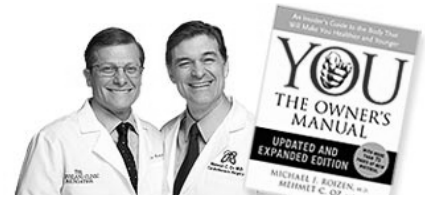


YOU: The Most Important Choice For Making Yourself Younger: Who's Your Buddy?



By Dr. Michael F. Roizen

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Our basic premise is that *your body is amazing: You get a do over: it doesn't take that long, and isn't that hard if you know what to do*. In these notes we give you a short course in what to do so it becomes easy for you and then to teach others. We want you to know how much control you have over your quality and length of life.

You can imagine that we're asked all kinds of health-related questions—everything from what kind of pills we recommend (aspirin- *what dose?* , multivitamins-*whose, what should we look for in it*), fish oil or DHA—*600mg a day of vegetarian DHA—we'll discuss this in a future issue*) to the name of that fat-storing organ in your belly (the omentum). But, one of the most basic questions we get is this one: “If you could do only one thing for your health what's the most important thing?”

Our response isn't about some miracle food, powerful pill, or impossible workout. It's something that virtually everyone can do: “Walk 30 minutes and call a buddy”. We wrote about the health benefits of walking last month—so it's time to discuss the buddy.

Calling the buddy is just as important as (and maybe even more important than) the walking itself. Why? Because calling a buddy is key to managing stress and to consistently choosing healthy behaviors.

Often, we use our spouse as the buddy and that makes sense: You have to care (generously) about your buddy and find things that you share with each other. That bond results in instant intimacy (not necessarily involving satin sheets). The people you surround yourself with for health, especially your buddy, defines your health and who you are. Your buddy helps you identify what you're most passionate about, as long as you have absolute candor. If you try to make choices for health, whether it's walking 30 minutes a day, cutting back on your portion sizes, or anything else, and do it alone, there's a much higher risk you'll end up lips first in a tub of headed-for-the-hips ice cream.

So perhaps the biggest health choice of them all is making a commitment to find your YOU partner, be it a spouse, a friend or a colleague. Your buddy is someone who you can talk to about your goals, your food choices, your plans, your aspirations for your health and how you're doing day by day. Make a plan to talk or email for at least 5 minutes every day (as is the case with freshly caught Marlin, longer is better). You want to have a buddy who you share goals with (both you and your buddy can lose together – but if your buddy has no interest in losing, you will probably end up with a gut that beats you into rooms by a full three or four seconds). And if you're the buddy, it's a position where you generously help someone.

Buddies are important in another way, too. A best friend at work helps you stay healthy and productive. The Gallup organization has found we're more productive at work and don't miss as much time when we have a buddy or best friend at work. We feel that obligation, that accountability to the buddy. And most importantly we enjoy work better and that's good for our health. That keeps you younger, financially more secure (since you're more productive), and of course, it makes you have more fun. So, find and nurture a buddy at work.

I often joke that women are better at this than men because women naturally listen. A buddy isn't there to judge, a buddy isn't there to give solutions (unless you ask for one), a buddy is there to support you no matter what. So now pick your buddy carefully and work with him or her. Share the passions.

So the most important tips that we can give

anybody are:

1. Understand you get a do over and it's not that hard and it doesn't take that long if you know what to do.
2. Start with walking.
3. Recruit a buddy and call daily.

About the author:

Michael F. Roizen, M.D., is a professor of anesthesiology and internal medicine, Chief Wellness Officer, and chair of the Wellness Institute at the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Roizen can be heard on over 30 radio stations Saturdays from 5 to 7 pm. For a listing just email a request to YouDocs@gmail.com