

DO YOU NEED A HEALTHY START?



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Are you off to a healthy start in 2022? What's this mean to you? When you think of healthy is it all about your body? Or does it include your mind and soul too?

According to a study done by Duke University in 2006, over 40 percent of

what we do is not a result of conscious choices but as a result of daily habits. This begs the question, "What sorts of habits should we put in place in order to be the best versions of ourselves—in every area of our lives?"

In order to answer this question, it seems we must also consider this: "Who do I want to be?" or even, "Who does God want me to be?". And then we must create our habits and actions—a roadmap of sorts, to get there.

If we think about a roadmap, it looks much different today than it used to. When I was a kid we had a book of maps of all the states. Do you remember these paper maps? If you wanted to get somewhere, you pulled out the maps you needed and created the best route you could find with major highways and roads to get you there depending on your desires—taking what looked to be the fastest route or maybe the most scenic route. When plotting your travel, unless you heard something on the news, you really didn't have a clue if there were any issues such as road closures, detours, or other unforeseen problems. And you had to guess how long it would take based on the speed limit of the different roads and how long the roads were according to the legend.

You didn't have the same access as you do today to know what the weather might like be along the way. And if you ran into an issue, you couldn't call ahead to let someone know that you would be late—unless you wanted to take the extra time to find a payphone to call.

Comparing all of this to today, wow! There are so many more conveniences. Google Maps can tell you the route and possible detours or problems, you can pull up the weather in any area with a couple clicks on your smartphone, you know how long it's going to take because it's all computed for you, if you have problems or unforeseen issues, you have a phone right there to call anyone you want, and if you are hungry, you can easily figure out which restaurants are nearby! Incredible.

I wonder, which of these roadmaps do you use to navigate your life? Do you use the "olden-days" map and start with the end in mind—knowing who you want to be, creating habits, and hoping on good roads to get there? Or do you fly by the seat of your pants and take the Google Maps route, not having to look ahead because someone or something else will help solve your problems "in the moment".

How is your roadmap working for you? Considering how many of our actions come from habits, do you have good daily habits that help you to be the person you want to be? Because of how you've grown in grace and kindness over the years, do you respond well to others and possible detours in life? What might others say about the person you are? Is that the person you want to be—mind, body, and soul? Will traveling on your current mapped out course help you finish well? Or do you need a "healthy start" so that you can have a healthy finish?

I recently watched the movie "Greater", based on the true-life story of Brandon Burlsworth, a college football walk-on who had the hope and drive to be a Razorback at the University of Arkansas. He was the underdog, he had issues that prevented him from being his best, and he was bullied. Supported by his faith, his coach, and his family, Brandon strived to be the best he could be in every area of his life. In changing his "roadmap" and transforming who he was, he ultimately made a tremendous impression on everyone who had the



Briella, Cindy, Olivia

privilege to know him and he left a legacy worth applause.

Brandon's story has a tragic ending, yet the "feel good" part of it made my family feel good throughout as he overcame obstacles and loved with a good heart. What God did in his life, being in the driver's seat of his journey, was truly incredible. It made me ponder, what if we were all like Brandon?

What if we created habits that helped us to win in life? What if, just by the way we treated others, we made an impression on them and made them feel good—with every interaction. What if we had his great faith and great heart? What if others could see Jesus in our everyday words and actions and we left behind a legacy of His goodness? Now that would be a healthy finish!

Unfortunately, not everyone has Brandon's heart. We'll come back to this.

First, I want to tell you about a change in one of the physical roadmaps in my life—the main road by my house.

In late summer the road I take from my house to everywhere was torn out. You may also be affected by the construction if you drive on Valleyhigh Road toward Byron. If you have been, know this—we are all in this mess together!

For several months during the tear out we were detoured in strange ways and oftentimes we didn't even know which route to take. It was a real crapshoot. And now, as the project is on hold for the winter, we are traveling on a dirty, grimy, dusty, bumpy gravel road.

Every trip I make is a mess. The dust makes its way into my vehicle through every crevice or intake possible. On the outside, the pieces of gravel have kicked up into my automatic running boards and caused all sorts of problems. The dust and debris have wreaked havoc on the undercarriage. And I can completely forget about having a clean vehicle in the near future.

What about the things unseen? As I bounce down the road, I wonder what is happening to my vehicle? Might the bumpy roads with potholes that I can't always avoid wear out my suspension components prematurely? Is it affecting my tires in negative ways? And what about the alignment—might I need to check it more often in this road-construction season?

As much of a mess the construction has been and its havoc wreaking on my vehicle, it is what it is. I can't do anything about it and I may as well embrace it with a good attitude, looking ahead to how great it will be when it's finished! I wonder if other's have this outlook with roads and vehicles?

