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Don't Go It Alone!

There's an old story about a child trying to move a heavy stone while his father looks on. The child works and works, but is just not strong enough. Finally, he tells his father, "I can't do it. It's impossible."

His father responds, "Of course you can. You haven't used all the strength you have available to you yet." The little boy answers that he has tried his hardest, and still can't do it, to which the father responds, "You haven't asked me to help you yet."

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Sometimes dieting can seem like moving that heavy rock. You struggle and fight, exercise and sweat, but it's so hard to stick to a diet and exercise schedule that you give up. There comes a time to recognize that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Enlisting the aid of friends, family and a good weight loss support group can bolster your efforts and help you overcome setbacks that threaten to derail your weight loss efforts. Instead of trying to go it alone, try a few of these suggestions to help you stay on track with the help of friends and family.

1. Hook up with an exercise buddy. Making a date and a commitment to help support someone else's efforts will help you stick to yours as well. Think you don't know anyone you can exercise with? You might be surprised. Several years ago, I was commiserating with an online friend about another failed effort to lose weight when she proposed a novel idea. We each got a cell phone with the same calling plan, and every afternoon at 2, we 'met' for a walk. She did her walking in Seattle, and I did mine in Boston - but by keeping each other company, we helped each other lose 25 pounds each, and cemented a friendship that will last a lifetime.

2. Get your family on the right page. Husbands, wives, children and siblings can offer support in unexpected ways. Something as simple as a sincere compliment at the right time can be all you need to nudge you onward. By the same token, refuse to let them sabotage your diet efforts. When you recognize it, point it out but keep in mind that they probably don't think of it as 'sabotage'. If your husband habitually brings you a bowl of ice cream when he gets one for himself, for instance, he probably thinks he's expressing his love. Let him know that you appreciate it, but you'd rather have a kiss than ice cream anytime.

3. Join a weight loss group like Weight Watchers. There's a lot to be said for seeking out the support of others who are fighting the same battle you are. Whatever it is that motivates you, you can find it in a weight loss support group. Healthy competition, companionship, encouragement, applause and practical, common sense advice from others who are also fighting to take off pounds can all make reforming your eating habits considerably easier.

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