

# Reassessing your Plan

## with a less is more approach

### NUTRITION

1. How are you handling meal planning? Is it working for you or do you need to simplify? Try something new? Maybe a meal delivery service would work well for your lifestyle. There are many now that have gluten free and paleo options.
2. Are you overindulging in healthy foods? Maybe a little avocado works well for your body, but half an avocado every day is too much. If you're having symptoms, go back to basics with a food diary to see if you can pinpoint the culprit.
3. Are you feeling deprived? How can you work in an indulgence or splurge in a way that will not derail your health? Perhaps, from your new food diary, you've realized that you feel great when you eat your favorite chips once per week, but when you have them two days in a row, you don't feel well.

### MOVEMENT

1. What is your favorite way to work in movement? Do you like to be extremely scheduled, perhaps even working with a trainer? Speaking of trainers, do you need that one-on-one time for accountability?
2. Do you live in a place where it would be safe for you to step outside your door and go for a walk? If you're not doing this already, what's stopping you? Is it lack of time, lack of appropriate clothing or shoes? How can you solve those problems?
3. Are you bored with your current exercise routine? Do you want to try something new and fun? Loved swimming as a kid? Can you find a local, indoor pool at a community center? Love dancing? There are all sorts of dance exercise classes available through Peloton, Apple Fitness and for free on YouTube

### SLEEP

1. It's just March, so some would say we're still in the "recovering from the holidays" window. Did you let your sleep routine go by the wayside from November through December? It's time to get back to a regular sleep and wake schedule. Research shows that staying up late and sleeping in later one day a week is not likely to cause harm, but best health outcomes are associated with a regular sleep and wake schedule.
2. Practice your breathing techniques and progressive muscle relaxation if you wake in the middle of the night.
3. What can you do for that hour before you hit the sack that doesn't involve a screen? Read a book? Work a puzzle? Play a board game? Try not to do something stressful like pay bills or have a serious talk. Find something relaxing and enjoyable to work on for that last hour before lights out.

### STRESS

1. Time to take a close look at your schedule. How do you feel about it? Do you have just the right balance of work/family time/extra curricular activities? If the balance is out of whack in one or more of these categories, what can you change?
2. What are you doing for leisure time? I realize that not all of you are Christians, but God created the world with the plan that we would rest on the 7th day. Since I began that practice of no work, only church, family time and fun activities on Sundays, I feel so refreshed going into my week. This meant that we would not allow our kids to participate in sports that required weekend trips. It means I don't check my email on Sundays. This is just my personal example, but I believe that what God designed is what is best for us. Where have you created margin in your life? What are your absolutes? Do you need to set firm boundaries?
3. What is your escape plan for when stress begins to take over? Do you pull out of activities that are causing the stress? Do you call in help (grandparents, babysitters, dog sitters, etc.)? Do you schedule a personal day where you allow yourself to do whatever it is that brings you the most joy? Is it simply that you take time for some deep breathing? If you don't currently have a plan, it's time to make one.

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS

1. When you started your functional medicine journey, you probably had a goal of eliminating all plastics, switching out all of your household cleaners, adopting a fully clean beauty routine. How are you doing with those goals? Did you get to a certain point and then give up? Did you just run out of steam? Or budget? Making all those changes can be very costly. Time to assess where you are on cleaning up the environmental factors you can change. And once you have a list of needed changes, prioritize and schedule them.
2. Remember that these things take time. No one would expect you to make all these changes in a short amount of time.
3. Go back and work on areas you may have given up on. For example, suppose you searched high and low for a clean deodorant that actually works and after lots of money spent and lots of stinky days, you went back to your old aluminum-containing brand because it always works. Now is the time to put that back on the list. There are lots of new products coming onto the "clean" scene all the time. Just because you didn't find something that worked for you last year, doesn't mean there isn't a good option now.
3. Don't forget to ask for help. Ask me, ask the other members in our community, ask your friends and acquaintances who are also living a more "natural" lifestyle. People love to share about products that they love. Don't hesitate to ask.

### EMOTIONAL HEALTH

1. Do you even ever think about your emotional health? If not, take a few minutes to take stock of how you're feeling. Good? Stressed? Anxious?
2. Next, try to figure out why you're feeling that way. If all is right and good in your world, then you can skip to step 4.
3. Now that you're starting to figure out why you're feeling anxious, depressed, emotionally unwell, spend some time thinking about how you're going to get out of it. Maybe you can handle it on your own (is there too much inflammatory food in your diet? don't forget that gut-brain connection). Maybe you need to seek professional help. Counselors will give you tools to help you move past these difficult emotional states. If you are not interested in any pharmaceutical remedies, be sure to tell your counselor about your preference. Some will not work with people who don't want medication. Make sure you find someone who will work with your other lifestyle goals.
4. So everything is going well for you right now in the emotional health department? That's great! Time to figure out how to keep it that way. How did you get to this point in the first place? Can you just keep doing those same things? As you look back, can you pinpoint a particular change that got you to this place of emotional health? Maybe you finally ditched a toxic relationship. Maybe you were faithful in your pursuit of self-care. Whatever it was, figure out how to keep that rolling.