Recently we received a text at our shop from a past customer about his alignment—we will call him Mr. Grumpy. I cannot tell you the contents of the texts since my articles are G-rated. But let me just say that his

language and words made me sick to my stomach.

Here's the history of his vehicle while it was in our care:

Mr. Grumpy brought his 2011 Subaru to us a year and a half ago for an alignment. It was completely out of specs so we performed an alignment as requested to the best of our ability. You see, there were issues that needed to be fixed in order to align his vehicle properly. Mr. G didn't want us to repair it so he took his vehicle and installed the components himself. He then returned to us and asked us to fix it correctly and re-align it. We gladly performed these services for him.

Now, a year and a half later, he sent us the string of eleven nasty texts with endless expletives about his alignment being off again and what terrible people we are and what a terrible business we run.

Once the shock wore off, a few things became apparent to me. #1 Mr. G must not know that alignments are not a one-and-done kind of service. #2 I wonder if he has ever considered who he wants to be and how his words and actions might affect others? #3 Perhaps he needs more than a vehicle alignment—a healthy start in life to be a better version of himself?

Speaking of "healthy starts", I want to share with you a person who is the antithesis of Mr. Grumpy. Perhaps her name should be Mrs. Kind but it's really Cindy.

Cindy owns a small business called, "Healthy Start" in Byron. She just reached her third anniversary at this cutie little healthy drink shop tucked into the shopping center off of fourth street, just northwest of Fareway Foods.

I learned about Cindy from my daughter, Briella and her best friend, Olivia. These two seniors frequent Healthy Start—and when I say frequent, I mean they go there almost every day. So often in fact that Cindy sometimes even puts them to work!

As they have gotten to know Cindy, they would share the sweetest stories about her with me. It soon became apparent that these girls weren't only visiting Healthy Start for the drinks, they were going there for the goodness in Cindy's heart.

With all of the hoopla surrounding Healthy Start, I have tried several shakes. And when I say several shakes, I mean several of the exact same shake. Oh friends, I am one of those people that when I find something I like that has less than 250 calories, is gluten free, and makes my taste buds dance, I just stick with it because I would hate to try something else and not like it as much as my favorite GF "Chunky Monkey".

Though I've had the shakes, I didn't feel all of the feels of Healthy Start until I had a chance to meet Cindy myself and get to know her a little with an informal interview for this article. As I sat at the counter waiting to ask questions between customers, the time flew by as I watched her joyfully greet

and serve every patron. Her smile and demeanor make you want to do what Briella and Olivia do—sit there for hours in the company of Mrs. Kind—oh, I mean Cindy, talk to her and enjoy her interactions with everyone.

Cindy started her real "healthy start" journey four years ago when her sister handed her a hydration drink. Previous to that moment, Cindy was an avid runner, although overweight. She said to me "You can't outrun your fork!"—meaning if you fork 200 calories into your mouth and only run off 100, it's not a recipe for success. As Cindy began using nutritional supplements (of which I cannot name for proprietary reasons) and understanding what her body needed to become healthy, she began losing weight and is currently down 47 pounds from her top weight! The pain she had previously in her legs and feet is gone. With her "healthy start" came a whole new lasting habitual healthy lifestyle!

Not only is Cindy healthier in body but she is healthier in life. Because of her personal success and her dream to share it with others, she changed career paths—altering her roadmap in life. With the support of her husband of almost twenty-six years, Cindy created and opened Healthy Start in 2019. She now uses the healthy products to give others a "healthy start" and this has become the most rewarding job she has ever had. She says she wakes up every morning and "is like, Yeah!". Not only that, but the love and enthusiasm she exudes to others is inspiring and feels so good.

Just as things became apparent to me with Mr. G, a few things have also become clear with Cindy. #1 It's not all about the shakes and energy drinks—though they are what started her on this journey, God had more planned. He has used her life to make an impact on others—not just in body but in her "feel good ways". #2 Cindy reminds me of Brandon. She has used her life to do good and make an impact on others. When this happens, God does a good thing in return and blesses the giver with all of the "feel goods" too.

Ah my friends, I wonder, after my stories here, who do you want to be? What sort of impact do you want to make on others? What legacy do you want to leave? Do you want to be a Mr. Grumpy or Mrs. Kind?

If we aren't who we want to be now, the good news is, we can make a healthy start! We can begin new habits that will change our trajectory on our roadmaps so that we can have a healthy finish.

So here is my advice to you today ... take some time to look at your roadmap, seek understanding in who you want to be, and when your roadmap doesn't get you to the destination that you desire, re-align your life with better habits and a better route. And when you need a little inspiration and some "feel goods", watch one of my new favorite movies, "Greater" and visit one of my new favorite people—Cindy at Healthy Start in Byron! You'll be glad you did!



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-MIKE T.