



This is the *Health Matters* podcast.

Nurturing Body & Soul by CJ Hitz

I'm your host Kimberley Payne and this is the show for women who want to improve their spiritual and physical health.

In this episode, we'll be talking about nurturing body and soul. CJ Hitz shares about how he started running in his 30s and eating smoothies to support this new activity and the impact it had on his life.



This week we're going to be talking with CJ Hitz. CJ is an author and speaker with a heart and passion to see people walk closely with Jesus. He and his wife Shelley speak in churches, schools, camps and retreats across the United States and abroad.

CJ received his Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at Anderson University in 1996 and added a Secondary Education Social Studies degree at Bowling Green State in 1998.

He's an avid runner, loves the outdoors passionately, enjoys strong coffee, dark chocolate, Mexican food and Oregon Ducks football having grown up 80 miles south of Eugene. He also does impressions of Scooby Doo & Shaggy whenever he gets the chance and would love to try out for the next Scooby movie. CJ and his wife reside in Colorado Springs, CO. Welcome CJ.

CJ

Thank you for having me.

Kimberley

Now you know I'm going to ask you to do the impression. I'm a big fan of Scooby Doo myself. What can you offer us for an impression?

CJ

Alright. Let's see if I can do it in my best morning voice here. So I'll actually do both Scooby Doo and Shaggy. Here it goes. (impression)

Kimberley

Wow, that's fantastic. You really do sound like them!

CJ

It took a little practice but if you can do Shaggy you can do Casey Kasem of Casey's top 40 the radio show. He was the voice of Shaggy all those years.

Kimberley

Oh. I do have the movies and I really enjoyed watching them with the kids. Let's move on to a little more serious stuff. Can you share with you us your background and journey with Christ?

CJ

Yeah, I grew up—as you mentioned in my bio—in Oregon, a little town called Myrtle Creek. My parents raised me in church. We went to a conservative Baptist church. My dad, actually, had come out of the Mormon church and it was kind of interesting in what church they were going to raise me in. My mom ended up winning that argument and my dad eventually ended up coming out of the Mormon church and being baptized in the Baptist church. I never really gave my life to Christ in a serious way. I think I said a prayer with my dad as he was reading some Bible stories one evening, I was maybe 6 or 7 years old, and it didn't really take root in terms of a genuine commitment until I was in college. So my sophomore year in college I was invited to come down the hallway of the dorm I was living in and there was a Bible study going on. Little by little I felt like the Lord was softening my heart toward Him. Just through hearing the Word and discussing it. And it was my sophomore year, I was just coming back from a play—you might be familiar with it—it's called Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames. I think it originally started in Canada. I came back from that feeling really moved and decided on my dorm room floor I dropped down to my knees and I said, "Lord I surrender to You." Since then I've been walking. That was the spring of '93. I came back from college that summer and the pastor from the church I grew up in, ironically, asked me, "CJ I notice on our records you've never been baptized." So I said, "It's the right time because I recommitted my life to the Lord a couple months back." I felt like the Lord was really working in all that. It was neat to be able to be baptized after making a genuine commitment to the Lord and so here it's been 22 years later and the Lord still has my heart.

Kimberley

Isn't that wonderful. Now, when did you start running and how has that impacted your life?

CJ

Let me actually take you back to my high school years. I ran cross-country my freshman sophomore year in high school but I absolutely hated it. I actually only did it because someone said, "Hey you should

come out because it'll help you with your basketball season". And basketball was my passion. So I came out my freshman sophomore year for cross-country and didn't enjoy it. We'd give our coach grief. He'd send us out for a run and a few of us would take different routes and we'd just go down to the river and hang out. We didn't really do our full run. Pretty soon he got smart on that and got a moped. Coming after us with this beet red face and you'd hear that thing whizzing around the corner and it struck fear in you. And so I quit running after my sophomore year. I said I had it, I'm just going to dedicate my athletic endeavours to basketball.

