

A New Beginning

Category: A Turn for the Better

written by Ronna L. Edelstein | August 1, 2024

My eating habits are embarrassing. I open and close the refrigerator from the time I get up until I retire for the night. Apples. M&Ms. Strawberries and blueberries. M&Ms. Bananas and grapes. M&Ms. Carrots and celery. M&Ms. Cereal with skim milk. M&Ms.

The pattern is an obvious one: No protein but a lot of sugar. I buy sharing packages of dark chocolate M&Ms, which cost more than six dollars per package, but I share with no one. I quickly go through the “melt in your mouth” candies, which I keep cold in the refrigerator, wondering why my grocery bill is so large. Something has to change. And something is about to.

A visit in late June to my daughter in Manhattan and a visit by my son from British Columbia in late July taught me something I should have realized a long time ago: eating even one healthy meal a day is better for me than dining on candy throughout the day. When with my adult children, I eat dinner—veggie burgers, salmon, pasta, salads with tofu, chicken. These foods diminish my craving for the M&Ms and make me feel better about myself. Embracing this healthier diet is a turn for the better.

The question is whether I will maintain this new daily menu once I am again on my own. Cooking for myself is not fun; eating in a restaurant by myself can be lonely—and seems like a waste of money. I become lethargic when it comes to doing anything within my kitchen; grabbing a handful of M&Ms is so much easier than broiling salmon or grilling tofu. Or even scrambling an egg.

On August 8, I turn seventy-seven. I would like to live to the ninety-eight years my dad enjoyed, but I worry that I have already made myself susceptible to diabetes or a heart attack. I would like to have many more experiences with my children, but even that desire has not yet released me from my M&Ms addiction. I need determination and confidence; I need discipline and focus.

My birthday is my starting point: my time for a new beginning. I will clear my fridge of the delicious candies and start filling it with healthy substitutes. I will make dinner a time of pride and physical and emotional nourishment. That is my promise to myself; I pray I can adhere to it.

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