

Be your own Valentine

Have you ever sent yourself a Valentine's Day card or taken the time to thank yourself for being there for you all the time? Chances are the mere thought of doing either of these has never crossed your mind. Increasingly, however, people are discovering how to be their own best friend and the importance of a positive relationship with themselves.

"Being your own best friend doesn't mean slipping back into the self-indulgent 'me' decade of the '80s," says Marie Ludwick who, as area director of weight Watchers for Southern Ontario and Atlantic Canada, promotes healthy self-esteem and self-appreciation.

"To be your own best friend is to treat yourself with the same degree of respect, dignity and kindness you try to treat others. If your best friend was trying to quit smoking, would you tempt her with cigarettes or constantly remind her of all the other times she has tried to quit and failed? Of course not! You'd be there for her 24-hours a day with positive reinforcement and encouragement."

"Why, then," Ludwick asks, "do so many people mentally mistreat themselves whenever they try to lose weight? It's like being visited by the Ghost of Diets Past the way some people will constantly heap negative, self-defeating thoughts on themselves rather than give themselves a reassuring pat on the back. Just think of how much more success you could have in anything you seek to achieve if you believe in yourself and give yourself all the encouragement and support a good friend should have."

At Weight Watchers, being your own best friend is an important element incorporated into every aspect of the 1993 program. Along with group support and the Weight Watchers food and exercise plans, people enrolled in the Weight Watchers program learn how to banish the Ghost of Diets Past by focussing on their current goals and progress and not making unfair comparisons with previous weight-loss attempts or on how others in the program are pro-

gressing. Weight Watchers teaches that it is possible to recognize and accept your limitations while also being your own best friend. This is possible as long as you have realistic expectations of the rate at which you will lose weight and concentrate on what you've got rather than what you are giving up.

"Once you have accepted that you can be your own best friend," says Ludwick, "everything else starts to fall into place. You no longer tempt yourself by keeping unhealthy foods in the back of the desk drawer. Similarly, you stop comparing your progress to that of your friends or to a previous diet because you know that you have set yourself a goal and pace that is just right for you."

As your own best friend, though, you don't try to fool yourself. You accept that there are going to be times when the support and expertise of others are needed. By trying to do it alone, you could be setting yourself up for failure. Weight Watchers suggests that you make a list of the people in your life who have been supportive to you and of the ways they can help. For instance, if the children are driving you to distraction and you feel you need a break, a neighbor who has helped out in the past might be able to take them for a couple of hours while you get yourself under control. Of course, you should be prepared to give the neighbor your support when needed.

This Valentine's Day, and every other day for that matter, be your own best friend and think of all the jobs you've accomplished, goals you've achieved and hurdles you've overcome. Accentuate the positive. Eliminate the negative and give yourself a well deserved pat on the back.

After all, that's what friends are for.

Weight Watchers is the leading authority in the weight-loss industry and offers weekly meetings throughout Canada and various locations around the world. For more information or to attend a meeting near you, call 1-800-387-8227.

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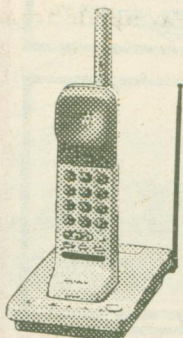


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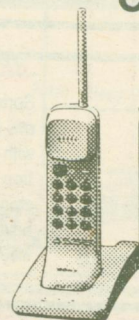
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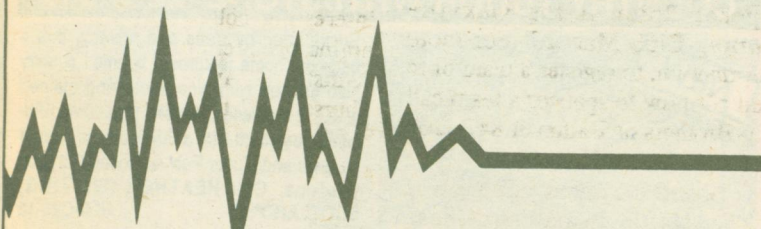
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