

### Episode 6

## Getting Support

Hello Dear Health Enthusiasts. This is Rosie Bank and I will be your host on this episode of Health Matters podcast.

Even the process of deciding what I want to talk about with you on each of these podcasts brightens my day. This will be the sixth podcast in the Health Matters series. I look so forward to each session knowing that I have some sacred time to talk with you and connect with you. I enjoy recording these podcasts so much that I have to check with my husband, Mark, who is also the producer of these podcasts, if I've completed everything on my work-related check list. Preparing to spend this time with you feels like cheating to me, because it is so enjoyable. Talking about the best practices from a wellness perspective puts me in a good mood. I hope it does for you too, which is the whole reason why I record these podcasts for you.

Oh! I'm very excited about the free download I have for you that goes with this episode. I prepared a fun cheat sheet to help you find people in your life who will help you achieve your health goals. Not everyone you know knows how to be supportive without judging or without controlling. On this free download, I'll show you how to identify just the right kind of people who can not only support you, but who also can join you on your mission to achieve your goals and enjoy more vitality. Just go to [www.RosieBank.com/6download](http://www.RosieBank.com/6download). That's [rosiebank.com/6download](http://rosiebank.com/6download).

The feedback from these podcasts is starting to roll in. If you ever want to make me the happiest person in the world, all you have to do is share your wins with me and others in the Health Matters community. Have a look at [www.Facebook.com/GetYourBodyToLoveYouBack](http://www.Facebook.com/GetYourBodyToLoveYouBack). I promise to read and respond to your wins, your questions, and anything else you want to ask or discuss in the arena of getting and remaining healthy.

What's amazing about the strategies we discuss in the Health Matters system is that many of the simple ones produce the most dramatic results. Maybe that is my favorite part of the approach my team and I have put together. If it were complicated, few people would take this mantle on. I promise to keep things simple for you. At the end of the day, when the little things you do add up to make a huge difference, you will have yourself to thank.

I am calling this podcast Getting Support. I will be offering you a three-part system to help you feel connected to, supported by, and encouraged to make smart choices about your health by the people in your life. Mostly, I will show you how you are not alone. I envision you having a breakthrough by allowing more connection and contact with the people who can become key on your journey. Also, later in this episode, I'll also share five easy-to-implement ideas for you to create community in order to solidify these connections along the way.

When you get support on your journey to get and remain well, everything changes. The big picture is simply that you are not alone. This has its own rewards. Feelings of isolation are detrimental to your health and your immune system. The need for human contact and connection is central to our mental and physical well-being. As intricately social beings, we need to see ourselves through the eyes, hearts, and minds of others. We need feedback and other's perspectives in order to see our worlds beyond our own limited perspective. In the case of our well-being, sometimes we get stuck behind limited or negative thinking. Someone who is not you, but who knows you, can say a few words of encouragement to remind you to feel and think more optimistically.

Personally, I find that providing support for my loved ones nourishes me as much as receiving it back. It is more of a continuum than it is a back and forth process. It is not better to give support than it is to receive it. Or vice versa. Both sides need the other in order to be complete. These connections are an essential resource in your life.

I like to call this letting other people in, and letting your feelings out. In a previous episode of Health Matters podcast, I spoke with you about the beauty of imperfection. One of my favorite authors, Brené Brown, says, "You're imperfect and you're wired for struggle, but you are worthy of belonging." I recommend her book, [\*The Gifts of Imperfection\*](#). When you cultivate your ability to form life- and health-affirming bonds with key people in your life, being accepted unconditionally helps you recognize your worthiness. People who feel good about themselves do more things to take good care of their bodies. People with high self-esteem tend to be better aligned with their health goals and are far less at risk to do things that are damaging to their bodies. We can learn to regard ourselves more highly when others help us remember that we are lovable and deserve to enjoy good health.

