember buying boxes of cards in various shapes and sizes and then vigilantly going through the names on our class list, deciding which card to give to whom. I would always select the most beautiful cards for my favorite friends, and sneak in a couple of anonymous notes for boys that I liked. Back then it was expected that everyone, including our teacher, would give everyone else a card. Otherwise some kids would have been left out, and we were told in no uncertain terms that would be both unacceptable and unfair.

As time went on the real meaning of Valentine's Day became more important. Love, or what passed for it at various times, became the name of the game. Paper hearts were replaced with long-stemmed red roses, and cinnamon candies turned in to rich chocolates. Or not. There were many Februarys when Cupid's arrow missed my heart, and I would spend the day of red and romance alone, wondering when my turn at love would reappear.

True love, when it entered my life, took me by surprise. The wonderful man who became my husband was so nice! From day one he was thoughtful, caring and sincere. I had been stung before, and found myself waiting for the other shoe to drop, wondering when things would change. And they did change, but only for the better. And there's one simple reason for that . . . respect.

We all know that respect is the foundation of successful relationships. But did you know that civility can add sizzle to your romantic relationship?

Civility within couples is about so much more than being polite; it means choosing kindness as a guiding principle. Kindness warms hearts, and warm hearts lead to loving, lasting relationships. When we know - without a doubt - that someone really, truly cares about us, we become more trusting, open and romantically committed.

**Listen:** It takes effort to really hear what your spouse or partner is saying. Be an active listener as they share the story of their day, confide their fears and dreams, and tell you about their big 'aha' moments. It's a privilege to be someone's sounding board, so smile, nod and maintain eye contact when they are speaking to let them know they are important to you and you are fully engaged in their story.

**Observe:** Watch out for your companion. Be on the lookout for evidence of worry, fatigue, stress or distraction, and note when they appear to be at their best. By keeping an eye on their behavior you'll be more readily able to help them in times of challenge and support them in times of joy.

**Verbalize:** Let your sweetie know when you're proud of them, happy for them or concerned about them. Communicate the depth of your love by using respectful language one hundred percent of the time, and choose a courteous tone whenever you speak with your mate. Vow to resolve disagreements through calm discussions that are focused on reaching mutually beneficial results.

**Enjoy:** Have fun together! Laughter is vital to vibrant, strong relationships. Maintain a playful, positive attitude and go out of your way to put a smile on your partner's face. Happiness goes a long way towards keeping romance alive.

Don't wait for Valentine's Day to wear your heart on your sleeve. Express kindness every day, and watch the sizzle of civility spice up your relationship!

Sue Jacques is The Civility CEO™, an executive consultant who helps individuals & businesses gain confidence, earn respect and create courteous corporate cultures. Sue proudly promotes respect in the workplace. Do you have a corporate conundrum for The Civility CEO™? Please send it to [advice@TheCivilityCEO.com](mailto:advice@TheCivilityCEO.com). Your question could be featured in an upcoming column! [www.TheCivilityCEO.com](http://www.TheCivilityCEO.com)

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Dear BE4 Community:

This issue of Best Ever You holds special meaning to me and is, forgive the pun, close to my heart. In July a college teammate of mine was diagnosed with Giant Cell Myocarditis. This is a rare but devastating heart disease that usually affects young otherwise healthy individuals. Larry had no warning signs and up to four days before going to the hospital he was functioning normally.

There is an expression, "my heart goes out to you" which we often use to let people know we feel genuine sympathy for them. Well, in August, literally someone's heart went out to Larry. He successfully received a heart transplant because an organ donor gave him the gift of life. The gift of organ donation is an incredible one because it has the ability to touch many people's lives. I have listed myself as an organ donor and encourage you to champion the cause as well. Monday February 14 is National Donor Day.

In addition to Larry, I have witnessed several friends and relatives demonstrate the heart of a champion in beating the odds and winning the most personal battle which exists-the battle for life. This article is dedicated to those individuals, may we all maximize our potential with the heart of a champion as they have.

Best,



# HEART OF A CHAMPION

Imagine, for a moment, that we're able to approach all of our personal and professional challenges as if our lives depended on it. The results would be phenomenal. Unfortunately, that is not the case nor is it realistic given the fact that we as humans have a limited amount of energy with which we must divide up and to assign to prioritized goals and activities. Given this reality, a starting point in all of my teaching and coaching is one very basic and clarifying two-part question:

**What do you want?  
Based on your answer now . . .  
What you are willing to earn?**

The biggest gap that exists for people is the gap between knowledge and practice. I call this the performance gap. Many people have an idea of what sort of "championship" they want. The student who wants to make Dean's list, the athlete who wants to be an All-American, the salesperson who wants to make President's Club, the actor who wants to win an Oscar; but do they have the drive, habits and characteristics to transform dreams to reality? It all starts with an idea; however the best ideas are useless without a plan to turn ideas into action, action into performance and performance into championship caliber results.

**"It has to be a mentality  
before it's ever a reality."**

Champions approach each day with a performance mindset. Champions of any industry, whether it is sports, business or entertainment, have an "expect to win" attitude. They create a vision of success in their mind and, more importantly, employ laser sharp focus on the process of making their vision a reality. The subconscious mind holds tremendous power and cannot tell the difference between reality and visualization, it simply responds to the thoughts that we feed it. It is often said the best leaders are "visionary." They see their organizations not as what they currently are rather as what they can become. This begs the questions: what does it take to become a champion, and what do experts deem as the most important qualities that are at the heart of a champion?

In 1999, Dr. Shari Kuchenbecker, a psychologist at Loyola Marymount University, performed a research study to determine the top characteristics for success in sports. She surveyed 658 coaches from 43 different sports, asking them to "describe an athlete who is a real winner" by selecting five attributes from a list, including 64 physical and 64 psychological characteristics. The results indicated that the overwhelming majority of the coaches described "a real winner" by psychological aspects over physical.

**The top five attributes selected were as follows:**

1. Loves to play the game (43%)
2. Positive Attitude (33%)
3. Coachable (30%)
4. Self-Motivated (27%)
5. Team Player (26%)

Interestingly, the first physical characteristic, "natural athlete" didn't appear on the list until #19 and was only selected by 11% of the coaches surveyed. What does this tell us? (Beyond the fact that Yogi Berra wasn't far off in his statement that 90% of the game is half mental.) I believe it reveals that you can apply the same attributes in other facets of your life to achieve success and reach your goals. You could survey CEOs and replace the word "athlete" with "business person" and the same attributes would rise to the top. Similarly, if you surveyed HR executives and inserted the word "candidate," I bet almost identical results would follow.

It stands to reason that in business, if we want to be successful and bring out the best in our people, we need to develop ways to encourage these five specific psychological attributes. To take it a step further, I would add that we also need to be seeking these habits in prospective recruits during the hiring process. There is no such thing as an overnight success and performance is preceded by passion, attitude and motivation. With that in mind, I am sharing with you one of my success strategies designed to enhance your performance. This is something you can begin employing immediately in pursuit of your own personal championship.

## **6 Red Hot Habits at the Heart of a Champion:**

**Loves to work & compete**

**Has tremendous focus  
& listening skills**

**Commits to excellence  
in all aspects of life**

**Is coachable & commits to  
continuous improvement**

**Pays attention to details, takes pride  
in doing the little things right**

**Holds self and others to  
high standards of performance**

**Success Strategy: POWER HOUR**

Start your day like a champion by waking up an hour earlier. In doing so you are gaining over 2 weeks of healthy productivity time over the course of a year. (365hrs / 24 = 15.2 days)

How to do it? Start by going to bed an hour earlier instead of watching a movie or TV. Sleep deprivation has been linked to an increased risk of heart problems. Final thoughts as your head hits the pillow should be reflecting on and visualizing or replaying in your mind three small successes you had that day related to your goal.

What to do with your Power Hour? Stay in your technology free zone (no email, internet, cell phones) Exercise or take a walk for a designated time (anywhere from 15-45 minutes). Physical activity strengthens the heart, literally. This will set the tone for your day in two ways: positive mindset and focus. Expressing gratitude during this time will put you in a positive mindset. In your mind, spend the first half of your exercise activity expressing gratitude for what you have. (For example: Mentors, important people in your life, the ability to passionately pursue your goals) The second half of your workout should be utilized as a focusing tool by allowing yourself to game plan and reflect on how you will win the day. Focus on the following two questions:

- *What is the single most mission critical activity to be accomplished today?*
- *How will you go about enthusiastically attacking it to win the day?*

Invest remaining time in your Power Hour by consuming some vitamins for your mind. Read a chapter from an inspirational book, or a book that will help you develop expertise in your chosen field. If you feel this time is better invested in exercising, more power to you! During your morning commute, instead of listening to music or the morning news, listen to that same book on CD or podcast in the car. (You're not missing anything in the news any way. At the top of the hour they wish you a good morning and then proceed to spend the next 29 minutes telling you why it isn't.)

To bridge the performance gap between knowledge and practice, stick to this Power Hour routine for ninety days. By doing so, you'll make it a habit, see results and won't want to stop. I guarantee it will be a game changer for you because it is first an attitude changer. It is important to start your day the right way, the quality of your mindset determines the quality of your performance. Remember it has to be a mentality before it's ever a reality.

**\*Links to Champions:**  
[www.OrganDonor.gov](http://www.OrganDonor.gov)  
[www.AmericanHeart.org](http://www.AmericanHeart.org)

John Brubaker teaches audiences how to obtain better results in business with straightforward tools that turbo charge performance. Author of the forthcoming book *Overtime Victory: Success Strategies From The Locker Room To The Board Room*, John uses a multidisciplinary approach to help organizations develop their competitive edge. John Brubaker brings more than fifteen years of experience in Leadership Development, Coaching and Human Resource Management to his work as a consultant, speaker and author. He is a 1992 graduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University with a bachelor's degree in psychology and he also earned a master's degree in personnel psychology from FDU in 1993. Brubaker has completed his doctoral level coursework in Sport Psychology at Temple University. For more information visit: [www.coachbru.com](http://www.coachbru.com)





# Sexy!

## From the Inside Out

Last week found me running my early morning errands in Deno's, a world class shoe repair shop in Highland Park. If you don't know, Highland Park in Dallas is the equivalent of Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. I only point this out because it sets the groundwork for the tale I am about to tell. My daily routine is that after I drop my boys off at school, I get a cup of tea, chat with my father on the phone, listen to music and run a few errands. So this story begins with Starbucks in one hand, shoes in another.

