**Giving up on a loved one**

So, you’ve got a loved one who is obese (a smoker, alcoholic, suffers from depression, drug addict) and you’ve given up on them. Not without good reason! You have honestly given it your all. You’ve dieted with them, you’ve supported their dieting, you’ve attempted to get them to exercise with or without you, you’ve purchased them workout shoes, health club memberships, workout videos, you’ve been to the doctors with them, you’ve consoled them, you’ve cried with them, you’ve loved them, you’ve challenged them, you’ve threatened them, and you’ve even attempted to scare them into getting themselves healthier. Now, finally you’ve given up on them and you feel terrible.

Let’s change the health issue into something that we perceive as being worse than obesity or alcoholism, something like cancer. Would you? Could you? Give up on that loved one fighting cancer? I’m suspecting that you’d never give up on a loved one who is fighting cancer. Then what is it and why is it, we eventually give up on this same person when it comes to obesity and/or other lifestyle health concerns?

She, like so many of us who care for loved ones, found herself upset for not being able to make this person better. You know what? She had to get over it. She told me that she quit being mad and disappointed in herself, because it was causing more stress on her own self than on the obese family member. If the person in question isn’t motivated enough or concerned enough about how their obesity is affecting everyone, then why should she be beating herself up over it? It’s not her battle!

So, we changed the conversation back to “cancer” and tried to understand the difference in the fight and the support that we would give. It’s as simple as making the choice and commitment. With cancer, they’d be fighting the fight! They choose to fight, they’d be in treatment, they’d be doing what was expected and needed to win the battle for life. If they were fighting, then we would be fighting with them. The energy, the time, the support, the emotions, and the dedication wouldn’t matter and we’d never “give-up” on them, because they were trying!

So, I’m back to a philosophy that I discuss often in these articles, the power of the brain and the power of making up your mind to do something and in this case, to do something to become healthier. I know from the experience that I’ve gained through being in the health and fitness industry, that I can’t make a difference in anyone’s life until they make up their own mind to do it. I have wasted more hours on people giving them workouts, advice and structure towards change only to realize that I wasted my time and they aren’t ready. They have to commit to the process first! I too, quite beating myself up over those who miss out on the benefits of health.

That’s where the frustration comes when we discuss someone important in our lives. Most health issues are not as serious as “cancer”, but they can be when it comes to the effects it has on families and friends.

They are making the choice to not experience what living a healthier lifestyle can give them. Health and fitness are a personal choice and it’s up to each of us to decide to make that decision for ourselves!

You can only do the best you can, by setting an example and living, loving and supporting (to the best of your ability) those loved ones. When your loved ones are ready and committed, then you can make that difference and celebrate in their successes together.