What Dr. Brown writes about relates to our discussion. Your decision to make better choices regarding taking care of your beautiful, unique, and precious body will pay you in dividends. Looking and feeling better are two simple benchmarks that describe what's in it for you to, let's say for example, have a protein shake with berries for breakfast instead of a muffin and a cup of coffee. When you love yourself, you take better care of yourself. I write this implying it is simple on purpose. Sometimes we experience our self-love more easily when others help us remember our inherent value.

If you are listening to me, then I can assume that on some level you want your body to work better for you. Perhaps you need to climb out from under massive amounts of stress. Maybe you can no longer tolerate bingeing on food that you know makes you feel crummy afterwards. Maybe you are caught in a caffeine/sleep deprivation/exhaustion cycle. Maybe, as one of my clients told me, you are simply sick and tired of being sick and tired. Let's explore now what it means to you to have support to resolve these real and painful situations.

I recall from my former food addiction days how much shame and isolation I felt. This was decades ago, but the memories are still there. I used to feel trapped. I was too embarrassed by what I did to my body, and too horrified by my horrendous behaviors around food to tell

anyone. I remember sharing with a friend how I kind of struggled, and how I sort of had this issue with food. But I never came out and told her that I was a raging bulimic, that I had my head in the toilet about a dozen times per day, and how I was afraid I was going to die. I felt way too much shame to tell her my truth.

To this day, I am convinced I could have gotten a lot of relief a lot sooner if I had just let someone in and let my feelings out. I suspect that most of you listening to this don't do something as damaging as what I used to do, but it doesn't matter and this is not a contest. Maybe your thing is to stay up too late, and drag yourself out of bed in the morning. Maybe your thing is like what I often hear from my clients. You start off eating well during the day, making really good choices, but then you can't stop stuffing yourself after dinner. Maybe the thing that troubles you the most is a pesky habit of drinking diet sodas throughout the day. And you can't figure out why your belly fat just won't budge. You get the point. Your habits don't have to be unspeakable to feel trapped behind them. And you don't have to suffer from an eating disorder to feel embarrassment and a reluctance to let others know that you are struggling.

I want to encourage you to dig deep into the truth about how you treat your body. I want to support you to connect the dots between your habits and the reality of your health. I have three specific goals for doing this:

1. To give you a little nudge to consider letting others know what's really going on for you.
2. To guide you to letting others offer support and encouragement.
3. And last, as a result of the first two, for the chance to get that monkey of fear, shame, embarrassment, and frustration off your back. What's in it for you is to become freer and happier. There is no food on the planet that tastes as good as how freedom feels.

Regarding the nudge to let others know what's going on for you, here is a story from my own life.

I have a cousin who is a part-time health nut. When she is on track, she loves to share and discuss the latest breakthroughs in nutritional science. When she is in a cycle of bingeing, she tends to isolate herself and barely comes up for air. Isn't it interesting to consider that the bingeing is as much a result of the isolation as the reverse? When my cousin is in a downward spiral with her self-confidence, she uses food to buffer herself against the pain. She told me that she can talk about it a little bit when she is not in the middle of this behavioral cycle. But that it's impossible to talk about her feelings when she is in the middle of one. This is an example of how we can use food to barricade us away from people and life itself.

On one fine day, my cousin agreed to call me just to check in when she felt she was sliding downhill. Later she remarked that she had completely lost sight of the fact that there was someone in her world who loved her and cared about how she was doing. She said that the effect of this one simple call helped her feel better about herself. The result was that for the rest of the day she felt calmer, and the risk and fear associated with the food habits she

normally perpetuated were lifted. All this from simply connecting with someone who reminded her that she was lovable and worthy.

I do something with my clients that you can do with a loved one, a friend, family member, or coworker. Each day at approximately the same time per person, you can send a text with a win, or some observation or insight as to how you are taking care of yourself. This can be a picture taken on your smart phone of a radiantly healthy meal, or a selfie of going for a walk mid-day. Share how you are doing something to nourish your body and your mind.