I was in Deno's finishing my request just as the door rang to announce that a new customer had entered the store. At 8:15 a.m., I found myself trying to clear my eyes as I did a double take. Through the doors strolled one of the most gorgeous women I have ever laid my eyes on. Let me paint the landscape. She was around 5'8" tall, angelic blond hair, big blue eyes, dressed in the best that money could buy, diamond ring the size of a small coin, zero body fat and the nicest legs I have ever seen! This woman started conversing with the service consultant about her ultra-sexy black patent leather pumps telling about how she had rubbed the tip off while attending various social gatherings and questioning if the pump could be revived back to its original stature.

Now normally, I would not have paid much attention to an encounter such as this, but this moment had me spell bound. We happened to lock lashes and the look in her eyes startled me. There was an intense look of surprise as if she were unsettled, if not surprised, that I was looking at her so intently. This baffled me, and she seemed a bit off guard as well. I stood there centered in my own presence, as being the woman that has created, lives, and breathes the concept of "Spirituality is Sexy". And not unlike any other morning that I don't have formal appointments, I had not showered, I did not have a stitch of makeup on, my hair was a week away from a much needed highlight appointment and was pulled back in a pony tail. I was wearing blue jeans, tennis shoes and my alma-mater Iowa Hawkeye sweatshirt! I certainly wasn't showing up as the spiritually sexy girl, OR was I?

Upon a scan of my appearance, I was at first totally taken aback at myself! My breath caught and stopped cold for a moment. Yikes! How could I have possibly left the house looking like this? What was I thinking? Let me just say that at this moment in time, I was profoundly grateful that my service was complete and that I could leave and at least go home and shower. When I was seated in my car, I paused and questioned what had my heart pumping double time as I stood in the midst of this beauty? What was this feeling that was within me? Just as I was asking myself these questions, the light bulb went off. I had a moment that cannot be described in this story, but which closely resembles an

enormous tidal wave of consciousness of love, joy and bliss that entered my entire being. With this beautiful light came a message that resonated so deeply within every ounce of my being that I was guided to share this encounter. What had just transpired for me was truth and confirmation on a very deep level. This beautiful woman and I were one – there was no separation. The look that passed between us was the shock of recognizing "sameness."

Now, from an outsider looking in, she was the epitome of perfection. I wondered how many times in her life she had been judged by the way she looked on the outside, and not given a chance to show her magnificent bloom from the inside. I, on the other hand, showed up that day just as I am, a mom running early morning errands with a schedule to maintain and a household to run. It dawned on me that the shock in her eyes wasn't because I wasn't perfectly groomed but because she also sensed the beauty within me, and what a shock it must have been that it radiated through my eyes and heart, instead of my external appearance.

I found myself loving this woman completely and rejoicing in her beauty, both inside and out. She was simply a mirror showing me what I have always known deep within. Sexy is an inside job and glamour should not be confused with beauty. I can clean up, dress up and show up with the best of them, but that is not what makes me, you, or anyone else sexy. It is the love, light, energy and brilliance that radiates from every pore of our being and acts like a magnet to attract all sorts of wonderful people and experiences. It lights up the face, radiates through the eyes, pours from the heart like a light of love. It is the light of Creation.

I am a person that believes in taking immaculate care of my physical being by honoring my Divine Temple. I eat healthy, I exercise, and I love being groomed to perfection. But if this is all that I did, and my inner spiritual sanctuary was not cared for with the same obedience, I could not wear a single material item that would help me become more beautiful. I want to break a long held illusion right now. Beauty, richness and sexiness come from within and radiate outwardly, not the other way around. Dressing up the soul and finding your unique essence is the light that shines for all to see. This is the true beauty that each and every person has been born with, but often lies dormant because society has programmed us to see otherwise. It is fun to be glamorous, but in seeking the truth and finding your inner beauty and richness is the path that will lead you to being a spiritually sexy and radiant person. Find this light, and allow it to shine from you so that you may discover how infinitely attractive you can be.

Love and Light ~  
Pamela Jo McQuade



Pamela Jo McQuade is a Reiki Master, student of "A Course in Light", a Reverend with the Universal Life Church, and a trained Holographic Healer. After leaving the corporate world, she underwent a radical spiritual transformation and now is on a soul-inspired quest to bring forth teachings of inner light and truth. For more information on Pamela Jo and her teachings, visit her site at: [www.http://spiritualityissexy.com](http://spiritualityissexy.com).

# Idaho Students Find Their Best Even in the Face of Adversity

One out of every 10 Idahoans live at or below the poverty level.

Across the Treasure Valley, 66,000 people live in poverty. Few places across Idaho know the reality of poverty better than the Caldwell School District, the 10th largest district in Idaho. Four out of five students in Caldwell are in poverty, making it the district with the third lowest income in the state. These high poverty levels affect student health, academic performance, and of course, their quality of life.

Rather than excuse students from being their best due to extreme circumstances, the Caldwell School District has been pushing to do whatever it takes to help each student reach for the stars. In addition to providing free breakfast for every student, a healthy mid-morning snack, and free school supplies to every child entering the classroom, the Caldwell School District continues to strive for more.

In 2008, Sonya Lovejoy, a second grade teacher at Sacajawea Elementary in Caldwell, Idaho began a, "Best Ever You" challenge within the Caldwell School District. In addition to discussing college goals and life plans, the second graders began identifying how each student could strive to be their best. From healthy eating tips and lifestyle choices to positive problem solving skills and goal-setting techniques, these Caldwell students aren't letting poverty stop them from being their best.

Lovejoy began a Friday afternoon lesson where the students would rotate in a "Best Ever You" club challenge. Each station featured components of being your best in every area of life. These stations included push-ups, reading fluency, math facts, conflict resolution, art techniques, positive affirmations to other students, and the list goes on. At the beginning of the school year each child would write down their goals and watch as they improved academically, socially, and increased their fitness levels. This activity opened up discussions regarding goal-setting and the ability to be your best - regardless of any circumstance.

Lovejoy cherishes her box filled with written letters from her students along the years sharing their goals, growth, and Best Ever You Plan. Lovejoy stated, "I want our students to recognize that each of them really does hold the world in their hands. No circumstance, problem, or obstacle is bigger than picking a goal and working hard to achieve it. These students are bright, sweet, and just need that extra push to know someone believes in them and is willing to show them the steps necessary to make all of their dreams possible."

Studies show that lifelong behaviors, both good and bad, are formed in the elementary and middle school years. Programs like the National School Lunch program, Caldwell Aspirations Project (CAP), Best Ever You Challenge, and collaboration between school staff and home support are crucial to helping students be their best. "Young children aren't going to just wake up one day knowing how to improve their grades, deal with tragedy in their lives, or cope with difficult situations. We must train and prepare them to be their best throughout all of the circumstances of life."

Since 2008, Lovejoy has been able to work this Best Ever You challenge within Caldwell second through fifth graders and has seen improvements in lifestyle choices, student behavior, and most importantly, student confidence in their own abilities to be their best. Lovejoy isn't the only one seeing the results of Caldwell's hard work.

Since Caldwell participates in the National School Lunch program, they were required to have a School Wellness Policy that addresses nutrition education, physical activity and activities to promote student wellness. During the 2009 and 2010 school years, staff from the State Department of Education's Child Nutrition Programs conducted comprehensive Wellness Assessments at every school district and public charter school in Idaho, looking at the content and implementation of school wellness policies and the school environment. Caldwell School District earned a place in the Top 10 "wellness" recognition.

In addition, the Caldwell School District is Idaho's most rapidly improving district. Just five years ago, no schools had made "Adequately Yearly Progress", the federal benchmark for student achievement from the "No Child Left Behind Act." This past year, 8 of 10 schools made AYP.

Lovejoy concluded, "As we live our lives striving to be our best, we naturally encourage those around us to do the same. Being purposeful in the education and values we pass along to our students, paired with the attitude of doing whatever it takes to get them to their best, is the only way to teach. I encourage everyone to join in our Best Ever You Challenge!"



By Sonya Lovejoy

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# If you would like to maintain a healthy heart, why not start in your kitchen?

What we keep in the refrigerator, pantry and freezer sets the pattern for what we put on our plates and in our bodies. If you are able to stock your kitchen with whole grains, beans, nuts, fresh fruits & vegetables, your heart will reap the benefits. These fresh, unrefined, whole-foods provide the cornerstone for a heart-healthy diet since they help wipe out free radicals in the bloodstream, protecting blood vessels. They also assist with controlling your blood sugar. When you eat a diet high in refined flour and sugar, your body responds to the rush of blood sugar by pumping out more insulin to turn the sugar into energy. Too much insulin raises your triglycerides and causes inflammation in the arteries, making them more vulnerable to hardening.

There are simple and quick additions that you can make to your diet that will lead you on the right path to a longer life and a contented heart. Try making the foods below a part of your daily meals.

## TOP 10 HEART HEALTHY FOODS

**Avocados Salmon Flaxseed Olive Oil**  
**Beans Legumes Oatmeal Nuts**  
**Berries Spinach Whole grains**

While eating heart-healthy foods is an essential part of proper nutrition, it's just as important to limit or avoid foods that can cause damage to the heart. Knowing which foods can damage the heart over time is crucial to prolonged health and life.

### Trans Fat

Trans fats are partially hydrogenated fats, and should be completely avoided in your diet. Excessive trans fat consumption is one of the greatest risk factors for coronary artery disease. Many countries around the world have actually banned trans fats due to the known dangers of consuming these man-made fats.

### Refined White Flour

Eating excess amounts of refined flour has been linked to heart disease and diabetes, due to its high glycemic index and lack of vital nutrients. Instead of refined products, opt for whole grains.

### Vegetable Oils

Oils high in omega-6 fatty acids, such as canola, sunflower, corn, soybean, and peanut oils, contribute to the development of heart disease. They contain free radicals, raise LDL levels, and, over time, can even cause irregular heart rhythms when consumed excessively.

### Sugar

Sugar should be eaten in very, very, limited quantities. It has an array of negative health effects, including contributing to high cholesterol, heart disease and inflammation.

## Power Breakfast Oatmeal Serves 2

Start your day with a steaming bowl of oats, which are full of omega-3 fatty acids, folate, and potassium. This fiber-rich food will lower levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol and help keep your arteries clear. Opt for coarse or steel-cut oats over instant varieties, they contain more fiber. Blueberries are full of anti-inflammatories which will reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer.

2 cups water  
1 cup rolled oats  
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1/4 blueberries, fresh or frozen  
1/2 banana sliced  
2 tbsp. ground flaxseeds  
1 tbsp. maple syrup

Bring water to a boil in a small saucepan. Add oats and cinnamon. Reduce heat to a steady simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until oats are tender, about 8 minutes. If you are using frozen blueberries, stir them in now.

