

Julie's Dares

Today I am DARING each of you to make healthy lifestyle changes. These are all changes that helped me to lose 145.75 pounds. Pick at least one Dare for this week. The choice is yours. If you want to make a long term commitment to this process, pick at least one change to focus on for 3 weeks. When that becomes second nature, pick another change to add to your daily regimen. When that becomes a habit, add another, and so on. Most importantly – enjoy the journey to a healthier you!

DARE to drink at least six 8 ounce glasses of water everyday. Actually TOPS recommends drinking eight glasses of water daily to meet essential body requirements. Drinking water regularly also has the advantage of making you feel full, thus decreasing hunger.

DARE to write down everything that you eat. If you don't want to write that donut down, then don't eat it. Keeping a food diary also gives you a way to review the actual number of calories that have consumed.

DARE to exercise at least 15 minutes everyday. This really can be anything; walking, jogging, stretching, yoga, weight resistance, biking, vigorous housework. Find an activity that you enjoy and you will be more likely to stick with it. Are you a couch potato? Start getting up and walking around the house during those television commercials. Just start moving.

DARE to make healthy food choices. Avoid eating processed foods. Eat more fiber rich foods. Choose low fat options whenever possible. Avoid enriched white flour, refined sugar, and saturated fats. Learn to request what you want and what you don't want at restaurants. Learn to love beans.

DARE to take at least 20 minutes to eat each meal. Remember that it takes 20 minutes to feel full. If you are eating too fast, you could be reaching for a second helping before you realize that you are already full. SLOW DOWN. Put your down fork between bites, take a sip of water between bites. Try chewing each of bite of food 20 times, although this is not recommended with cottage cheese.

DARE to say your TOPS pledge everyday. It is a great daily reminder that you are an intelligent person, after all, you joined TOPS!

DARE to spend 10 minutes everyday visualizing yourself healthy. Picture yourself in that dress you like so much. Picture yourself walking without getting winded. Picture yourself happy and healthy, whatever that means to you.

Here are some healthy SRD graduates. Don't they look happy.

DARE to learn something new everyday. Find a new healthy recipe. Read "The Choice is Mine". Revamp an old favorite recipe and make it healthier. Learn your TOPS food exchanges.

DARE to encourage other TOPS members. Call, email, drop them a note. Let your fellow TOPS members know that you are there for them. We could all use a little extra encouragement.

DARE to be an example for TOPS. Walk the walk, talk the talk. You are the best advertisement for TOPS. When someone asks you how you are losing weight, let them know. Invite them to a meeting. Let people know about TOPS.

Here are some shining examples of what TOPS can do.

DARE to attend your chapter meetings regularly. Regular attendance equals accountability. Even when you know you will have a gain, don't skip your meeting. That is when you need to be there the most.

DARE to get more involved in your chapter, run a contest, do a program, share the program with another member if you do not feel comfortable doing it alone. Being more involved helps you and others.

Who knows, you may one day become a Field Staff member.

DARE to put your health first. The best way to ensure that you will be around to enjoy your family is to make your health a priority. Don't buy that bag of cookies to keep around for your grandkids. They don't need to eat them either. I keep this photo on my fridge to remind me that I want to be healthy so that I can one day take my granddaughters hunting.

DARE to set small goals for yourself. Big long range goals can be so daunting. Set smaller goals for yourself, and celebrate as you achieve those goals. Reward yourself; take a bubble bath, buy a new pair of walking shoes, give yourself flowers, you pick your rewards. Just don't make food your reward.

Every small goal achieved leads you closer to your ultimate goal.

You could be a State Division Winner.

You can join the Circle of Light.

Picture yourself walking to take the SRD stage.

You too could be State Royalty.

JUST DARE TO REACH YOUR GOAL!