Little did I know that almost 20 years later I would pick up a book by Dean Karnazes, he wrote a book about his trail running and ultra running adventures . Something just awoke in me. I said, "Man I'm getting more and more out of shape" and I wanted to try something that really snapped me back into fitness. At that time I thought I might want to do 100 mile races. But ultimately I just wanted a sense of adventure and getting out on trails. And so I slowly took up running and I was 35 years old. I caught the running bug big time. Pretty soon neat things like weight started coming off. I started doing more and more races. Now it's been 7 years, and all 7 years each year I've improved in my times. I just love running. It's really taken me a lot of places. That was sort of the 'getting back into running' story.

Kimberley

Very inspiring. I remember running when I was younger as well. And I hated every last second of it. Maybe there's hope for me too. I know that my cousin—who is the same age as me—his wife does marathons and does Boston, and he just started. He was in his 40s when he started and he got into Boston marathon as well. There is hope for us who are getting up there in age that we can try a new thing that maybe we didn't like before.

CJ

Definitely. You guys actually have a gentlemen up in your area, his name is Ed Whitlock. He's in his 80s now. He continues to set world age group records. He didn't start running till his mid-40s. This gentlemen is just incredible. I believe that at 80 years old he ran a 3:15 marathon. Which is just absolutely astounding. I mean it just blows away any concept of age. He was a phenomenon but still it just shows you that this is a guy that reserved a good lot of his running years to the second half of his life. He's an inspiration. I believe he lives in Toronto, that way. Look him up, Ed Whitlock. Just a real inspiration for those who think they can't take up running later.

And be careful though, it is a positive addiction. Feel those endorphins and that second wind. You begin to understand what I never realized what they mean by running bug. Now you can really enjoy it more than you can ever imagine. I know that's been the case with me.

Kimberley

I will look up Ed and I'll put a link in the Show Notes for the listeners as well. That is inspiring, 80 years old, oh my goodness. Now why is healthy eating important to you?

CJ

What I realized—especially as I took up running a little older—I realized how important getting good nutrition in your body was for recovery. Recovery is huge. You make the most gains in your running, or any fitness for that matter, while you're at rest. So it's important to rest. That goes for sleep. But part of that is with recovering by getting good things in your body. What you're putting in your body is really the rebuilding materials for what your body is going to become. And so if we're recovering on junk food on a regular basis, you can get away with it for awhile and some people will even say, "I perform just as well in races. I eat a greasy, sugary food and such." And that might be the case but what's the long-term effect? You should begin to look at long term. It catches up with you eventually. It could come through with injuries, it could come through just feeling fatigue. Really draining a lot of the nutrients that it needs to function. Not just at a survival level but really at an optimal performance level.

And what I've found, especially as I've turned into a Masters Runner (which is for the listeners who aren't familiar with that term, all of over 40). Now you suddenly enter this world of Masters Runner. It's kind of cool. It's like starting over again in a lot of ways. What I've found as I've gotten older is the importance of getting good nutrition in my body to recover well is that much more significant. Things that you could cheat on 20, 22, 23 years old, they sort of come back to bite you if you're doing that on a regular basis into your 40s.

Ironically I'm running faster at 41 years old than I ever ran in those cross-country in high school. It's a myth to say you can't continue improving for years and I think nutrition is part of that. I think it's almost half the battle. Yes, you need to get good workouts, you need to be consistent and that kind of thing if you want to compete at a pretty competitive level. But I just think that nutrition is key in terms of a component that'll help you squeeze out your most potential.

Kimberley

Now the book you wrote, "Smoothies for Runners", how are those smoothies different for runners than they'd be for anyone else?

CJ

It was sort of one of those things where the title, even though it's geared towards runners, in effect you could really say smoothies for athletes of any kind. I was trying to specifically reach the runner niche but in reality people like cyclists and triathletes have asked me if the smoothies are good for me as well. Yes, of course. Whether you're doing yoga, whether you're a triathlete or whether you're a basketball player specifically what I do is mention some of the key ingredients in each of these smoothies. And there are 32 of them that I mention.