Remove oats from the heat. Stir in flaxseed. Place oatmeal in two bowls and top each bowl with banana slices, blueberries (if using fresh) and drizzle with maple syrup. Serve immediately.



Sara Sullivan, BA, NC, HHP, CH is a Certified Nutritional Counselor and Holistic Health Practitioner. She has a private practice at Sanctuary Holistic Health & Yoga Center in Yarmouth, ME.

Sara uses an individual approach to achieving optimal wellness for each and every client. "We are all unique" — no two people have the same metabolism, biochemical make-up, health concerns, behavioral issues or nutritional needs.

For the past five years Sara has also been a featured chef at the Stonewall Kitchen cooking classes in Portland, ME and continues to teach Pilates classes three days a week at Sanctuary Holistic Health & Yoga Center. She lives in Yarmouth, ME with her husband and two children.

## **Pan Seared Salmon with Olives and Potatoes**

**Serves 4**

Salmon is super-rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Salmon will effectively reduce blood pressure and keep clotting at bay. Aim for two servings per week, which may reduce heart attack risk by up to one-third.

4 small red potatoes (about 3/4 lb.), sliced in 1/4-inch pieces  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
4 salmon fillets (about 5 oz. each), scaled  
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, divided  
2 sprigs fresh rosemary, each about 3 inches long  
1/2 cup pitted kalamata olives  
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar  
4 lemon wedges

In a medium saucepan over high heat, bring the potatoes to a boil in enough salted water to cover them by 1 inch. Reduce the heat to a brisk simmer and cook until tender but not falling apart, about 5-10 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Pat the fish dry and season with a pinch of salt and pepper. Heat 1 Tbs. of the olive oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Arrange the fish skin side down in the pan so the fillets fit without touching. Cook undisturbed for 3 minutes.

Flip the fillets and cook until the fish is cooked through, an additional 2 to 3 minutes. With a slotted spatula, transfer the fish to a serving platter or plates.

Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the pan and heat until shimmering. Add the potatoes and rosemary and cook, flipping occasionally, until the potatoes are tender, 3 to 4 minutes.

Add the olives, parsley, balsamic, and a pinch of salt and pepper and stir gently to heat. Arrange the potato mixture around the fish. Serve garnished with the lemon wedges.

## **Sauteed Spinach with Parmesan**

**Serves 2**

Spinach will help keep your heart healthy due to its stores of lutein, folate, potassium, and fiber. Olive oil will lower bad LDL cholesterol and reduce your risk of developing heart disease.

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons raisins  
1 tablespoon pine nuts, toasted  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
10-ounces of baby spinach, washed and dried  
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon shaved Parmesan cheese  
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet or Dutch oven, over medium-high heat. Add raisins, pine nuts and garlic; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add spinach and cook, stirring, until just wilted, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in vinegar and salt. Serve immediately, sprinkled with Parmesan and pepper.

## **Tabbouleh**

**Serves 4**

Bulgur is a standout in terms of its fiber content, which regulates blood sugar levels and keeps your digestive tract healthy. Bulgur wheat also has one of the highest mineral contents of any food. It is rich in iron, phosphorus, zinc, manganese, selenium and magnesium. Enjoy this dish alongside baked fish or chicken or add chickpeas for a light lunch or dinner.

1 cup water  
1/2 cup bulgur  
1/4 cup lemon juice  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Freshly ground pepper, to taste  
2 cups finely chopped flat-leaf parsley, (about 2 bunches)  
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint  
2 tomatoes, diced  
1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced  
4 scallions, thinly sliced

Combine water and bulgur in a small saucepan. Bring to a full boil, remove from heat, cover and let stand until the water is absorbed and the bulgur is tender, 25 minutes. If any water remains, drain bulgur in a fine-mesh sieve. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool for 15 minutes. In a small bowl, combine lemon juice, oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Add parsley,

mint, tomatoes, cucumber and scallions to the bulgur. Add the dressing and toss. Serve at room temperature or serve cold.

## **Turkey Chili**

**Serves 4-6**

This is a delicious chili that elicits rave reviews from my clients and their families. It is spicy, but you can certainly adjust the heat to your liking. I prefer to use Muir Glen Organic canned tomatoes and Eden organic white beans.

2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped  
8 oz. mushrooms, cleaned and sliced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 fresh jalapeno, seeded and minced  
2 1/2 tbsp. chili powder  
1 tsp. dried oregano  
1/8 tsp. cayenne (use more if you like a really spicy chili)  
1 tsp. sea salt or any other coarse salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
1 lb. ground turkey  
1 can (29 ounces) tomato puree  
1 can (14-ounces) diced tomatoes, drained  
1 can (15-ounces) small organic white beans, rinsed and drained  
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar  
garnish: 1 avocado, diced into bite-sized chunks

In a large pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and bell pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until the onions are translucent and the edges of the peppers are browned, about 8 minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue to cook for about 5 more minutes. Add the garlic, jalapeno, chili powder, oregano, cayenne, salt and pepper. Stir until well blended and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the ground turkey to the pot. Stir to coat with the other ingredients.

Stir in the tomato puree and diced tomatoes. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally until the sauce is thickened, about 20-25 minutes. Stir in the white beans and the balsamic vinegar. Taste and add more salt, pepper, cayenne or balsamic if needed. Garnish with avocado chunks.





Do You  
Know the Signs  
of a Heart  
Attack?

**HEART AND STROKE AWARENESS**

These are the stories, these are the lives . . .



# My Call to Action!

By Shannon Devine



## Five years ago,

I found myself sitting in the Heart Center waiting room at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, NC with my best friend's family & loved ones. Just sitting & waiting for the phone to ring. It was one of the scariest days of my life. Worry and anxiety cannot begin to describe how frightened and shocked I felt on that day, January 17, 2006.

Was this really happening? HOW? WHY? How in the world can my best friend, my college roommate, the person I've shared every personal story, fear, trial, success . . . so many laughs and tears . . . how in the world can this be happening. She's too young and she's perfectly healthy!

I had to come to terms quickly with the fact and harsh reality that just because someone's heart is made of GOLD, doesn't keep it free from heart disease.

That day changed not only Brandi Hoffman's life forever but my own. Talk about a wake-up call! Thank God she noticed the subtle changes in her body that didn't seem "quite right." If she would have continued life as usual, she could have been 1 in 3 . . .

My hope is that you hear my story today. Please take my message and take action. Make it your mission to fight heart disease in

women, women like my best friend, Brandi Hoffman.

Heart disease kills a woman every minute, BUT there's hope. WE CAN do something to stop this. 80% of cardiac events in women may be prevented.

Just imagine if we all make it our personal mission to STOP the #1 killer. The fact that 90% of women have one or more risk factor and research proves women who GO RED are more likely to make healthy choices in their lives on a daily basis.

Listen to these facts about women who have changed their life by GO-ing RED . . . One-third have lost weight, 6 of 10 have changed their diets, and 50% report they have increased their exercise routine.

Minutes are passing . . . heart disease continues to take the lives of our best friends, our mothers, our daughters...there is NO time to spare. Make it your mission today. Tell five women you want them to live! Thank God five years ago my best friend was not part of the statistic 1 in 3 woman die because of heart disease. It remains the leading cause of death in America, taking a half million lives each year.

Heart disease is the #1 killer of women age 20 and over and takes more lives than the next five causes of death combined, including all cancers!

Five years ago was a dark day, but today, my best friend, Brandi is happy, healthy and spends her time educating youth. She loves her job and her students adore her. Her heart is still made of GOLD . . . but today it's healthy and that's what matters most. You can possess all of the gold in the world but it can't buy you time and sadly, it can't bring back loved ones who have lost their lives to this deadly disease.

**Together we can STOP the #1 killer.**

## CALL TO ACTION!

**Tell 5 women you love you want them to live and lead by example.**

- **REPRESENT:** Register for movement at [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org)
- **GO RED:** Wear pin in support
- **SHARE:** Your story, your experience (facebook) speak up nationwide for women's heart health
- **VOLUNTEER:** Find your local affiliate (shared my experience with Carolina Panthers game and Work with Simone)
- **GIVE:** Make a donation
- **CHANGE:** Your lifestyle GO RED heart checkup
- **ADVOCATE:** Be a voice! Tell FIVE today!



## 2011 Fact Sheet

Heart disease is still the No. 1 killer of women, taking the life of 1 in 3 women each year. This means women just like you - mothers, sisters, friends - are dying at the rate of one per minute because they don't know what you know: heart disease kills.

Heart disease has already touched you or someone you love, so help us save a woman's life today. **Make It Your Mission to stop the No. 1 killer.**

### WHY TAKE ACTION?

- Heart disease is the **No. 1 killer of women** age 20 and over, killing approximately one woman every minute.
- More women die of heart disease than the **next four causes of death combined**, including all forms of cancer.
- **1 in 3 American women die of heart disease**, compared to 1 in 30 women that die of breast cancer.
- **Ninety percent** of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease.
- **Eighty percent of cardiac events in women may be prevented** if they make the right choices for their hearts, involving diet, exercise and abstinence from smoking.

### WHY GO RED?

Research shows that women who Go Red are more likely to make healthy choices.

- More than one-third have lost weight.
- Nearly fifty percent have increased their exercise.
- Six out of ten have changed their diets.
- More than forty percent have checked their cholesterol levels.
- One-third have talked with their doctors about developing heart health plans.

### HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This year, Go Red For Women invites women across the country to **Make It Their Mission to fight heart disease.**

- **PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY (February 4, 2011):** Show your support by wearing red on National Wear Red Day to build awareness and inspire action.
- **TELL 5:** Go Red For Women asks you to bring your network into our network. Tell 5 women you want them to live, and we can help stop heart disease in our lifetime.
  - Give 5 women you care about the power to save their lives at [GoRedForWomen.org](http://GoRedForWomen.org).
- **VOLUNTEER:** Contact your local American Heart Association office to see how you can get involved with Go Red For Women.
- **GIVE:** Donate to help fund life-saving research and educational programs that are needed so that our daughters, sisters and mothers have a chance to fight the No.1 killer of women.

# A Stroke of Luck

By Melisa Zwilling

One night in April of 2004, I became one of the nation's six million stroke survivors. I had never given a single minute of consideration to the possibility that I, a young, healthy woman without any known risk factors, could ever suffer a stroke; but I did.

