

What are the benefits of a wellness lifestyle as opposed to traditional medical care?

Well, you're going to try all the natural methods first, instead of when you're feeling blue going to a doctor who might just try and put you on an anti-depressant. Instead you focus on movement, nutrition and faith. When we go natural, we are trying to look for the source of the problem. Western medicine often masks the problem with pharmaceuticals instead of getting to the root.

In your private practice how do you focus your clients on wellness practices?

One of the things I highly recommend to my private clients and class members is journaling. I believe it is so powerful because it is your written word. Through journaling, you are able to see patterns and break patterns. You might see things in your eating patterns, in your emotional patterns, in exercise patterns. It really gives you faith that you can change.

I also encourage my clients to give back and get involved. Movement is huge. There is a whole science behind it. Moving gets the blood flowing and you are just going to feel more alive. I love hearing my clients in the beginning say, "I'm too tired," or "I have no energy," because once they trust me and begin to exercise, they have more energy and they are not tired anymore.

A nutrient dense, low-calorie food diet is another principle I try to promote. People sometimes don't realize you can eat tons of fruits, veggies and whole grains and you will have more energy while taking in fewer calories than if you ate that tiny, fried donut.

More than just the journaling, I try to get clients to wake up grateful for the day, not living in the past or the future.

How is your program affected by seasonality? The local food movement has gained momentum in recent years. Do you advocate your patients engage in a diet that revolves around seasonal, local foods?

Absolutely. I definitely talk to clients about buying local, organic foods. Right now, the local apples are incredible!

**A CONVERSATION WITH
Barbara Kimrier
The lifestyle and wellness coach
on the benefits of eating healthy,
managing the holidays
and accepting that you can't
change everything.**

BY KATHRYN G. MENU

We are such a fast food society, that I try to get people to slow down enough to go to Provisions, or go to Schiavoni's, get a salad – it is already washed and ready to go. I'm very much into whole foods because they give you more energy through all the nutrients they provide ... Instead of taking a vitamin, eat an apple. Instead of that cup of coffee, which is going to pick you up and crash you down, if you eat right, you'll have energy all day. I try and get people to change the way they look at food as more of an energy source than anything else.

How did you get involved with The Retreat and what kind of methods do you employ there? How does it differ from your private practice?

I am a survivor of domestic violence from a previous relationship, and I kept seeing signs for The Retreat everywhere. I spoke with them at their annual Commemoration Day in October, and I also go to the shelter and work with the women there. One of the things I love to tell the women is the serenity prayer. I was not in the [Alcoholics Anonymous] program, but I picked up the book once, and read, "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change," and for me as a survivor, it was a life changing moment ... I can't do anything about my past, but in addition to exercise and nutrition I can offer other survivors, I am also someone who knows what they are going through.

There is no judgment. We are all on our own journey trying to figure it all out. I talk to them about eating, nutrition and exercise programs. We can all help each other through our own experiences, which is why I decided to get involved.

Being in the midst of the holiday season, are there any special techniques you employ this time of year – a time of year where often feasting goes hand and hand with holiday celebrations?

I love that question because I think the holidays are such a special time of year and I personally really try to embrace the true spirit of the holidays – faith and family. That is what I focus on, rather than the food. I really try to make it about conversation and creating a great atmosphere. But it is all about balance – have that extra glass of wine if you want. Where people really get into trouble is with the leftovers, so I say, spread the fat around. Send guests home with those extra desserts so they are not all lying around your house. Another thing is don't go hungry to parties. Make sure you've had a nice big salad at home so you can stay on track. That is the difference between diet and life style.