They're broken up into pre-run fuel, extra smoothies. Smoothies that are really going to provide energy for fueling. And then I got post-run smoothies that are geared toward recovery. Giving you the building blocks to recover well and help you maximize your next run. And then I got green smoothies. They're all green based smoothies that really have a lot of greens and yet there are some other ingredients in there as well. And then what I call 8 dessert smoothies. These would be sweeter smoothies that sort of help satisfy your sweet tooth. And yet are really healthy in their own right as well. It's not like I'm asking you

to put chocolate syrup in there. It's really just sweet that play off different desserts that are out there but with a healthy alternative likes fruits.

The unique part of the book is that in each smoothie I give a nice description of some of the key ingredients and why those are important for our bodies. For example, why blueberries are important and why blueberries really serve as a high antioxidant. Something that's going to relieve inflammation. I call blueberries a natural ibuprofen. Because blueberries contain components that really help alleviate inflammation. Inflammation is one of those things that can create lots of soreness. If you're living with chronic inflammation it can be quite debilitating. Even people with arthritis I would say, "Hey load up on anti-inflammatory fruits like dark berries and things that really can help in a natural way"b. Bring your body back to a rhythm that it feels good.

God's given us so many of these natural foods that are geared to bring health to our bodies and that almost serve as a healing agent.

Kimberley

I personally love blueberries and I didn't realize that they helped with those things. You've inspired me to go out and buy some more berries again. Now up in Canada we have to get it imported. I like the fresh ones in season. The "Smoothies for Runners" sounds great and I especially like the part on sweet smoothies because I really do have a sweet tooth so I'll definitely be getting a copy myself.

You've written a number of books. You've got "Fuel for the Soul", "Forgiveness Formula", "Smoothies for Runners", "Starting Off on the Right Foot" and "A Life of Generosity". Tell us about your writing and speaking ministry.

CJ

I've always enjoyed writing. I wouldn't consider myself a prolific writer. My wife is a little more in that category in terms of the sheer amount of content she can put out. But I've always enjoyed the creative side of writing. Going back to high school I was always in an AP English class. I still remember the English teacher was just fantastic in terms of taking us to different realms with classic books and identifying good writing and creative writing. I've always enjoyed that. I dabbled with some devotionals. I remember there was a gal back in Pennsylvania that was putting together a big compilation of devotions and poems. And I was welcome to contribute to that. It was called "Pen from the Heart". And that was some of my first exploration into contributing some writing.

I got involved with an organization called Youth for Christ when I got out of college. I ended up working with them for a few years. And working with local high and junior high school students sharing the Gospel and inviting them to meetings. Really geared toward non-church kids and kids that didn't grow up in a church atmosphere. In some of the talks I would put together, I found that I was enjoying putting down some writing as well. Eventually that led to things like "Fuel for the Soul" where I decided I'm going to put together and edit some of the things I've written over the years. It turned into 21 devotionals there.

Over the years I've even had opportunity to partner with Shelley on a few of the books like "Forgiveness Formula" we wrote together. I'm not necessarily one that can just put out 2 books a year, and be as prolific as some, but there are moments where I have very creative stretches and I can sit down. That's probably more my gifting, wording something in a unique way. That's unique to my own style. Everyone has their own style and their own voice in how they write. I've enjoyed it. It's a way to share what God's teaching me. It's a way to share thoughts that rise to the surface that just need to get out.

I once heard a saying that I really like, "Impression without expression equals depression". So in other words, you're impressed with something from God, you need to express that, and if you don't it sits inside and it becomes depressing. God has these ways of sort of welling something up in us to where it just needs to overflow and be shared with others. Otherwise it just sort of grows stale and can be depressing. Writing is just one of those ways that we can get out those thoughts and get out those things that God is teaching us.

Kimberley

Well we're definitely on the same page that way. I like that, "Impression without expression equals depression." I remember reading your devotional "Fuel for the Soul" and I did write a review of it too and I was very impressed with it too and enjoyed it.