On what was otherwise a typical Friday evening, I was typing on our home computer when I found myself unable to spell even simple words. I developed a sudden, severe headache like I had never experienced before. My husband came to check on me and started asking me questions such as the name of the President, where I lived and where I graduated from college. My answers were far from accurate. Much of what I wanted to say was coming out of my mouth in completely nonsensical, made up words. My husband asked me to do things like touch my nose with each hand and smile. I thought he was trying to be silly. When he declared that he was taking me to the emergency room because he thought I was having a stroke, I realized he was quite serious. I told him I just needed to get some rest but, thank God, he didn't listen.

About 15 minutes later, the time it took to get to the hospital, most of my symptoms had resolved. My husband told the emergency room staff that he thought I was having a stroke so they quickly took me back for an exam. After a few minor tests the emergency room physician came in and announced that I was having a migraine and should go home and rest. Although I certainly didn't think I was having a stroke, the attorney/advocate in me didn't accept that it was a migraine. I told the doctor that I had never previously experienced a migraine and wasn't really convinced that I was then.

After a brief period of time, he called a neurologist for a consultation. I was admitted to the hospital and spent the next four days undergoing more tests than I could count. At the end of all of the tests, my neurologist said that I had suffered a TIA, or a "transient ischemic attack." A TIA is a "warning" stroke which does not last long enough to cause permanent damage. I was absolutely stunned, but incredibly thankful, that I did not simply accept the initial misdiagnosis that is so common for women. Although about the same number of women as men have strokes, more women die as a result of them. Tragically, part of the reason for that disparity is misdiagnosis.

My experience with having a TIA was eye-opening, to say the least. I am a well-educated woman yet, in 2004, I could not have named even one warning sign for a stroke. I would never have sought medical treatment but for my husband's insistence. Like me, countless other women who are busy being mothers, wives, daughters, employees/employers and so much more never consider the possibilities when it comes to heart disease and stroke. The fact is, though, that heart disease is our nation's number one killer of



women. Stroke is our nation's third leading killer of women. Ninety percent of women have at least one risk factor for heart disease or stroke. Think about it; chances are that you are among that ninety percent. The most encouraging fact, however, is that 80 percent of all heart attacks and strokes in women can be prevented!

In many cases, prevention is as simple as learning the risk factors and warning signs and making small lifestyle adjustments. Women must eat healthy, exercise, know their cholesterol and blood pressure numbers, quit smoking, etc. Above all, women **MUST** listen to their bodies. Most women will spend their last ounce of energy taking care of their children, husband, parents, friends . . . everyone but themselves. The hard truth is that, unless women become more informed and make those lifestyle adjustments, the statistics will not change. We will continue to lose lives unnecessarily.

After my TIA, I became an active volunteer for the American Heart and American Stroke Associations. I also became involved in pageants to reach a larger audience with my message and I'm currently Mrs. Southeast International, 2011. It has been my mission and my passion over the past several years to educate women about strokes and heart disease and to advocate for passage of legislation certain to reduce the number of heart disease and stroke victims. I hope you will join in my efforts to save lives. Please take a moment to learn the risk factors and warning signs for heart attacks and strokes, listen to your body when it is trying to tell you something and encourage everyone you know to do the same.





**AGE OF STROKE: 23**

**CAUSE: Stress**

**SIDE EFFECTS:**

Loss of feeling for 6 weeks on half of my body, from my face to my toes.

**P.S.** I was 6 months pregnant with my son, and raising my 18 month old daughter.

**IMPACT ON MY SON:**

Fetal Distress during stroke; relived during delivery that contributed to him breeching and umbilical cord suffocation. Thankfully, Chris was revived; he's 21 years old today.

**IMPACT ON MY DAUGHTER:**

What if I lose my mom? I'm here today to share how proud I am of her as an athlete.

**MESSAGE: You deserve a happy life!**

Respect YOU by surrounding yourself with people that add to your life consistently; reduce your stress through exercising, eating healthier; do what's required to believe and achieve your dreams; give back.

**Your life may not be the only one that depends on your happy, healthy heart.**

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Mrs. Southwest Texas 2011



# Taking Wellness to Heart

By Sarah Cronk

## This Valentine's Day, Laine Berry is

ending heartbreak one woman at a time, literally. In 2000, Laine experienced a family health crisis that would change her perspective on heart health forever. "I am very blessed to have a very best friend who is also my mother. When she was only 45, she began having strange symptoms which included fatigue, migraine headaches, sleeplessness and unexplained anxiety." After several diagnostic tests, Laine's mother discovered that she had three blockages of more than 90% in three of her major arteries, one of which was in her LAD, known as "the widow-maker" in men. She underwent an emergency triple bypass procedure.

Today, Laine's mother is still happy and healthy, "She has been blessed with 11 amazing years, and we hope for many more," Laine expressed. Laine's heart went out to the women who were not as fortunate as her mother. She has used her experience to launch a national organization that promotes and raises awareness about women's heart health, named Taking Wellness to Heart. "At the time there were absolutely no heart health awareness programs that focused totally on women, and their unique needs. Go Red for Women was still a few years away, and someone needed to take up the challenge of helping women be their own advocates."

And boy, did Laine accept that challenge. In 2008 she won the highly prestigious Mrs. International Pageant, which showcases and rewards the accomplishments of married women. "Mrs. International is a pageant system that strongly stresses commitment to platform and community service. During your year, you are given incredible support through the organization to promote a cause that is close to your heart." Laine's cause was a little closer than most. Through Mrs. International she was able to travel 50,000 miles across the country speaking on behalf of the American Heart Association, educating women every step of the way. "Heart disease is the nation's number one killer of women, and its primarily preventable! Diet and exercise aren't just good for your waistline; they are excellent for your heart. Your heart is a muscle—the most important muscle in your body to maintain! For ten years spreading this message has been my mission, and will continue to be until I no longer have breath to preach it!"

Through lobbying on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, being a key note speaker at GO Red luncheons across the nation, and hosting the national GO Red casting call in NYC, Laine has become the premier spokeswoman for women's heart health in the United States. But, she enjoys her down time as well: "My precious hubby and I will celebrate fifteen years of marriage this summer, and my favorite thing to do is spend time with him! We love to travel, but I'm equally happy spending time at home curled up with our fur-babies."

Want to support Taking Wellness to Heart? Here's how: "The most important thing to do is to support the message. Each women needs to take the responsibility to know her own body and be her own advocate, but also, be an advocate for the women around her. If each woman educated herself about risk and prevention, and she tells one woman, and that woman tells one woman we really can begin to make huge strides in the fight against heart disease."



Laine Berry

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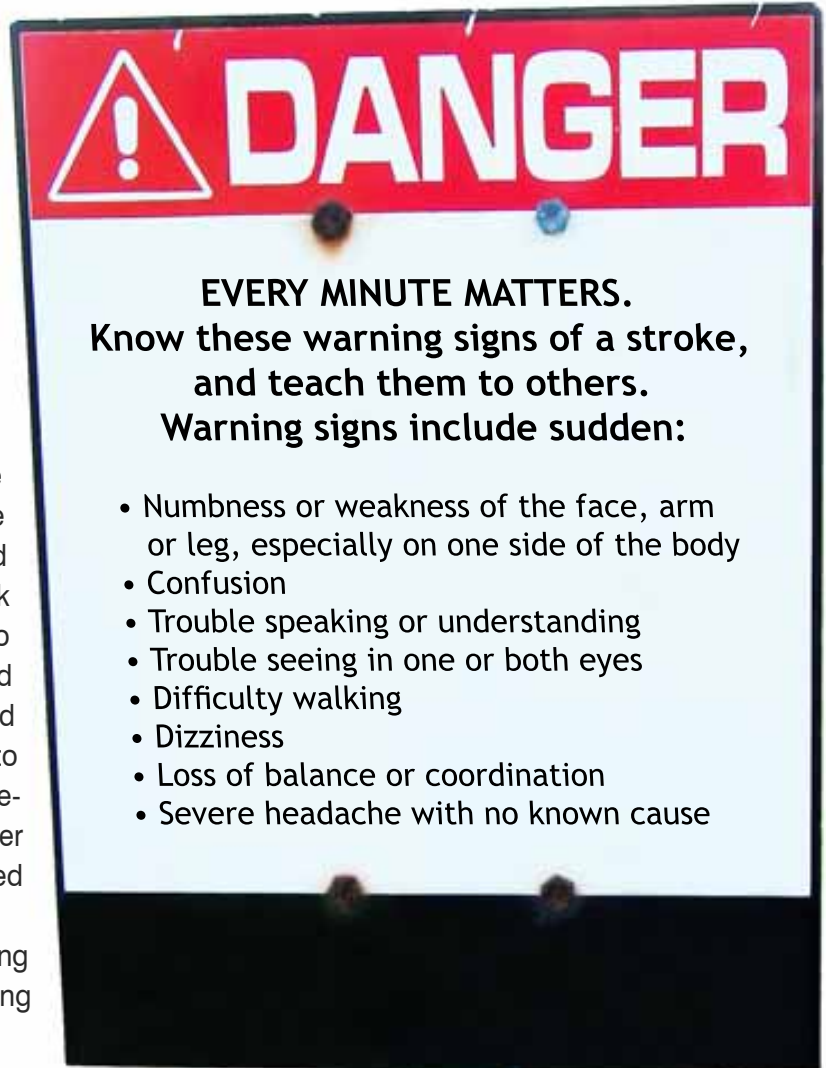
*Just in case... Be informed... Know the signs...  
You might save the life of someone you love...*

By Katie Eastman

It was early afternoon and I was having one of those crazy days. I was running around, trying to get six things done at once. My mom, who was living in a nearby long term care facility was supposed to be coming over to babysit later that evening. I had planned on calling her to check in after I completed my "to-do" list, but something told me to call her sooner.

It's difficult to describe, but it was as if some voice inside of me was whispering in my ear, telling me to call right away. Not one to ignore these kinds of messages, I picked up the phone, unsure as to why. My mother picked up the phone and, before she could speak, I heard something crash and she dropped the phone. Alarmed, I called out to her and after what seemed like an eternity, she came back on the phone. With slurred speech, she managed to say she didn't feel well. I immediately remembered one of the signs of stroke is slurred speech. I told her to sit tight; that she was sick and I needed to call the nurse. Within 25 minutes my mother was being treated by a specialty team at the hospital. Other than some short term memory loss, she recovered almost fully after two weeks in a rehab hospital.

A local TV station had done a series on identifying signs of stroke and heart attack and I remember watching it . . . just in case . . .



