Text Type: Literary
Lexile Level: 930L

You Are What You Eat

Last week your teacher asked me to come and share what I know firsthand about overcoming an eating problem. This is my story. I hope what I say will help you make the changes you need.

I'll start with a simple principle that kept me on track: You are what you eat. If you are concerned about your weight and want to have a strong, healthy body you must learn to eat healthy meals every day. If your diet doesn't contain enough nutritious food on a daily basis, you'll simply run out of steam and have no energy. And, it won't be too long before your body starts paying the price. You may be tired of hearing this, but please don't turn a blind eye. Having a healthy body doesn't simply appear out of the blue. It takes time, planning, commitment, and knowledge about nutrition. Don't try to pass the buck and blame others for your eating problems because the choice is totally yours.

Fears that you can never have fast food or something sweet are unfounded. There is a way to have the best of both worlds, but you must learn how to eat in moderation and resist going over the top with large serving sizes. A good rule of thumb is to regularly eat moderate portions of a wide variety of foods within and across all five food groups. Nothing is forbidden, but foods with added fat and sugar should be eaten in smaller amounts and much less often. Learn to balance the number of calories you eat with the energy you use up during the day. That way you won't gain or lose too much weight.

If eating this way is new to you, don't worry about starting from scratch. It takes time to change a habit, but you can succeed by taking small steps. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day. Keep your focus and don't be a doubting Thomas. If you bite off more than you can chew, you'll be very disappointed. I'm in the same boat as you, and I've learned to keep my eye on the prize. It makes a huge difference in my attitude. When I get stuck between a rock and a hard place, it's easier for me to make the healthy choice. Setting and achieving small, healthy food goals can be a piece of cake. If you learn not to pig out on foods with empty calories, you'll find it easier to achieve your goal.

The good news is that there are a lot of nutrient-rich food choices out there. You don't have to be a copy cat and eat exactly like anyone else. We all need the same nutrients to be healthy, but we don't all need the same food. Thankfully, we are not robots and can think for ourselves. Imagine how boring it would be to live in a cookie-cutter world where everyone eats the exact same food. Eating is personal, and one size does not fit all. There are many combinations of food choices that support a healthy lifestyle. Each of us needs to figure out what works for our own bodies and follow a diet that is up to the task.

If you're sitting on the fence and can't decide what to do, just keep your chin up and remember that it's never too late to take charge and get started. Don't let the fear of failure hold you back. How you respond to failure is what matters. The ball is in your court now. Just remember, the choices you make will end up making you.