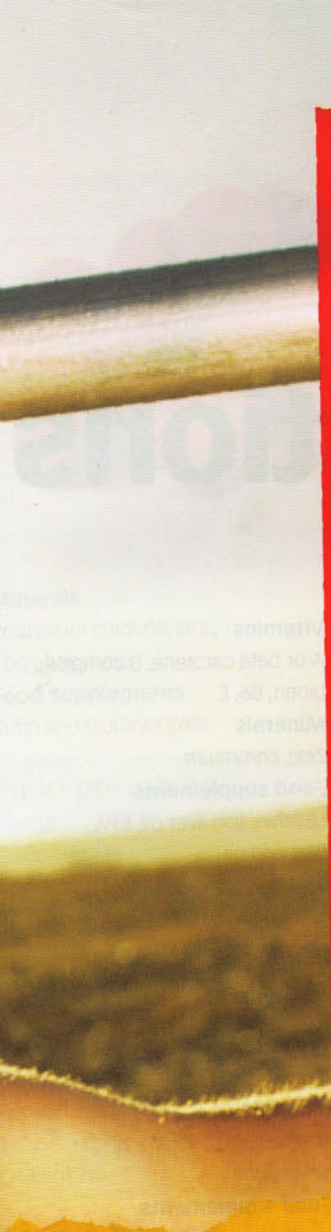


What women want

You might think you know what you want. But does your body agree? **Dr Peta Stapleton** and **Terri Sheldon** give you the insider tips to get exactly what you want.

Case study

Faith had always struggled with her health and weight and tried many different systems, exercise plans and dietary advice to achieve a healthy weight and shape for her height. But nothing had really ever worked in the long term. She used to always focus on trying not to be unhealthy and unfit, and this is exactly what she ended up being – unfit and unhealthy! She finally read an article on focusing your mind on what you really want and she started to apply this in relation to her health and achieved amazing results!



As is human nature, we are motivated either towards pleasurable outcomes (everything from a great reward like more money, or positive praise), or away from painful outcomes (someone tells us we are overweight, so we diet, or we cannot stand the thought of debt, so we work 70 hours a week to reduce it). When we set goals we want to achieve in life, about absolutely anything, we must think about how we are motivated. Moving towards pleasurable outcomes or away from negative ones, affects how we think, feel and behave. It may also affect the outcome.

Are you motivated by a reward? Or away from a painful outcome?

One of the key things with achieving a goal is remembering to look where you want to go – not where you don't want to go! Here's a common example: many single vehicle car accidents occur between the car and a stationary object (for example, a tree, a pole). What happens is when the driver realises they are in trouble they immediately focus on what they don't want to hit – and they end up hitting it. This is the opposite of trained drivers such as Formula One drivers who respond to a potential accident by looking for an open space.

The same happens when we need to achieve a goal – we need to look where we are going. The power of the mind and the subconscious has been documented in many forms.

Make sure your goal is what you want

Here are some extra tips to assist the process in achieving your goals: make the decision first. Use visual reminders or pictures of your goals to be achieved – your subconscious notices what is around your house even if you are not paying full attention. Incidentally, this can be the very reason some people wonder where all their money goes to – they have all the bills pinned on the fridge in full view and are being continually and subconsciously reminded of their debt. Your mantra here should be: focus on what I want (not what you don't want). Is debt what you want or more money in the bank?

Write it down

Write down your goals. The more detail, the better. This will make you really focus on what you want, rather than just thinking loosely about it in your mind. A 1950s study of Harvard University graduates queried students about their ambitions in life and whether they wrote it down. 1500 students were interviewed and while 75 per cent discussed their specific ambition in life, only 3.3 per cent wrote it down. You can guess who achieved their goals when a follow-up study was done many years later.

Watch the movie in your mind when you go to sleep

Activate your subconscious when you are going to sleep at night and when you are waking up in the morning by thinking of your goals as already achieved. Rather than imagining the image on a movie screen, get into the picture and 'be' in the movie. This is associating with the feeling and

convinces the subconscious it has already happened – and then it will move towards achieving it. Your subconscious mind will start to believe what you are dreaming about and within time, make it your reality. So get into the movie and enjoy it!

Motivation and healthy bodies

Finally, one way to start your journey to a healthy lifestyle is to work out how this will 'look' to you. Begin thinking about what it is that you want to achieve and focus on all of that being your reality. Remember, if you focus on the things you don't want to be (e.g. unhealthy, fat, no energy, lonely), then this is what your mind will think you want and set about achieving it. Instead, spend time writing a list of characteristics that are positive and encouraging, and then focus on this list everyday. It is exciting what you can daydream and then make into your reality!

Dr Peta Stapleton and Terri Sheldon are Australian psychologists with 35 years of combined experience. Their SlimMinds Program teaches the effective psychological techniques to break out of that yo-yo failure cycle. See www.slimminds.com for more. *

Successful thinking

- Focus on being slim and healthy
- Treat this as a life decision
- Focusing on 'losing weight' is a temporary state and your brain will get confused not knowing when it can stop

Put your mind to the test

Here is a simple example that will prove to you your subconscious mind is on the alert 24 hours a day. On the way home today, choose a make, model or colour of vehicle - anything will do. Start to think about it consciously and repeat the type of car to yourself over and over. And then start to look around and see how many you can count on the way home. Really look hard – you will find them everywhere! How was it that yesterday you didn't notice any of that type of car? You were not focused on them, that's all.