



May 14, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

Change is Possible

297. That's the number of you who responded to my email "You Decide." That's the highest number of responses I've ever gotten to a question I've asked. Here is the way things broke down;

The first response at 4:03 a.m. was from my daughter-in-law, Kerri, and she was feeling hopeful.

Altogether 264 responses were for "There's Always Hope."

22 responses were for "Doomed"—that's a 1 to 12 ratio on the side of hope.

11 responses were philosophical answers from people who could see both choices were okay.

Most of you just sent in your choice, but some had things to say. Some of you were critical of the father but then went on to say that you haven't conquered your own weight or health issues yet so you can't really be too hard on him.

Some of you wondered about the mom—what was she cooking? Was she overweight as well? Some of you thought that it was the fast-food nation we live in that was the problem.

I appreciate every comment you sent. So I'm going to share one of my responses to an email I received that exhibited frustration on the part of the writer. She just couldn't understand why she couldn't make health changes permanent. This was my response:

In my opinion, health change comes down to three things:

- Inspiration
- Education
- Motivation

Inspiration is that moment in time when some book, some event, or some one inspires you to change. That can last for a few days or even a few weeks. But it fades if you don't have...

Education. You must learn what to do to be healthy that fits your lifestyle. I think that's the failure of our education system: public, private, medical, fitness, you name it. We don't keep people's attention long enough for them to learn all that they need to know. That's what I try to do in the messages I write: teach you what you really need to know in short, easily absorbable bursts. When you know enough, you don't just start—you keep going. You have to act long enough to permanently change your life. That takes...

Motivation. Motivation comes from within. What inspired you is a memory, and you really know what to do. Now it becomes a matter of knowing why you get up every morning to complete the transformation. We can lose the motivation—I have on many occasions. You have to keep searching for that key for yourself because it will be different for every one of us and different even for the same person at different stages of life.

One of the reasons your responses were so important to me is that it shows me that you really believe change is possible. I do, too. All we have to do is never quit trying, no matter how discouraged we get and no matter how unlikely change seems. Our future is a healthier one. I'm committed to helping you get there.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

P.S. Here's an interesting factoid: last October I wrote a message called "Smile" that had links to both the "Positive People" and "Negative People" messages from September. You clicked the link to "Positive People" exactly twice as often as "Negative People." It's not quite a vote, but I think it's a clear indication of the power of being a positive person. Want to attract more people? Be more positive. (Now aren't you glad you chose "Hope"?)

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