**In the past, doctors couldn't do much to help stroke victims. That's not true today. Now stroke doesn't have to lead to disability or death. The key is to recognize a stroke and get to the hospital immediately. The clot-dissolving drug tPA (tissue plasminogen activator) can reduce long-term disability if it's given within three hours after an ischemic stroke starts. (Ischemic strokes are caused by clots and are by far the most common type of stroke.)**

**Unfortunately, tPA isn't used as often as it could be because many people don't seek care quickly. Don't you make that mistake. If you or someone near you has the warning signs of a stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately.**





## Close to My Heart

By Elizabeth Hamilton

My own heart has stopped, burned, ached, broken, ripped, torn, felt, beat, loved, but I thank my lucky stars that to date it has never attacked. In fact, I've led a life of not paying too much attention to my own heart health until these past 11 years of my life (from age 30-41) and particularly the last six years, when my dad had strokes as the result of diabetes and heart issues.

Like I said, my dad, at age 60, suffered one stroke. It was due to undiagnosed atrial fibrillation, better understood as an irregular heartbeat. My dad had suffered three heart attacks that he had never complained about, nor reported to a doctor. Atrial fibrillation is a leading cause of clots that head to the brain and cause strokes.

My mom, Carolyn Hamilton says, "Dad was given too much Coumadin which caused his stroke site to bleed, leading to three brain surgeries. A fourth surgery re-attached his cranium to his skull. The brain surgery had caused his brain to swell. They removed part of his cranium and attached him to a 'brain drain,' which is a tube holding the excess brain fluid while monitoring the brain pressure. We watched it by the hour to make certain it didn't go over 22. He was kept in an extremely cold room, on a bed of ice, for the first several days of his coma. He would not awaken from his coma. After reviewing Dad's records, Doctor Rick Guarino believed that an unusual side-effect to valproic acid was the problem, and had his meds changed. Dad began to come to."

He was in therapy at the University of Minnesota, where the goal is to get you off the trach, and the removal of the feeding tube. The goal is to sit up for 30 seconds. From there, he was transferred to Sister Kenny at Abbott. They were wonderful.

When we went to Abbott, we were so used to seeing Dad lying down that it felt weird to see him even sitting up in a wheel chair. We remember the therapist at Sister Kenny who told us that Dad would walk out of there. We thought it could never happen.

My mom says, "After months of rehab he did walk out. He had worked so hard and so diligently that he overcame most of the hurdles. They had said he would never be able to do those things again. He could swallow, speak, understand us, and remember the family and its history, and how much he loved me. People had informed me that I may get him back, but that he would never remember me or his children and grandkids. I think it is important to tell the part of this story, where everyone told us that he was brain dead. The neurologist wrangled with me daily to shut off his machines. We knew he was still in there."

Mom continues, "I think one of the most unbelievable parts of this story is that I had you there. You, who almost never left my side throughout this ordeal, I think it is a real tribute to your husband that he just stepped in and took care of your four children while you were with us, and supported us through the financial ordeal that it caused. I will never forget it."

And let me tell you, seeing my father (coolest dad in the world), sick in the hospital like that was heart-wrenching. Knowing that his heart had thrown a clot which had led to a stroke, which led to more and brain surgeries and one very long coma, was devastating. This led to months in rehab centers, and night after night of seeing him with what I call the "Darth Vader" machine – "The Vent." I still have the worst nightmares from that sound.

It appears everyone you know has a story of someone – somewhere, connected to them who have been affected by heart disease, and it appears the problems are getting worse, not better. So I brought in the ultimate expert on the situation, and the man who helped save my dad's life: Dr. Rick Guarino (aka my husband's cousin). Dr. Guarino is now in charge of Medical Affairs, SVP, Chief Medical Officer at Nash General Hospital in North Carolina, in addition to being a Board Certified neurologist. He has led a lifetime of helping people with strokes, and has collaborated with Dr. Denise Guiffrida, of Houston, Texas, to answer the following questions:

**Is there anything we can do to prevent a heart attack and or stroke?**

Yes, mainly treat all risk factors with advice from your primary care doctor. High blood pressure is the most important thing to pay attention to, but diabetes, smoking, high cholesterol, and obesity - all are risks. If the doc says take medicine, take it. Next, learn the signs of stroke, and if they occur, seek medical attention immediately. Also, don't forget to exercise, after consulting with the doc.

**What are the signs in women of a stroke/heart attack?**

The signs of stroke depend on where in the brain circulation a clot lodges. Numbness, weakness, slurred speech, loss of vision are most common and are the same for all patients. In women specifically, a heart attack is more often associated with less common symptoms of pain in the jaw or, in fact, silent.

**Are heart attacks and stroke mostly fatal?**

No, most are not fatal, and often there are warning symptoms before a major event.

**Does butter really clog arteries?**

Diet can influence cholesterol and triglyceride levels and so, yes, in some people more than others, butter can lead to higher cholesterol levels, which can lead to clogging of the arteries.

**Is there any truth to the impact of birth control pills, smoking and so forth; or what other habits make you more likely to have heart issues?**

Yes, Birth Control Pills, especially in conjunction with smoking, are known to be associated with an increased risk of clot formation and, hence, heart attack and stroke. Bad habits, like certain drugs and too much alcohol, can also increase the risk profile.

**What can you do to check up on your health? Do you have to have a stress test each year?**

A physical exam with blood tests and a risk profile or wellness check is the best thing. Diet and exercise as recommended by your doc, especially if there is a family history, is the way to reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack. A stress test is indicated in certain people, but unless there are serious risks, I do not think it is necessary every year.

**What is blood pressure, and what is considered normal, low, high, etc.?**

Good question and it seems to be a moving target. In my prime, 140 mm Hg on the top, or systolic; and 90 on the bottom, or diastolic, was considered the upper limit of normal. The systolic pressure is the peak pressure on the arteries when the heart pumps the blood out and the diastolic is the residual pressure in between heart beats. Low blood pressure depends on if there are symptoms of weakness and lightheadedness. A neurologist will worry if the blood pressure runs 40 points above a patient's known normal range.

**Are people to blame for their own heart attacks because of their bad health habits, such as poor eating, smoking, etc.?**

Oooh, tough question. We can't help the genes we are born with that might put us at risk, but we can try to control the risk factors mentioned above. Then there is our response to stress, which is always there, but can be worked on in a constructive way.

Thank You, Dr. Rosario Guarino, Nash General Hospital, Neurology, Chief Medical Officer

(In memory of Robbin Barr and her parents  
Barbara Jahns and Robert Jahns.)

## PREVENTION

Certain types of heart disease, such as heart defects, can't be prevented.

However, you can help prevent many other types of heart disease by making the same lifestyle changes that can improve your heart disease, such as:

- \* Quit smoking
- \* Control other health conditions, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes
- \* Exercise at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week
- \* Eat a diet that's low in salt and saturated fat
- \* Maintain a healthy weight
- \* Reduce and manage stress
- \* Practice good hygiene

# Turning Point

By Lisa Madore

**April 10, 2007. As I was sitting at work** in my office, my phone rang. I picked up the receiver as I continued working. A smile came across my face as I heard the recording on my call screening say “dad.” I forgot about work as I hit “1” to accept the call and happily said “Hi Daddy!” My dad’s voice sounded odd to me as he said hello back, and I immediately knew something was not quite right. I asked him what was wrong and his reply was a simple, “Everything is ok, but I am at the emergency room with your mom.” Of course I asked what was wrong and his reply was simply that they thought she was having a heart attack that came on the night before while she was performing CPR on an individual during an ambulance run. When I asked him if he wanted me there, he hesitated and said only if I wanted to. I had never heard my dad sound like this. I could tell he was scared, and I asked again if he wanted me to come to the hospital. This time, his reply was a barely audible, but solid “yes.” That was all it took. I said I’d be there in ten minutes, shut my computer off, grabbed my coat and bag, and hurried out of my office. I announced to my staff that my dad just called and my mother was in the hospital and I would check in with them later – and off I went.

On the brief drive to the hospital all I could think of was that my Mom was too young for a heart attack. She was only 54 years old. She was ok – it was my Dad that we’d been worried about all this time. He had been having some concerns regarding his heart, and had an appointment set up to wear a monitor. I wondered whether I should call my husband, and decided to wait until I found out more information before calling him. All these thoughts raced through my mind as I fought to keep from putting the gas pedal to the floor.

I pulled into the parking lot and ran into the ER. Dad met me in the waiting room, and took me back to see my mom. I visited with her for a brief time, and she tried to tell us that it was nothing – she just wanted to go home. Dad and I stepped out to talk, and I asked where my sister was. He told me he hadn’t called anyone yet. I was his first call, and he wanted me to call everyone for him so he could stay with mom. As I made the calls to my husband, sister, and other family members, the doctor spoke with my dad about my mom’s condition. They decided that she was to be transferred to Bangor, where they are better equipped to deal with heart attacks.

Evidently, when she first felt the pains, she thought she had just pulled muscles from the exertion of the heart compressions she had been performing, ironically, while trying to save the life of a heart attack victim (both my father and mother are EMTs). The next morning, she went to work as usual, to the medical office where she is a billing clerk. She didn’t tell them everything that had happened, and they just sent her home to go see her primary care physician. She drove herself to her own doctor, and, once again, didn’t reveal all her symptoms to the Physician’s Assistant. The PA did tell her she should probably go to the hospital. Next, she drove herself to where

my dad worked, and yet again, did not give all her symptoms to him, either. On the way to the emergency room, she told my dad a little more about her symptoms. That is when he realized that she had been having a heart attack.

She was transferred to EMMC, and was there for close to four weeks before finally coming home. Tests were run to see how much damage was done to her heart, and to determine the best plan of action to treat her condition. There was concern as to whether or not she could survive surgery.

Every other day, I would leave work early and drive to Bangor to visit her. Every weekend I went to my parents’ house to clean, shop for groceries, and brought dad to visit mom. I had never seen my father so helpless. He has always been my pillar of strength and consistency; I had never seen him unnerved, not even at my grandmother’s funeral.

Finally, on April 23, 2007, the doctor performed a quadruple bypass. I had been full of positive energy and strength for my dad throughout all these weeks, but when I walked into her hospital room that day, and saw my mother lying in the hospital bed, I lost all of that strength. The wind was literally knocked out of me by the sight of her. Her skin was pasty white, her jaw slack, breathing tubes were in her throat, and she looked as though her life had left her. It didn’t seem right. The day before, when I had visited her, she had been lively and optimistic. And now – now she looked barely alive. Tears welled in my eyes. I felt dizzy – I couldn’t catch my breath. I stumbled, and dad and the nurse were at my side in one quick stride. My dad helped me to a chair as the nurse got me a cold cloth. She told me to put my head between my legs and take deep breaths. All these weeks of being strong, and now my strength had left me. What was I going to do if my Mom didn’t wake up?

