

COULD YOU MAKE BETTER LIFESTYLE CHOICES?

How often have you heard comments like these? Wish I had more time to potter in the garden. My golf is getting worse, not better. I'm wasting my gym membership. Haven't read a book for ages. We spend evenings flipping TV channels. Spare time! What's that?

It seems that in spite of all our talk about free choice, we often don't make very good choices for our lives. More and more people talk about their unhappiness with their chosen lifestyles; and make no mistake – we do choose them.

What does it take to make different choices?

First off, you've really gottawanna! It takes effort and energy, applied over time, to make a change and stick with it. The energy comes from your conviction that the change will be for the better. You can't be half-hearted about it.

The phrase 'Yes – but' is the giveaway. It says 'Yes; I want to

do it, but there's a reason I can't'. If you want to make a change, the 'yes' must be stronger than the 'but'. You've got to be convinced that there's something worthwhile for you in making the effort. You will be more motivated to sign up for a course of study, taking time away from your family, if you are absolutely sure that the qualification will help your career.

A change in your own lifestyle is almost certainly going to affect others in your close circle; friends, family, maybe colleagues. For example, if you are accustomed to a regular Saturday morning breakfast with friends, it will be difficult for you to break away for a regular exercise class instead. If you can get your friends to join you at the class however, you're all on the way to a lasting change in your behaviour. Getting support from others around you is a vital part of

making a lifestyle change. Finally, when you meet your goal, or get to a milestone toward it, you must celebrate. Small celebrations are a wonderful way of rewarding yourself for your effort, and bringing the people who have helped you, into the positive atmosphere they create. They also hold your success up in public, making it more difficult for you to backslide!

If you're really motivated, you get support from people around you, and you celebrate your successes, there's no reason why you can't make different choices. 🌱

Maureen Collins has a B Sc degree in Psychology from Edinburgh University. Maureen's passion is for showing people how to improve the quality of their conversations even under the most difficult conditions
www.straight-talk.co.za