One of my clients texted me that she took a walk around the block right at the time when she was accustomed, in the past, to hit the chips and the cookies. The text is her chance to be reminded that she is doing a great job. She loves the thumbs up icon I use in my reply to her. On the days when she is more discouraged and feeling less successful, I ask her what she learned about what happened. She said that remembering to make each experience into a learning one helps raise her energy and continue onward with her goals. I keep telling you that it's the little things that make the most difference.

These little two minute text exchanges are simple to do. I am encouraging you to have a text buddy. Your little accomplishments are worth acknowledging. A virtual pat on the back, or a thumbs up icon or smiley face can help you continue throughout your day.

This story illustrates the first thing I recommended to you in the three-part list from before. Let someone know how you are feeling. Do it in the spirit of taking the lid off of the pressure cooker. Back in the days when I was a bulimic, I was so excruciatingly alone and terribly lonely. I could have saved myself years of torture if I had just been brave enough to share my truth with someone.

This brings me to the second point from the three-part list. Namely, letting others give you support and encouragement. Let's say that you are willing to let someone you know see your imperfections, perhaps some embarrassment, and maybe even your pain around what you have done to your body. **YOU** want to make a change, but it's so hard to go at it alone, especially when your sense of worthiness is in the trash along with a few empty cookie box wrappers. What I want to suggest here is to choose wisely. To the best of your ability, avoid people who always try to fix you or your situation. Avoid people who could be harsh and critical. All this leads to your connecting with people who will hold the space for you to be honest, who can listen without judging, who want the best for you, and might just tell you that they get it, or perhaps ask if there is something they can do to support you.

When someone asks you if there is something that she can do to support you, I urge you to pause and reflect on this question. My friend Kathy and I end our weekly check-in with this question. Depending on what we are working on in life, business, or with our families, we let the other know how we would like to be supported. This takes practice, knowing yourself, and mutual trust. Giving someone permission to support you is not to be confused with carte blanche permission to tell you how to live your life. A good friend wants for you what you want

for yourself. As you practice this reciprocity with a chosen good friend or co-worker, you both will get better at identifying your needs and asking for help. It takes strength to ask for help. I agree with Brené Brown when she says that you are stronger when you ask for help, compared with isolating yourself and staying stuck and alone.

And last, as a result of the first two, let's talk about your getting that monkey of fear, shame, embarrassment, and frustration off your back.

Whether we do or don't take excellent care of ourselves depends on many factors. Someone who was reading my book, [Health Matters](#), said that she has really good self-esteem. And yet, she became curious why she occasionally does things that look like self-sabotage to her body. She told me yesterday that she gets on good cycles with food and exercise, and then everything just seems to fall apart. She described her journey to become well as evening out the roller coaster, in particular avoiding the rapid downturns.

Not all health issues find their root in shameful behavior. It's up to you to determine the degree to which your habits make you feel bad about yourself. Or more precisely, it's up to you to determine in what ways you feel bad about yourself, and as a result, you do damaging things to your body. It might look like a lot of fun to be at a party and chow down the pizza and guzzle the beer. But does it make sense to disassociate from your body and act as if this physical expression of you does not matter? This is why in the Health Matters system you are encouraged to take your body with you.

Let's focus on this idea that when you are connected with others, when you allow yourself to be seen, felt, and heard, that this impacts your health.

Let's say optimistically that you are ready to be honest with yourself about your health goals and concerns. Let's say that you can tell yourself the truth about how you do or don't honor your body. This vital information is key for you to move in the direction of becoming more well. Self-knowledge and self-awareness are part of your overarching strategy. It helps to know yourself as you practice getting to know your body.

This does not have to be a negative thing. You could be anywhere on the scale of feeling excited and optimistic, or you could be on the opposite end, where your fears are more real than your goals. Either way, having someone know what is going on for you, can make a world of difference. I like to think of this as having someone who can help you carry your load if it is heavy, or having someone to share in your joy if you are happy with your progress.