Fortunately, I didn’t have to find out the answer to that question. My mom is a fighter and on April 27, 2007, my mom was discharged. Her recovery was long one, and she still has issues with the leg that they took the vein from to do her bypass. She still struggles with her health, with eating right, and most importantly, with being active. My dad’s tests came back fine, and his issues are controlled with medicine. My parents are only turning 60 and 58 this year, and to me, they are far too young to have these medical issues. They are learning that they need to take better care of their health – if not for them, then for my sister and I, and our children.

This scare inspired me to have tests run on myself and I learned that I, too, have the genetic make up for heart disease. This knowledge pushes me to take excellent care of myself. I take Omega Three fish oil vitamins, use flax seed in a lot of my baking and cooking, and work out on a regular basis. I want to know that I have done all I can do within my control to prevent having to go through what my mother went through, and I don’t ever want my family to watch on helplessly, feeling the way my dad and I felt watching my mom those horrific weeks.



# A Second Chance

By Susan Tafini

In the fall of 2007, I suffered a heart attack at the age of 57. I still remember the date: October 11. I was working in my flower beds when I suddenly felt hot, cold, nauseated. It felt like an elephant was crushing my chest. I think I had an Angel whispering in my ear to seek help. My husband took me to our family doctor. The doctor asked me a few questions and stated that I had the symptoms of a heart attack. He called the rescue squad to take me to the hospital where my pulse was erratic and I was scheduled for a stent after an hour or two.

Two arteries were clogged – one of them was 99% clogged, with a blood clot. It was amazing how quickly I felt relief after the first stent was placed in my artery. A few days in the hospital, and a few tests later, it was revealed that I had a minor heart attack. My friends and family were shocked that I would have a heart attack as I was very active, and not too overweight. The doctor informed me that it was likely my family history that contributed to this. My father died at the age of 38 with hardening of the arteries. Two weeks later, I received the second stent in an artery that was 85% blocked.

At that point, I was told that I needed to go to rehab therapy. The therapy nurses instructed me that exercise was to be my new best friend. I had always tried to exercise; in fact the Saturday before the heart attack, I had taken a four mile walk. In classes that I took, I learned how to eat better. Cutting back on fat and sodium, and making life style changes were necessary if I wanted to reduce my chances of having another heart attack. I needed to take all the recommendations and incorporate them into my daily life.

I made a conscientious decision: I wanted to make my life better and enjoy the second chance I had been given. I was told I needed to exercise at least thirty minutes, six days a week, preferably seven times. I needed to keep my fat intake to 56 grams a day and under 2000 grams of sodium. I bought myself a good pair of walking shoes and a pedometer to record my progress. I walked an hour most days, and on the bad weather days, I would walk at a mall in our area.

Walking made me feel better, and I liked the fact my waist line was shrinking. If I didn't exercise first thing in the morning, I just wouldn't take the time to do it. Every day I would drag out my walking shoes and start my day walking. I am now on my second pair of walking shoes. Watching my diet, walking, exercising, I began to lose weight – and I felt better. I still take the medicines that were prescribed for me to insure I do not have another heart attack.



Nearly two years ago I began going to Jazzercise class. It spiced up my exercise routine. Jazzercise teaches aerobics, strength training and stretching while moving to great music. I wear a Pulsar watch which monitors my heart rate, calories burned and time in my zone. I have discovered that with an hour of exercise I will be in my zone for 40-50 minutes. At least three times a week, I try to go, and sometimes five times, if it is offered at the location I visit. When I don't have time to go to jazzercise, I try to walk or to do some other type of exercise. Exercising is a great way to start my day – I enjoy it. It is now an important part of my routine.

In my diet today, I try to limit my red meat and bread. I eat more chicken and very seldom have fried foods. I make sure to eat more fruits and vegetables. Counting calories is just too difficult for me. Instead, I limit the amount of those calorie rich foods. I have found that I can live within these boundaries and still enjoy life.

Living with heart disease doesn't have to be a prison sentence. It's a sentence where you can enjoy all the days of your life. Every day, I thank God for this chance to enjoy life again. I have many blessings with my family, and am surrounded by my grandchildren, sharing in their lives. Adopting a healthy life style may be the hardest thing you can do—but it is worth it.



**During a heart check up, your doctor takes a careful look at your “numbers,”** including your cholesterol and triglyceride levels, your blood pressure and more. Knowing your numbers is an important part of keeping your heart-healthy. It can help you and your doctor know your risks and mark the progress you’re making toward a healthier you.

To get a quick overview of numbers you need to know and the goals you need to reach, start by using the following chart. If you choose, you can even post it on your refrigerator as a reminder to love your heart.

Then read on to learn the steps you can take to reduce your risk for heart disease. Once you know a few key facts about your numbers, you’ll be on your way to mapping out a heart-healthy lifestyle for you and your loved ones.

Factor	Goal	
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL	
LDL ("Bad") Cholesterol	LDL cholesterol goals vary.	
	Less than 100 mg/dL	Optimal
	100 to 129 mg/dL	Near Optimal/Above Optimal
	130 to 159 mg/dL	Borderline High
	160 to 189 mg/dL	High
	190 mg/dL and above	Very High
HDL ("Good") Cholesterol	50 mg/dL or higher	
Triglycerides	<150 mg/dL	
Blood Pressure	<120/80 mmHg	
Fasting Glucose	<100 mg/dL	
Body Mass Index (BMI)	<25 Kg/m²	
Waist Circumference	<35 inches	
Exercise	Minimum of 30 minutes most days, if not all days of the week	

\* "<" means "less than"

## **Keep Your Numbers in Check**

The first step to a healthy heart is learning the simple things you can do every day. By getting involved in fun physical activities and enjoying nutritious meals, you can help reduce your risk of heart disease. But don't do it for the "numbers," do it for you!

## **Get Physical**

One of the best ways to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease is to start getting regular, moderate exercise, at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. Of course, if it's been a while since you've been physically active, the hardest part is just getting started.

## **Make Good Food Choices**

Healthy food habits can help you reduce three risk factors for heart attack and stroke, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and excess body weight.

### **Set the stage for success by:**

- Eating a balanced diet by following Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations from the American Heart Association
- Eating foods low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- Drink delicious, unsweetened 100% fruit juice instead of soda.
- Enjoying a large glass of ice water, hot tea or another calorie-free beverage. Garnish with a twist of lemon or lime
- Dividing the extra portions of recipes into containers to eat throughout the rest of the week.
- Eating with other people. You'll eat less than if you eat alone.
- Knowing your snack "triggers" and planning ahead. Fight the urge for high calorie/high-saturated-fat and trans fat foods, by grabbing pre-cut carrots, celery and other raw vegetables when you're on the run.
- Shop for heart-healthy foods, certified by the American Heart Association

## **Quit Smoking**

Smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. If you smoke cigarettes (or cigars), you have a higher risk of illness and death from heart attack, stroke and other diseases. These include lung, mouth and throat cancers; chronic lung diseases and infections; congestive heart failure; and peripheral vascular disease (in the legs and arms). What's more, constant exposure to other people's tobacco smoke increases your risk, even if you don't smoke. The good news is that when you stop smoking, no matter how long or how much you've smoked, your risk of heart disease and stroke starts to drop. It's cut in half after one year without smoking, then continues to decline until it's as low as a nonsmoker's risk. So if you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, love your heart and quit today.

**Need more motivation? Visit these American Heart Association resources for help quitting smoking.**





# Hidden Dangers

By Donna DeMichael

I always thought that breast cancer would get me. My mom died at the age of 52 from it. I was in pretty good shape: I did a “power walk” just about every weekday morning; I played tennis four or five days each week; though I always want to lose a few more pounds I wasn’t obese; although I ate out a lot, I avoided fried and fatty food. So in July 2010, when I had pressure in my jaw while I was walking and playing tennis, heart disease didn’t cross my mind. This jaw pressure was not painful enough to stop me from exercising. It was not a shooting pain. It was merely pressure where the jaw meets the skull. Still, after googling “jaw pain upon exertion,” I called a cardiologist. The EKG and office visit seemed to confirm my thoughts that the jaw pressure was sinus-related, at least that is what I thought.

A stress test was scheduled for four weeks later. In the meantime, I continued to play tennis and do the morning walk. On three occasions I felt a slight squeezing in the chest area . . . right in the middle, about the size of a plum. Each time I slowed down a bit and the squeezing feeling went away.

Several weeks later I had the stress test. My walk on the treadmill was nothing compared to the training for a half marathon that I had just completed. The echocardiogram looked normal, too. My life changed, though, when I was told that there was “coronary involvement” with the jaw pain. The doctor explained how a heart catheterization worked, and the options for treatment. If there was a blockage (and I keyed in on the “if”), he hoped to insert a stent. I have to admit that when he said “coronary bypass” as another option, my palms got sweaty and I was light-headed. Not me! I was only 51! I exercised and ate right! The heart cath was scheduled for two days later.

Hospitals are not my favorite places, and having to wait for the procedure would put strain on any heart. In my head, I was

convinced that the jaw pressure was sinus-related, and the stress test was a false positive. However, when I was in recovery, I heard them asking for a room for me, indicating that I would be admitted to the hospital, and that a stent had been inserted. As I woke up more I was told that I had a 95% blockage in the left anterior descending coronary artery. Thankfully, there was no damage to the heart itself and the stent successfully “fixed” the blockage.

I was released from the hospital the next day, with a pile of pamphlets and information about coronary artery disease. I read every single thing they gave me, plus I read all I could on various websites like the American Heart Association. Now I realize the mistakes I made when eating. Though I avoided fatty and fried foods, most restaurant meals are very high in sodium and there are hidden fats. Even salads and grilled chicken can be bad for you! Check the websites of your favorite restaurants to see what I mean.

The same is true of many canned and processed foods. Reading labels is the key. And, because of the connection between diabetes and heart disease (and after having been told that I have an impaired fasting blood glucose), I am cutting out refined sugar and refined flour and watching carbohydrates. In addition, I try to eat vegetables and fruits as well as whole grains, and the right oils.

Stress is related to coronary health and diabetes. I am the mom of a teenage daughter, and I work for the state in the complaint division of a small agency. Stress seems unavoidable. However, I am learning to handle the stress that comes my way. Exercise is a big part of that.

