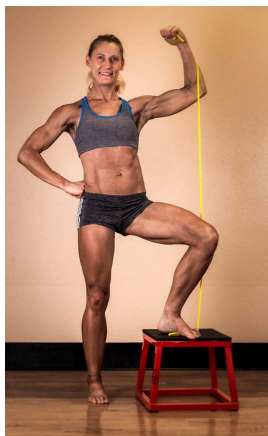


November's Challenge – The Gift of Giving

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4 Weeks of Giving



*Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

When I was younger, in my teens and 20s, my thought patterns were quite different. I was slow to understand some profound connections – like the idea that love is not limited. As I have matured I have discovered quite the opposite to be true; the more you love, the more love you have to give. Likewise, giving increases your ability both to give and to receive; like love, giving is not a “limited commodity.”

So, let's focus on GIVING during the month we celebrate ThanksGIVING? Here are 4 ways to give thanks this month

1. Give Away

– Go through your closet and pantry. The Pre-Holiday season is a perfect time to take inventory and thin out those clothes that have life left in them, just not in your closet. The same goes for shoes and coats. If you haven't worn an item in a year, give someone else a chance. This is also prime time to clean out your cupboards, make space for new holiday ingredients and rid yourself of any extra processed foods you're ready to eliminate from your diet. This is also the perfect opportunity to donate canned and boxed foods to a Holiday Food Drive – Challenge #3. I've started with my closets and have the kitchen as my next goal.

2. Give In

– Embrace the holiday season that is upon us and plan for some splurges, like Thanksgiving dinner. One of the best suggestions I've seen is, "Don't worry about what you do from Thanksgiving through Christmas nearly as much as what you do from Christmas through Thanksgiving." There's a lot of truth in that and of course, moderation is another key. For balance, limit November splurges to two or three and counter each splurge with an “exercise splurge” within the same week. We have a favorite restaurant inside the Golden Nugget for an after-show splurge and of course Thanksgiving dinner is on my list too. For balance I continue to have the goal of a 5-mile run per week.



3. Give Time

– Include a charitable act in this month’s challenge. Donating clothes to a shelter or second hand store and dropping off canned and boxed foods to donate to a Holiday Food Drive is a great way to show support for your community. My November goal is to reach out to a new center in our community that supports homeless youth and volunteer some time this month. Additionally, my school sponsors a food drive and I have two bags already started to bring to our local thrift store that donates to Big Brothers Big Sisters.



4. Give Thanks

– Recognize 1-2 people weekly who bless your life. Write a note, give a call, arrange a coffee date and let them know. Connecting with family and friends, celebrating love and good will and engaging in charitable activities is a big part of the reason for the season, so indulge mostly in giving thanks – it won’t break the bank or your waistline, but will leave your spirits high and your good will full. Increased focus on thankfulness will no doubt pay dividends for your own health. And smiling is a much better contagion to spread this winter than the flu!

What I mostly hope you glean from November’s Challenge is that giving can be very replenishing. Giving does not compromise our ability to receive; in fact, I believe it enhances it. Taking time to help others and thanking others promotes great feelings. And when we feel great, we tend to make healthier choices. It is all connected. Bless you over this holiday season, and may the magic of the holidays be bountiful.

Reach for the stars – take charge of your life (no one else will), and enjoy the month. Follow me on FB (<https://www.facebook.com/mel.joeredington>) for daily inspiration and the November 100-mile challenge.

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