It is very beneficial for you to allow people in your life to have the chance to accept you even when you are struggling to accept yourself. Regarding your health, since we are all imperfect, another person can help you remember that perfectionism is overrated. Better we were self-acceptists, rather than perfectionists. A dear friend recently confided in me that she dug into the hotdogs, soda, and chips at a ballgame, even though she normally doesn't select food like that to eat. She had disappointed herself and had some shame/blame self-talk going on. I felt

empathy toward what she was feeling, but I did not share her embarrassment or shame. Therefore she could offload it on me because I love her unconditionally, and I love her even when she isn't totally loving herself.

Normally we think of judgement as causing someone to feel even worse if they did something that they regret doing. Like with my kids, who are now grown adults, if they make a mistake, it does no good to rub their noses in it. When I make a mistake, I want the people in my life to be forgiving, since I am probably working on that myself.

But here's the thing. Not judging helps people to have a chance to lighten up. If a friend tells you that she gained ten pounds on her trip to visit her parents, listening to what happened on that trip without judging will help your friend hand off some of her shame and blame energy. It is always easier to keep moving toward our goal after a slip-up if we can lighten up about our occasional lapses in judgement. This is why angels fly. They take themselves lightly.

As I move toward the end of this episode with you, I'd like to share five easy-to-implement ideas for you to create community in order to solidify these connections along the way. But before I do, let me remind you of a useful tool I created for you to help you find people in your life who will help you achieve your health goals. On this free download, I'll show you how to identify just the right kind of people who can not only support you, but who also can join you on your mission to achieve your goals and enjoy more vitality. Just go to [www.RosieBank.com/6download](http://www.RosieBank.com/6download). That's [rosiebank.com/6download](http://rosiebank.com/6download).

Here are the ideas you can implement right away. I'll add these to your free download since you might be at the gym, on the train, or driving. I'll take notes for you.

1. Have social gatherings with a pro-health theme. Vegetarian potlucks work great, especially if everyone has copies of their recipes that they can share with others. Get together to share smoothie recipes or salad recipes instead of cookie recipes. Be creative. This works great around the holidays.
2. Get a walking buddy. Arrange with a friend or neighbor to meet three to four times per week for a hearty walk. The pace ought to be just at the level where you can still speak, but find it slightly challenging to do so. My walking buddy is my husband. It's amazing how much ground we cover, literally, and in our conversations.
3. Be selective. If your co-workers go out for pizza and beer on Friday nights, or if a set of friends over indulge in alcohol on a regular basis, you may need to look around for people who can relate to and are supportive of your desire to take better care of your body.
4. Let your family and co-workers know what's going on. If you are going to eliminate junk food at home or in the breakroom, sit down with those who are impacted by this and tell them about your goals and commitment. Be prepared for resistance from the people with whom you live and work. Find those who will work with you on changing the environment to become more pro-health.

5. Ask someone to help you with accountability. It might mean someone stands between you and the fridge helping ensure that you don't binge on ice cream before going to bed. It might mean that your partner promises not to tempt you with some of the food you used to eat and are trying to avoid. Get creative, be honest, and continue to practice these new habits.

I'll end this episode on the same note with which I began. You are not alone. You count. Your imperfections give you the chance to lean into self-improvement. It's a wonderful thing to always strive to get a little bit better. I just finished listening to [\*In Defense of Food\*](#) by Dr. Michael Pollan. I really loved it and highly recommend it. As a result of what Dr. Pollan wrote about quantity of food and health promotion/disease prevention, I announced to my husband that my current health kick was portion control. Mark knows that I get tremendous pleasure out of naming my pet projects, even if I try to practice them all the time. So, at the end of the day today, I told Mark that my first day on my health kick was a success. Just having him know that being particularly mindful about portion control is my intention and that I completed day one successfully makes this more fun and motivates me to continue tomorrow and the next day.

I hope you have fun, and I hope you stay motivated too. And I know that you are not alone, because I know that I am here for you.

This is Rosie Bank, and this is Health Matters Podcast. I wish you great joy and an abundance of vitality living in your uniquely beautiful body.

Remember – Health Matters, and so do you.