It has been just over five months since the stent was inserted. My follow-up stress test looked normal. I have lost some weight and I feel great! I plan to stay on this course and hope to have a stent-free future!



**Visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org)  
for more information about heart awareness.**

# GREAT RELATIONSHIPS = GOOD HEALTH

## Here are some tips to improve interactions with loved ones:

**SHARE MORE.** Be open and honest about what is really going on in your life. This will help others relate to you better and in turn, open up to you.

**MAKE TIME TO TALK.** Agree to a time to chat each day. Consider setting a time limit, especially for couples in relationships where one person talks more than the other. It helps the quiet person speak up and the chatty one focus on what's really worth saying.

**GO OUTSIDE TOGETHER.** Being outdoors relieves stress and makes it easier to connect. There's also less need to manage it before it becomes a problem.

**DISCUSS FINANCES.** Money is one of the most divisive issues in a relationship. Agree it is a priority and to discuss it "CALMLY" and decide how to manage it before it becomes a problem.

**TURN OFF THE COMPUTER.** And the i-Phone, TV, and videogames. Too many families spend evenings with their separate electronic devices. Try talking without a screen in front of you.

**MAKE NEW FRIENDS.** Research shows that high-quality relationships are important. Add to your network by reaching out to someone you'd like to know better.

For years experts have been telling us how important social bonds are to our overall well-being, affecting everything from how our brains process information to how our bodies respond to stress. It's been said that people with strong connections to others may live longer lives. And there is certainly no shortage of interest in our need to interact - just look at the success of social networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter to name a few. The quality of our relationships is possibly the single biggest factor affecting our happiness. So, with such importance placed on them, wouldn't you think it might be worth some added piece of mind to work a little harder to improve or revive those relationships that have either become a bit of a struggle, or maybe not tended to as well as is perhaps deserved? At the same time you might also want to think, too, about forging some healthy new relationships.

Unfortunately, sometimes it takes going through hardship to wake us up and help us realize that life is too short to sit by and do nothing. Coincidentally, it can often be the case that the people you need to reach out to may also be feeling disconnected. Too frequently, each person is waiting for the other to make the first move. After a long time of not connecting, you may even forget what it was that separated you in the first place.

Let me share a true story with you that I feel really brings this point into sharp focus. A middle aged man who had previously enjoyed financial success suddenly lost a good friend to ovarian cancer. Several months later both his father and father-in-law died. His income also fell sharply due to economic times. Meanwhile, his retirement account plummeted 60% and he lost \$500,000 selling an investment property in a short sale. These events were more than a wake up call. They were overwhelmingly devastating and he was not emotionally prepared to handle everything that happened.

He had learned the hard way, finally admitting what we all have heard before, that we do not appreciate someone or something until it is too late. His response to this harsh wakeup was to focus more on his family and to communicate and thereby connect with them more often. He admitted that in the past he was a control freak, and needed to be right all the time. He was critical of those who didn't live up to his standards. As a result he often argued with his wife and two twenty-something children.

He began to understand how much he really loved each one of his family and how he needed to express his caring and feel it in return. So he has worked very hard to change. He has opened up and shared stories about his life growing up and has even cried in front of them - a vulnerability he would have never allowed anyone to see before. His family has accepted his change with open arms, and they feel he is a real person now, and someone with whom they can share things. Making changes and accepting responsibility for our relationships is a big jump towards feeling healthier.

Mending and building relationships is more important than you can even begin to imagine. None of us wish to leave this world with regrets. The time to mend the fence is now... if you let time slip by, it is too late to do anything when you show up for the wake. And creating new associations is both a proactive and time sensitive enterprise. Seize these positive opportunities. Our goal should be to live our lives with the least amount of regret as possible. Doing so brings us needed relief, energy and happiness with peace of mind for ourselves and others.



Shea Vaughn is an accomplished fitness instructor, choreographer, personal trainer of athletes and celebrities, a model and a successful business woman. Her journey represents a lifetime of study and practical experience in fitness combined with a passion for health and well-being. Ms. Vaughn is also the founder of SheaNetics®, a new East-meets-West exercise and lifestyle practice that helps you make positive and lasting mind-body changes. Visit [www.SheaNetics.com](http://www.SheaNetics.com) for more information on the SheaNetics lifestyle concept. The website provides a video introduction to SheaNetics and its Five Living Principles of Well-Being, and offers samples of the workouts in addition to student testimonials, physician endorsements, and a sign-up for the SheaNetics newsletter coming soon.

# Home Is Where the Heart Is



If home is where the heart is, why do so many people neglect their heart, both physically and spiritually? Is your heart suffering due to a lack of exercise or to the foods you eat? Maybe your heart is bogged down with negative emotions (anger, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, fear or resentment). In either case, the heart becomes cluttered with an emotional filth that leaves no room for physical cleanliness. Would you enjoy living in a home that is dirty, cluttered, dangerous, and gloomy? I imagine most would answer that question with an emphatic “No!” Why, then, would anyone live with a heart condition that is equally harmful and depressing?

Your heart is the central operating unit for the entire body, pumping blood, oxygen, and nutrients to every cell. It’s the home base, if you will, from which the entire body receives its commands, including the mind and its ability to think. Phrases such as, “Home is where the heart is,” “Home sweet home,” “A man after His own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14), even “homesick” are reminders of where we long to be . . .HOME! If you are out of shape and depressed, however, do you stuff your home and your heart with things that never fill the hole left by what you are truly seeking? If we long to be home and our heart is the “home” from which we operate to our fullest potential (when we’re healthy), we should honor that home – clean it, purify it, fuel it, and exercise it to offer maximum benefits. The rewards are even far greater than what the heart offers physically. The heart is the home to a healthy mind, body, and spirit.

The first step in clearing the filth that has entered your heart (emotionally or physically) is to change the way you think. When you recognize and accept that you are worth the effort it takes to have a clean and healthy heart, you are ready to put the following necessary steps into action:

**Emotional Triggers:** Address them! Whether your triggers concern past or present issues, decide to let go and release the negative thoughts, feelings and actions that go along with that emotion. Ask yourself: Does my attitude serve me or those around me? You may be hanging onto anger and resentment even though the person against whom the

emotions are directed has been set free (because she/he did not allow emotions to run her life). Do you find yourself stuffing your emotions with food, alcohol, drugs, lust or shopping, to name a few? If so, consider what your future may look like five years from now if you continue down that path.

**Action Plan:** Put a specific plan in place for every day. Journal your eating, exercise, feelings and actions. Such accountability will develop into a daily pattern or habit. Hiring a coach or checking in with a close friend also works wonders to keep you accountable.

**Measure:** Take time each week to check in and measure your results. There is no greater motivator than seeing the progression that leads to one’s goals.

**Reward:** When positive results are clearly shown, a healthy reward is key to encouraging you to continue reaching new and perhaps even greater goals.

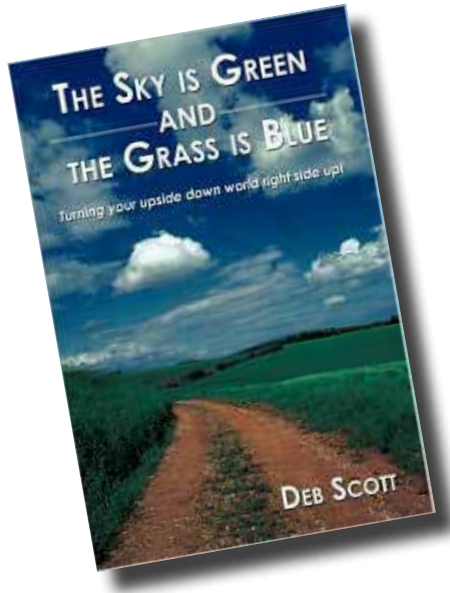
Once you get to the “heart of the matter,” you will appreciate that home indeed is where the heart is – and that taking care of your heart is critical for you and for those who love you most.



WENDIE PETT is a nationally renowned fitness expert and coach, mother, speaker, author and creator of the Visibly Fit™ exercise program. Her many Visibly Fit™ instructional DVDs teach wellness maximization through the balance of mind, body, and spirit as well how to use your body as your gym. To learn more about Wendie and her program visit – [www.wendiepett.com](http://www.wendiepett.com) and [www.wakeupwithwendiepett.com](http://www.wakeupwithwendiepett.com).



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**You've heard it before.** Doctors tell you to maintain a "healthy heart" to keep a healthy body. Your relationship has gone sour, and you talk to your family and friends about your "broken heart." Therapists speak of your "heavy heart" catalyzing depression, and exercise trainers emphasize you won't achieve your targeted weight until you perform aerobic exercise at your "target heart rate." Even the Bible tells us to "guard your heart with the closest custody, for in it are the sources of your life." Yes, indeed, the heart is the universal symbol that speaks love in any language.

It would appear that the answers you most desire in your head can only be discovered through the spiritual journey into your heart.

Heartache can be one of sadness or joy, but make no mistake, it can never be ignored. When you feel that tug in your heart – know in your head that it is a powerful prompt, and a call for you to take some immediate action.

If you have recently lost a loved one, you know what heartache does to your entire body in the grieving process. The sadness seems to embed itself into each blood cell pumping throughout your veins. Be gentle with yourself, for this is your call to heartfelt peace.

The freshness of a new found love will wrap your heart in an ache of euphoria – to the point you can't think of anything else but your beloved. Your mind will wander into daydreams of pleasant reminders with the one you love, automatically recycling the happiness of unending blissful joy. Yes, your love ache can quickly become an addiction which sweeps you down the aisle of "I do – until death do us part."

When you pray or meditate, you can only experience transformation through prayer from the heart. You must experience the words you speak, the affirmations you visualize, in order to generate any success in your ultimate transformation. Words are just empty vessels without value if you don't pour authenticity into the equation.

To be truly alive requires a functioning heart. You can't take a breath without your heart. Your heart is the center of your being, the ultimate indicator of being human. Your heart is the greatest gift you can ever give to another human being, and the most powerful motivator in achieving your dream.

This month, as you focus on tangible ways to improve the clinical health of your heart, don't forget to incorporate creative ways to hear the messages your heartbeats speak to you.

A heart filled with love and forgiveness is a medicine without any side effects, and a reliable cure for challenges that even the blind can clearly see.



## What is your heart telling you?



**DEB SCOTT, BA, CPC** utilizes her 20 years of award winning cardiac surgery sales experience to help individuals, groups, and businesses transform low energy dynamics into high energy successes. Deb is the author of the award winning motivational book, "The Sky is Green and the Grass is Blue – Turning Your Upside Down World Right Side Up!" and host of "The Best People We Know Radio Show!" on BTR.

