

The Counselor's Corner

Advice from a Fitbit

When my husband opened the Christmas gift I had given him this year, I thought I was watching Ralphie unwrap his official "Red Ryder, carbine action, two handled shot range model air rifle". Nothing else mattered, because this Fitbit Charge2 has it all. It counts all activity, even while we sleep. It helps us set up goals. When it doesn't appear we are going to be successful with our goals on a particular day, it sends us words of encouragement and tells us to "Get moving". Whenever the desired 10,000 steps are reached there is a fireworks display. When we are far from our goals, it never zaps us or sends us demeaning messages. It seems like it is one of the best self-motivating health devices out there.

Within the next two weeks, most schools in Michigan will be distributing report cards. When they come home, parents might want to emulate the activities of the Fitbit.

When we step on a scale, we discover if we are at our desired weight. That number is a fact, and how we got there is no secret. We either adopted a healthy lifestyle and ate well and exercised, or we chose immediate comfort through food and a sedentary lifestyle. We share this private number with the Fitbit, and it accepts it without shaming us. Then, it gives us a plan by suggesting how much activity we need.

Grades are objective, too, and one earns, not "gets them." Teachers carefully weigh a student's work, and come up with a grade that is based on a formula, not magic. Neither our teachers nor the scales are enemies, but both might have to be bearers of news we do not wish to acknowledge. In either case, we benefit when we get the facts, set some goals, and do the steps. Wasting too much time chastising ourselves or our children for making mistakes is self-defeating. Instead, vow to make changes. Get involved, be informed and commit to monitoring. Use report card comments to unlock the story behind grades, and to help set up goals to maintain or improve what we see on the report.

Life is in a constant state of flux. Whether we aren't doing our steps physically, or we aren't following the steps necessary to help our children achieve academic success, take advice from the Fitbit. Tell ourselves and our children, "you need to get moving."

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