

Pre-Reading Discussion: Do you feel you are as healthy as you can be? Do you plan to make changes in your life to become healthier?

This passage is about two friends who motivate each other to make good health decisions. Find out how they make some healthy lifestyle changes together.

Tiffany and Veronica are friends. They live across the street from each other. Their kids like to play together. They take turns babysitting for each other.

One day they were sitting on a park bench. They were watching the kids play. “Would you look at those kids go!” said Tiffany. “I wish I had that kind of energy.”

“I know what you mean, girlfriend” said Veronica.

“I saw a program on TV that said if you exercise and lose weight, you’ll have more energy,” said Tiffany.

“Really?”

“Uh huh. They said to start out by walking, even just 10-20 minutes to start. I was thinking I should give that a try.”

“Hey, we could do it together if you want,” said Veronica. “We could circle the park while we keep an eye on the kids.”

“That’s a great idea. I could stand to lose a few pounds of f-a-t.”

“That’s a four-letter word! Who *doesn’t* need to lose some of that?” laughed Veronica.

So that’s how it started. The two friends began walking around the park three times a week. Pretty soon they could make the loop four times in twenty minutes. Some days they walked an extra ten minutes. They walked fast enough to get their heart rates up, and to burn fat.

Then one day Tiffany said, “Veronica, I checked out an exercise video from the library last night.”

“An exercise video?”

“Yeah. Walking fast is giving us a nice cardio workout. But the video has exercises for different parts of the body - arms, legs and abs. I was thinking we could rotate the workouts. Each one is 30 minutes long. Before long we’ll be getting stronger and firmer. You just need a towel and some small weights.”

“Tiffany, you know I don’t have weights,” said Veronica.

“Sure you do! We can use cans of beans and bags of frozen vegetables. We’ll improvise!”

So the friends agreed to give the video a try. They decided to do it twice a week, on top of their walking.

When Veronica showed up at Tiffany’s apartment, she handed her a present.

“What’s this?” asked Tiffany.

“Open it,” said Veronica, smiling.

It was a 32-ounce water bottle.

“You know how you are always hearing advice on the TV? Well I heard a lady on the radio last night. She was talking about losing weight. She said one of the best things to do is to drink more water. She said, ‘Do yourself a big favor. Say goodbye to soda, and hello to H₂O.’”

“I heard that drinking water is supposed to be good for your skin, too!” said Tiffany. “But giving up soda? Ooooh, that’s a hard one!”

“We don’t have to quit all at once. The program said to drink three of these water bottles full of water every day. We need more water now that we are exercising.

Carrying the water bottles around will remind us to keep drinking. Then let's treat ourselves to a soda, say three times a week."

"It's a deal," said Tiffany.

The two friends got into their new routine. They did the strength workouts on the video. They kept up their fast walking. They drank a lot more water and a lot less soda. They motivated each other to stick with it.

Tiffany and Veronica liked seeing their muscles develop. They each started losing a few pounds. They found they had more energy. They found they preferred to snack on apples and almonds instead of chips and candy. They even shared tips for cooking healthier meals.

"Veronica, do you know what I think is the best part about taking better care of myself?" asked Tiffany.

"Fitting into your old jeans again?"

"Well, that too," said Tiffany. "But the best part is, I don't feel as stressed out anymore. I'm not only healthier; I'm happier."

"Me too, girlfriend," smiled Veronica. "Me too!"

Questions for Discussion:

Can you relate to Tiffany and Veronica's experience?

What healthy lifestyle choices did the friends make? Did they make them all at once, or gradually?

How much water do you normally drink each day?

Many experts recommend the following formula for calculating your daily water intake:

$\text{your weight (in pounds)} / 2 = \text{number of ounces of water you need}$

What kind of results did the girls start to see in their lives?

What keeps people from making healthier choices? What helps people to make better health decisions?