# *Elizabeth's Picks*

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## From The Heart

**"Listen to the heart,  
and whatsoever is  
there, bring it out.  
Soon you will  
become efficient  
in bringing it out,  
and you will enjoy it.  
And once you know  
how to be true,  
it is so beautiful that  
you will never settle  
for being false."**

– Osho



Deborah Beth Stern is a screenwriter. She received her BA from Scripps College in Claremont, and is from Los Angeles. She is ever grateful for the people she loves and those who love her.

### In 2004 I was living in New York City, renting a room

in a huge pre-war on the upper West Side and I had three closets. I know, lucky – but there were huge drawbacks as well in that the people who owned the place, an elderly couple, wouldn't let me lock my door. Right?!

I clearly recall sitting at my old Blueberry Imac, hunting and pecking away one day when these words came out of me: Heart, Head, Body...the thing just isn't cohesive. Whether or not that was the huge breakthrough moment that changed my life forever I don't know, but I remember writing those words. I was already four years into my yoga practice and teaching yoga privately in the City.

I appreciated the Zen moments in a perfectly sequenced Vinyasa class that united all the parts of one's conscious awareness. It was a worthy goal to try and make that feeling last, extending the union of self as long as possible, attempting to take it into the city streets.

Of course it wouldn't last long: Heart, Head, Body...it just isn't cohesive. When we come into this life, things are so simple. These type of observations don't occur to us as children. When young, we are cohesive, perfect little beings firmly planted in our bodies. It's only later as we grow that we're exposed to others and society and everything else ad nauseum that we develop a split in our being.

For me, the Head was firmly in charge, show-runner and literally running the show, by the time I was in my early teens. I was all over the place and I was fast. I had secret short hand languages with friends. The complete school social scene on mental rolodex, updating constantly. A mental platform that isn't unlike the internet, with software and downloads. New information. Go. Stop. Playback . . . more newness...that old thing you really, really want to happen, or don't. I don't, I really don't, want THAT to happen. Ugh.

Not until I matured through a host of unpleasant situations and all around good life experiences did I do enough personal work on myself to realize that the Head had to abdicate its reign. My meditation teachers will tell you that it isn't wise to try and control the mind and from what I know, it is impossible. So I was faced with a personal conundrum. The fact was, I escaped into fantasy to avoid the painful reality of my toxic home and family—the pain that was in my body and heart.

The only way out of this was to go through it, and it would be quite a journey. What started off as a genius coping survival strategy was now the barrier to my living in my experience. As a child, I made up stories and decisions and believed them, because being in the reality of my home hurt my Heart more than I could bear. I had conceived that whatever I put my attention to was the truth, and in a way, I was right. But not in the way I wanted. I wanted to be able to decide something and have it be so, always.

The problem is, this is a false premise. Nothing is guaranteed except for change. I was missing my life in favor of ideas. Being in the Head was distracting me from the pain I wasn't ready to deal with . . . until . . . I was. Slowly I let myself drop into my Heart and feel all the stormy hurt, the wounded love, and fragile exhilaration of being alive. Making a commitment to living from a place of Love from my Heart was, and is, probably the single most important choice of my life. It is not easy. My heart breaks every day and gets bigger and bigger to include all. That is the missing piece that I feel made a huge difference for me and gives me the courage to persevere.

Love and the Heart includes – it just gets bigger. It can contain all and it does. Putting this idea into practice is where it gets tricky, but I suggest starting with things that are relatively neutral. So you got a pair of new jeans, they're perfect, you Love them. Love the person that sold them to you, you wouldn't have them otherwise. Love the people who made them, shine a ray of warmth from your heart center towards the designers, imaging Levi Strauss cloaked in red velvet if you must. You can see how easily it multiplies and it nourishes both giver and receiver, always.

I still have challenges in dealing with my family, who doesn't? But, I can love the challenge to see how big my Heart can get. Can I love the fact that I'm engaging with people? How about the fact that I have these new tools? My Heart can even embrace my own pain as well as the pain of another, when they are acting out in unconsciousness. The Heart knows it isn't about 'me', that ego we used to protect us so long ago. The Heart is united as one, it doesn't lash out, or lie, and it is warm and welcoming.

An even bigger challenge is dealing with oneself, from one's own Heart. Having made the commitment to be more loving, sometimes it is a real drag to see what shows up to partake. Just yesterday I was nervous and unsettled about some communication. I wanted to go into my Head and spiral around in a mess of what the language or actions 'Meant'. How many times have you asked yourself to ascribe situational meaning? If I do "X" then it means "Y", but if I do "X" in a rainstorm it comes across as "W." Crazy making, literally. The Heart, however, has implicit meaning. Love is a Quality, not a Quantity. It is loving by nature, pushing harder won't increase its potency.

Like anything, in this practice makes better. I was able to reach into my chest open up that sucker and throw all the stories, doubts and fears in, feel them, and be present. And being present is of course, the most precious gift.

Authenticity and intimacy with yourself and others are huge rewards of being able to welcome your experience into your most sacred heart space. Though emotions can be huge and overwhelming, just acknowledging that they are there helps to ground me in my reality when I don't have the muster to feel everything. I'm sure I have only scratched the surface as far as my development in this practice. Though just knowing I'm committed to living from my heart makes facing the scary things easier. We are in this human predicament together, after all.

By establishing a culture of people who are more fully rooted in the heart we can truly heal. We must support each other and ask for help when we need it. The time of going it alone is over, and you can see how well that went. Together, we have an unprecedented opportunity to grow the capacities of our own Hearts to stretch and extend further than we ever thought we were capable of. The choice is each our own.

The Heart says yes. And as Osho says, the Heart is always right.

# Come home to Maine.



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# Why Your Biggest Beauty Asset Can Be Your Heart's Best Friend

**To get a healthy, beautiful smile, here are some easy steps:**

- 1) Floss and brush at least twice a day, and brush for at least 2 minutes. For the ultimate healthy gums, try using a WaterPik Water Flosser.
- 2) Use proper brushing techniques. If you brush too hard, you might actually irritate your gums and cause them to recede at a faster rate than normal. Receding gums allow more bacteria to enter your mouth.
- 3) Try using an oral rinse that contains fluoride to prevent tooth decay.
- 4) Don't forget to brush your tongue to remove bacteria that causes bad breath!
- 5) For the time-challenged (aren't we all?) try a multi-tasking rinse, such as Crest 6:1 or Listerine Total Care. These formulas contain fluoride, freshen breath and can whiten teeth.
- 6) Do not smoke! In addition to giving you yellow teeth and bad breath, smoking can cause lines around your mouth and potential for mouth cancer.
- 7) Visit your dentist at least twice a year for teeth cleaning.
- 8) If your teeth are yellow or discolored, consider whitening. From in-office procedures to at-home whitening strips, there are so many options! The more you see that your teeth are white and bright, the more you will want to keep them that way.
- 9) Choose makeup to brighten your smile. Try a blue-based red, berry or pink lipstick. Avoid wearing browns and oranges, as these can accentuate yellow teeth. Try also using bronzer or self-tanner on your face – the darker your skin, the whiter your teeth will look!
- 10) If your teeth are crooked, or you want to correct imperfections, try braces or invisible braces, such as Invisalign. This uses plastic retainers that are changed out every two weeks in order to move the teeth to the desired result. Straighter teeth are also easier to floss and clean. Another option is a veneer. A veneer is a thin shield of porcelain that covers the front of the tooth. You can do one tooth or your whole mouth to change your smile. One thing to remember about veneers is that you must maintain excellent tooth/mouth care after getting them, and they only last about 10-15 years.

Once you have your healthy, beautiful smile, you will want to use it often and maintain it. Even if "vanity" is not your focus, then realize that a healthy smile will help to prevent heart disease and keep you happier, healthier and give you more time with your loved ones! So go smile and hug someone – your heart will thank you.

There is no denying that a gorgeous smile is a woman's best beauty asset. A healthy, bright, white smile conveys happiness, good health, as well as inner and outer beauty. It can also make you look youthful and vibrant. It is also true that an unhealthy mouth, especially periodontal (gum) disease has links to heart disease, diabetes and pre-term birth. So even if you strive for a beautiful smile for vanity reasons, most likely you will reap the benefits of preventing heart disease and other medical ailments.

A healthy smile starts with flossing and brushing at least twice a day. Moise Desvarieux, MD, PhD an epidemiologist, was the lead author of a recent study published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*. The study examined 657 people with known heart disease. Desvarieux and his co-authors found that people who had higher blood levels of certain disease-causing bacteria in the mouth were more likely to have atherosclerosis in the carotid artery in the neck. Clogging of the carotid arteries can lead to stroke.

So why is there a connection between gum disease and heart disease? A few theories include bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream through the gums. This same bacteria has been found clumped in artery plaque, contributing to blockage. Another theory includes your body's own defense to bacteria. Swelling is a response to bacteria in the body; therefore, if bacteria travels through your body, it causes the blood cells to swell and then the arteries narrow and cause blockage.

There are many more theories regarding the connection between mouth health and heart health, and the answer is not clear yet. We do know that it is hard to feel your arteries closing; however it is very easy to see your gums swelling and bleeding. Therefore, if you do have these symptoms, it might help to keep an eye on your heart health as well.



Nina Sutton is a dynamic TV host, Beauty and Mom Expert. With an MBA and a business background in beauty, fashion and consumer packaged goods, she brings real world expertise to audiences around the country. Nina's first book, *The Chic Mom's Guide to Feeling Fabulous* was published in 2008. With the rise of celebrity moms bouncing back so "effortlessly," this book offers real women tips on staying chic in all areas of their life – including beauty, fashion, fitness, relationships with friends, spouses, children, and financial and time saving tips for moms. Nina also devotes her time to charity – she is on the LA board of Step Up Women's Network and worked with the March of Dimes on their Celebration of Babies event with Halle Barry in November 2009. For more information visit [www.ninasutton.com](http://www.ninasutton.com)





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***Although it may be hard to believe,*** spring really is just around the corner! And spring to us, as to most people, is a time of renewal, rebirth, renovation, re-everything. The printing industry has been hit hard, not only by the economy but by the technological advances of the internet, home computers, printers, and the cost of mailing. Everyone is cutting back and/or doing things for themselves.

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*Russ Burleigh, owner of Brown Fox Printing in Scarborough, Maine, took this photo in the backyard of his home in Scarborough.*



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