



March 9, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

Tracking

Monday's message was about repeating a health or fitness habit until you could respond under all circumstances. Let's continue with that train of thought with another observation I made at the gym. The track surrounds the tennis courts. Sides of the track are open parallel to the courts so you can catch the action as you run. This particular morning, there were age-group tennis matches going on. On one end, I noticed a man with a clipboard that contained a diagram of the court. Every time I came around the court, he was making notations. I finally figured out that he was tracking the shots of the player: where he hit the ball, the strength of the return, fore-hand or back-hand. Here's the thing: the player he was tracking was about five years old.

Why track the shots? So that he can work on the weaknesses of his game. The same holds true for us as we adopt better health habits. If we keep track of what we do, we can take advantage of our strengths and improve our weaknesses. For example, maybe if you ate your afternoon snack at 2:30 p.m.—before you were actually hungry—you might be more satisfied and less tempted to eat more than if you waited until 3:30.

If you track your habits, you're going to be able to identify what works and what doesn't. Obviously, don't track every habit all at once or you'll quit—unless you can find a guy with a clipboard to follow you around. Try tracking one habit every day for a couple of weeks until you get a handle on it. If it works for five-year-olds, I think it can go a long way in helping us as well.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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