We're going to move on to the BEEP round. CJ will give quick tips on the four disciplines of Bible study, eating healthy, exercise, and prayer or BEEP. So what do you have for us for a quick tip for Bible study?

CJ

One of the things I used to tell kids regarding Bible study is that it's kind of like if you go back to your school years. Half the battle in getting a passing grade is just showing up for class. I used to think you could just show up for class, take good notes, listen to the lecture, and you could still pass the class with a C by getting your homework in, and even a D on the test. You can still pass the class. It's just showing up and putting yourself in that position.

Regarding Bible study I think it's so true if you just have a routine of showing up, opening that Word and placing yourself before the Lord. Our walk with Him and what He can do in our hearts and in our minds is crucial. He wants to bring things to our mind at certain times of the day but if you don't show up for class you're not really going to have been exposed to his lesson. And so when it comes time to be tested at different points you're going to be in a more deficient spot because you weren't there for the lecture. I kind of look at it in that way.

Another way of Bible study for me is like throwing down soul grub. It's like sitting down to a good meal. You begin to look at it that way. You get excited about just showing up. Even if it's just 5 minutes. Some days we just have those days where it's just on and on, we barely have enough time to just breath, but just showing up even if it's just 5 minutes can really put yourself in a great spot for the Lord to use that.

Kimberley

“Throwing down soul grub” I’ve never heard that but I love it. What do you have for a quick tip for exercise?

CJ

You don’t have to be a runner. I know we have many listeners out there that are into different forms of exercise, whether it’s cycling or swimming. It could be a number of things. But one thing that always keeps me going is I set a goal. I’m always setting a goal for something I want to compete in. For me it’s running. So a good way to do that is to sign up for a race. And as you know when you sign up for something your accountability goes up big time because you’ve got this looming now. It’s on the calendar and if you don’t train for it, race day is going to show up and you’re going to be disappointed and think why didn’t I train more for this. You’ll stay a little more consistent with things. So I think just setting a goal, signing up for something.

Also, if you sign up for something or say you’re going to do something, include 2 or 3 other people to be accountable to. People that you will voice that goal to. And have them ask you about it from time to time.

One quick little story. Back before I got into running, I was getting to a point where my weight was getting out of control. I used to be 50 pounds heavier than I am now. I remember Shelley and I came out of a restaurant just feeling absolutely sick almost, we just ate so much. I was at a point where I was sort of miserable and I was at a point where I wanted to take a challenge. I was just very ripe for change so I picked up a book called “Body for Life” by Bill Phillips. And he offered this 12-week challenge where you took a before and after picture where you followed his program and then you had a chance to actually win a before and after contest. This kept me going. I signed up for the challenge and it kept me going those 12 weeks of doing this transformation. Over the course of those 12 weeks I really did transform. I lost 10 pounds but the thing is I gained a whole bunch of muscle so I looked totally different than I did before. I traded muscle for fat. Or the other way around. Anyway that was an example of how I signed up for something and all of a sudden it ratcheted up my commitment level.

I just encourage all your listeners to set a goal, whether it’s signing up for a race or doing a class at your local gym. Something that’s going to keep you going and people are going to keep you accountable to that.

Kimberley

Wonderful. And what’s your quick tip for eating healthy?

CJ

I’m going to go back to smoothies. Some people may say that they don’t have time or really want to get the most bang for their buck for nutrition. For me, smoothies have been a huge help and you can always keep ingredients in your freezer whether it’s frozen fruit or ground flax seed—it’s one of my key ingredients in getting a healthy omega fat in you—getting a good protein powder that is pure and

healthy. For me, I like “Garden of Life”. It’s a company that even gives me some sponsorship. They’re popular, alternative for those that want plant based protein.

But anyway, smoothies can really help give you some of the most nutrition you can get in one little sitting. And it’s quick. You just throw those things in your blender, blend them up. If you’ve even got something on the go, if you need to put it in a to-go cup, in your coffee mug or whatever to stay cool on your way to work. And it’s a way that your body can quickly use the ingredients. Because it’s in liquid form.

