

**A**  
**Deeper**  
**Look**  
by Delisa Renideo

# Do You Have Room In Your Life for Health?

“I don’t have time to eat a vegan diet! It takes too much time to chop all those veggies!”

“After I work all day, I just want to relax. I don’t want to cook. It’s much easier to order take-out or stop at a drive-through on my way home.”

“My friends don’t understand what this vegan diet is all about, so when I’m with them, I just eat whatever they’re eating.

There’s no question about it: it takes an effort to make a significant change in our diet or lifestyle. We have to make room in our lives for something new. But there is also no question about something else: If we don’t make room in our lives for health, later on we’ll have to make room in our lives for illness.

Anytime we start something new, we have to make room for it in our lives. When we get a job, we have to make room for it. When we go to school, we have to make room for it. If we decide to learn a new skill or hobby, we have to make room for it. If we join a club, we have to make room for it. When we have a baby, we need to make LOTS of room for her. So... when we decide to commit to health, we have to make room for that, too. But for some reason, many of us don’t feel like we should have to make that much of an effort to choose health. Until, of course, we lose it. Then we go to great lengths and great expense to try to get it back.

Making room in our lives for something new involves several aspects. One, of course, is time. Every one of us has 24 hours in a day, and

every second of those 24 hours is already filled up with something, even if it is sleeping or watching TV. So when we want to do something new, something else has to move over to make room. But much of our time can be organized better so that we actually get more out of those 24 hours. We discover that when something is a priority, the time somehow opens up.

Time, however, may be one of the simplest aspects of this issue of making room. We also have habitual ways of thinking and behaving, and carving a space out of our old habits to make room for something new can feel like we’re carving a piece out of our very identity. Family traditions, cultural norms, and the expectations of our friends can box us into old, unhealthy ways of living -- until we decide to get out of the box.



**Anytime we start something new, we have to make room for it in our lives.**

Beliefs may be the toughest challenge for making room for something new. We may not be fully aware of our beliefs, and they may not even be rational. But our beliefs can be a stubborn roadblock to making positive changes. Examples might include beliefs about gender roles, racial prejudices, and even nutritional information (and misinformation.) We need to remember that just because we believe something certainly doesn’t make it true! A common belief that challenges many people is that we have to eat meat to get protein. I run into people who have been vegan for years who still worry about whether they are getting enough protein. (If you’re eating a variety

of whole plant foods, you are definitely getting enough protein!)

No one appreciates health as much as the person who has lost it.

If we really think about how important our health is, we'll make a commitment to making room

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for it. We'll make time in our lives to learn how to plan and prepare healthy meals. We'll make time to shop and prepare

the food. We'll take time to sit down and enjoy the food! And we'll do these things even when it is inconvenient.

We'll also make room by deciding that our health is more important than going along with the unhealthy crowd who are stopping at the pizza parlor on their way to a heart attack. We'll learn that we can still love our parents while eating foods that are different from those they raised us on. And we'll leave some space in our life to explore new information that challenges our old belief systems.

If we don't do these things, we will have to

make room for the illnesses which are the inevitable result of years of eating the Standard American Diet. We can expect to suffer from the same chronic diseases which erode the quality of life and cause death in most Americans: coronary artery disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and Alzheimer's. We can expect to spend endless hours in doctor's offices and hospitals. We can expect to spend increasing amounts of money to fight the unending battle with diseases caused by our lifestyle. No pill or surgery can reverse the effects of an unhealthy diet. Only changing our diet can do that.

Why not start now making room for health, so that we'll have more room later for all the fun as we navigate our later years...

So why wait? Why wait until we are already sick to decide we want to be healthy, and that it is worth some time and effort? Why not start now making room for health, so that we'll have more room later for all the fun we'll have as we joyfully navigate our later years with health and vitality?

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