

Start with someone else to better our own health

The journey to health is ultimately one of personal responsibility. Yet we are definitely not alone as we strive to make healthy choices. Everyone wants to be healthy, right? We want to be healthy, not just for ourselves, but also for those that are important to us. These critical connections can influence our decisions and our ability to improve our health — positively and/or negatively.

The circle of connections that influence us extends beyond our family and friends; it includes our co-workers, neighbors, personal or professional groups, and our community. Any of the people we interact with can lift us up... or bring us down... when it comes to our health. You may not always be able to choose whom you interact with, but you can choose how you interact with them and minimize any potential negative impact they will have. If we are serious about changing our health, we need to identify people who inspire or support us in trying to create and sustain a healthy

HEALTHY BOTTOM LINE



Mick Bates

way of living.

"The biggest determiner of how long you live is who you hang out with. If your three best friends are overweight, there's a 50 percent better chance that you'll be overweight yourself," according to Dan Buettner author of *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer From People Who've Lived The Longest*.

Research indicates that we typically share the habits of people around us. Did you know that you can take a healthy person with healthy habits and put them in an environment of people that aren't and that healthy person will begin to take on the behaviors of the many? Similarly, an unhealthy person associating with healthy people has a tendency to begin both consciously and unconsciously act in "healthier" ways. This effect has important implications for communities in WV where we are often known more for being unhealthy than healthy.

I was a "fat" kid. I was cute (of course), but heavier than I should have been despite being active. I simply ate too much. Being the fat kid some 30 plus years ago, I stood out. Someone in my circle noticed and helped my family become more aware of my habits and how to better support me. This school nurse's assistance not only changed my weight and health, but also my changed my life — influencing my interest in health care and ultimately to become a Physical Therapist.

Fortunately, I only have a few lingering emotional scars from being "porky." And more importantly, I do not have any permanent health scars. But I was lucky. Today, the fat kid doesn't stand out. In fact, 30 percent of the state's elementary children are overweight. They learn a lot from what we do and don't do. So, what kind of influence do you want to be? And, what types of people do you want influencing your health and the health of your family?

See HEALTH, 8B

HEALTH

Continued from 1B

Start with someone else right now. Identify the supporters and detractors in your life, make a list or go to bodyworkshfr.com and print off a personal worksheet under the Health News tab. Consider how you can surround yourself and your family with positive influencers so you and yours can be

healthier. The ripple effect you create will be positive and help others to be healthier, too.

What will you do this month to start to make your bottom line healthier?

— Mick Bates owns and operates **BODYWORKS** in Beckley. Columns from previous months can be viewed at register-herald.com, search *Healthy Bottom Line* or under the *Articles* tab under the *News* drop down at Bodyworkshfr.com



BODYWORKS hfr.com

9 Yellow Wood Way • Beckley, WV 25801-7126 • 304-255-2376 • fax: 304-255-7120 • 1-888-511-4822