

you're actually eating when you eat a donut, by placing several spoonfuls of shortening (hydrogenated oil) and sugar into one participant's hand – the ingredients of just one donut. Once you know exactly what's in the foods you're eating, it is much easier to make smart food choices.

Knowledge is power, and we have choices. The theme resonated well with many Wise Women, including Jacqueline Hernandez. "I have recently lost weight using the Atkins program," she said.



JACQUELINE  
HERNANDEZ

"I was getting bored with the routine. I wanted to expand my food choices but was afraid I'd fall prey to the weight gain that some people experience after going off the program. Zonya not only gave us recipes, but practical life experiences," Hernandez added. "She's the first health and fitness speaker who acknowledges we have significant others and children in our lives, and they still want to eat pizza. Zonya showed us how we still can have a date night at the movies. Instead of purchasing food there, bring your own small bag of peanuts and buy a diet soda. You can live normally and make healthy habits your lifestyle. This is not an 'I need to lose 30 pounds for the class reunion' kind of diet. You don't have to grandstand and tell everyone 'I'm on a diet, I



DIANA WALLS

can't do this, I can't eat that.' You can still participate in family activities. It's about the choices you make. You can still go to the party, but eat a healthy snack before you go or choose something healthy at the party. That's what I got out of it. The power of choice."

Choice applies not only to avoiding movie popcorn and donuts. Zonya also cautions Wise Women to avoid the heavily advertised commercial brand foods, which are often laden with artery-clogging hydrogenated oils, salt and sugar. Zonya also suggested selecting whole-wheat pasta instead of white; brown rice instead of white rice; and whole wheat and whole grain bread rather than white bread. Not only do they have higher amounts of healthy fiber and other nutrients, they are more satisfying, so you feel full.

Sometimes a birthday is all the inspiration we need. "I just turned 47, and I need to start exercising regularly and watching what I eat and drink, and I basically need a kick start to push me to do it," remarked Diana Walls. "At work, lunch is always fast food. I'd like to change from ordering fries to a salad or wrap. It's a change that needs to take place in my brain as well as in my actions."

A birthday also inspired Gail Zatirka to attend. She struggled with weight all her life, and at 50 has decided to do something about it. She suffers from rheumatoid arthritis, a condition that has significantly affected all areas



GAIL ZATIRKA

of her life. "I work three days a week and feel tired all the time. It's hard to find the energy to exercise and stay healthy," she says.

"I did several low-carb diets with great results... at first. Then, as soon as I stopped, I gained it all back. Low-carb diets are about deprivation. I would've killed for a potato, where before that, I couldn't have cared less. I need a lifestyle change."



I've been looking at the recipes  
and tips in Zonya's book  
and learning a lot. I'll look at  
one idea each day and say,  
*"I can do this."*

– CELIA FORD

to making a change, starting today.