How to be a Healthy Latina

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At De Las Mías being a Healthy Latina is all about being body positive, food positive and culture positive. We don’t reject our food, our culture or our body to live a healthier life. We embrace the whole paquete and find the healthy path.

To become healthier and more powerful, más fregonas, we need to build a life of healthy habits. And that’s one of the areas we want to focus on:

**Build daily healthy habits.**

Ours is not a faster path to skinny jeans. We want to change poquito por poquito, and build up our healthy habits over time.

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Ditch the Diet Culture and Stop Dieting

We are not a diet club because diets don’t work. But, we want to help you crack the healthy weight code. It’s no secret that we all want to feel attractive, guapas, and be healthy and strong. But here’s a novel idea: STOP DIETING.

The way to crack the healthy weight code is to STOP DIETING. I know you don’t believe me so
“Would you take a medicine that was proven ineffective 95 percent of the time? That’s the failure rate of most traditional diets.” That’s what Rebecca Scritchfield, a registered dietician and author tells us in her book, Body Kindness.

Think about that, Mujer! We spend billions of dollars a year on diets that don’t work.

So here’s the magic formula that is going to crack the code: First, stop dieting. Then, mix one part self-love and self-acceptance, and one part make small healthy changes over time. This will build the life-long habits that will turn you into a Super Mujer. That’s it!

Habits are the building blocks of life.

**How Habits Tie into Our Identity**

I came across some interesting work by James Clear, author of the New York Times Bestseller, Atomic Habits. He has some insights on habits and he ties habits with identity.

The basic premise he explains is that in order to change habits, you need to “embody” the new behavior. In order for it to turn it into a habit, it needs to become a part of your identity. Make it part of who you are and how you express yourself.

This made perfect sense to me… I remembered many years ago, when my friend and creative writing mentor, Miriam Sagan, gave me some very good advice about being a writer.

I was just beginning my life as a short story writer and I told her I was worried that I would never become a writer because I would never get published. And this is what she said to me, “Honey, a writer is not someone who gets published. A writer is someone who writes.”

At first, I didn’t get it. “I’m not sure what you mean,” I said.

She said, “The way to become a writer is to do what a writer does. That’s it. If you want to become a writer, write.”

The second explanation made more sense to me and I have called myself a writer ever since. And yes, I have had lots of my work published, but publishing didn’t make me a writer. Writing made me a writer. I first had to own my identity as a writer and then do what a writer does.

My daughter is another good example of this. Sada is a dancer. Her identity is wrapped up in being a dancer. She dances. When she doesn’t dance, she doesn’t feel like herself. And that is because she is not doing what a dancer does. A dancer dances.

A cyclists cycles. A cook cooks. A mother mothers. Get the picture?
The Healthy Latina Identity

Now, let’s talk about our identity as Latinas. What do you do as a Latina that makes you a Latina? Think about it. I am sure you can come up with a few examples. ¿Cómo te latinas? How do you Latinize yourself?

Now let’s jump to a Healthy Latina identity. I call myself a Healthy Latina. That is part of who I am and what I do. Am I at the “ideal weight” according to the BMI charts? Nope. Do I eat donuts? Yup. De vez en cuando. Do I love me a good bizcochito once in a while? ¡Absolutamente! Con un cafectio por favor.

Donuts and bizcochitos notwithstanding, the way I embody my identity as a Healthy Latina is
by **what I do on a daily basis.** Every day, I eat fruits and veggies. I bike. I walk. I get my sleep. I drink my water. Those habits are all part of what makes me a Healthy Latina. Do I do this all the time? No. But I can tell you that these are my healthy habits that help me own my identity as a Healthy Latina.

A word of caution about labels and identity: There is so much research out there that points to the health problems that we Latinas and Latinx face. These health problems are real, but it is not, nor should it be, part of our identity. For example, having diabetes doesn’t make you “A Diabetic.” You have diabetes, you are a person with diabetes but you, my dear, are not A Diabetic.

We can be Healthy Latinas. We can claim that identity for ourselves and do what Healthy Latinas do.

Choose how you want to identify yourself and own it. Embody your identity and don’t let anyone pin a label on you that you don’t want.

**What makes you a Healthy Latina?**

Tell me. Start practicing those healthy habits now. Start small. Build Up. **Poquito por poquito.**

References:

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