THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL LIFESTYLE CHANGES

With 2009 just around the corner, the more ambitious among us might already be looking ahead to the new year – firmly resolved, at last, to shed that stubborn ten pounds, organize our disheveled closets, or just generally wrestle our out-of-control schedule into a more manageable feat. Whatever your goal, take an honest look at your current habits. Pick only one or two things that you are ready, willing, and able to change and that will make the most impact in your life right now. Then ask yourself these five questions:

• How long will it take you?
• Is it easy to do in your everyday life?
• Is it specific?
• How often will you do this?
• When will you do this?

Instead of vague statements like “I’ll get more exercise” or “I’ll eat better,” map out your goals with specific steps like this: “For the next month, I will take a 15-minute walk three days a week after lunch.” Or: “I will eat a piece of fruit for breakfast and one for an afternoon snack every day this week.”