

WHAT I HEAR, I FORGET WHAT I SEE, I REMEMBER WHAT I DO, I UNDERSTAND

BY DR. SUSAN MAPLES

If we are going to change the world, we will do it through our children.

By 2050 43 percent of U.S. citizens will suffer from obesity, half will have cardiovascular disease and one-third, Type 2 diabetes. Wouldn't it be nice if your kids were the exception? And if they drove change? Even if you're not caring for children in your household, keep reading. **After all, there's no such thing as other people's children. We're all facing this health crisis together.**

Raising healthy children is not as easy as it appears. It's not about putting a vegetable on the dinner table. It has to do with cultivating new beliefs.

Children learn what they live. In the words of Malcolm Gladwell, "We are constructed from the outside, in." That means, who we are inside (our

beliefs, behaviors and adopted habits) is largely a function of what's going on around us. In the case of lifestyle, the outside world of convenience/package food and increased non-active "activity" choices are continually impacting children to believe these are normal and healthy behaviors.

I meet many parents who resolve to get their kids back on track: to cut out sugared cereals and drinks, to find new ways to build in exercise and to pack healthy lunches for school. Unfortunately, they are bucking up against a developing belief system that speaks louder than they do.

Frankly, children get dulled to the drone of "Just do what I say."

"Why?" they ask. "Because I said so."
For new beliefs to emerge, we must help each child see "why."

Let's stop preaching and engage our children in learning ... right along with us. Read together. Watch health documentaries together ... most include memorable sideline stories. Prepare food together and play with science together.

Confucius said it best:
"What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand."

Try engaging in hands-on learning. That is, explore new healthy recipes and search the net for good science experiments that show-and-tell the truth. These are lessons your children will never forget.

I grew up with significant lung disease, spurred by a household of heavy smokers. My journey to health began with a piece of bubble wrap that mimicked what healthy lung tissue looks like under a microscope. It was a gift from my new doctor (at the age of 12), who helped me work toward clean lungs with no meds. That science experience ultimately saved my life.

Believe with me. Together, with our children, we can change the health of our nation! ■



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