Anything that’s in liquid form is already going to be broken down in one or two more steps than a solid food. So it’s going to immediately hit your system and it’s going to energize you. Not only that you’re getting the fiber.

People say, “What about juicing?” Well juicing is good and obviously it tastes really good. It obviously has a nice consistency but the smoothie keeps the fiber in there. And you need the fibre to bind up the waste in your body and some of the damage that you’ve done through exercise, the fiber binds that up. We need good dietary fiber in our daily routine. So smoothies keep that. I just highly recommend a smoothie. Whether it’s once a day, once every other day. If you could get 5 smoothies in your body during the course of the week you’re going to really add a lot of good to your body. You’re going to feel good.

Kimberley

Love it. And what’s your quick tip for prayer?

CJ

If reading your Bible is like throwing down soul grub then prayer to me is simply talking with Daddy. I guess you could say with Bible study and prayer you’ve got throwing and talking. It’s simple in terms of we know how powerful it can be yet so many times we want to solve things ourselves and sometimes God can be a last resort. I think if we really begin to look at this whole thing like Daddy just wants us to hop up on His lap and talk with Him. It’s not a pressure thing. It’s not, “I got to get so many minutes in prayer or I’m a horrible believer.” It’s really about a privilege of hopping on a Father’s lap who just wants us to talk with Him and share everything on our hearts, our concerns, give Him our praise. So that’s part of it, it’s just flipping that mindset to it’s a privilege to talk with Daddy.

And then for me it’s important to have a place for me to go. For me, on a very local level it’s my chair. My nice lazy boy chair, it’s my candle next to me. I just love to light a candle, there’s just something about that. I like it early in the morning before the sun comes up, the candle’s going, it provides this atmosphere of peacefulness. And sometimes I’ll even have my blanket. And I’ll just even get on my knees in front of the chair. I’ll have the candle going and I’ll put the blanket sort of over me. Sometimes I’ll just hide underneath the blanket. There’s a sense that this is a sacred place. A sense that sets me into a mode of prayer and just quiet. We need that quiet for our souls. So find your place. I would even recommend going to places that really are peaceful out in nature. I have a few of those places too.

Places where I can go on a retreat for two or three days. But more than anything start where you're at, find that place whether it's in your house or close to your home where you can go and it sets you immediately into a peaceful place of solitude to quiet your heart, both inside and outside. I think that's important for all of us.

Jesus broke away many times. You read that in scripture. It says that He, in Luke, that He often broke away for prayer. He just wanted to talk with His Daddy. And He gave us that example. Finding that routine and not making it a drudgery but something to look forward to. It's a spot where you realize you're going to come away from there with so much peace and joy and power. He knows you. To set out on your day. For me, I really like that in the mornings, those real quiet morning times. For some people it might be a half an hour before you go to bed at night. It could be different for each person.

Kimberley

I like the picture of getting up into the lap of my Daddy. I like that. I understand that you have a gift for our listeners. Can you tell us about that?

CJ

I would like to offer one copy each of my "Fuel for the Soul" (which is only on Kindle). I'd like to offer a gift of a copy of my "Smoothies for Runners" (that is either in Kindle or print format). And then a copy of "Starting Off on the Right Foot – A Beginner's Guide to Running Well". It's a book geared toward beginning runners of a lot of things that I learned over the years (it comes in print or Kindle). I would say that we would limit the print to the US and Canada in terms of sending a copy. If you're outside of those areas it would be a free e-version, something that could be read in Kindle format or whatever device they're using. I'd like to offer those, however you want to award those is up to you.

Kimberley

What I think we'll do is we'll leave the comments open on the website, specifically to do with this podcast. From the comments, I think I'll leave it up for a week, until the next podcast comes on. Then I'll do a random draw from the people that leave a comment about this podcast and we'll award it to one random person.

CJ

You bet. And you have a blog as well, correct?

Kimberley

Yes

CJ

Alright. So I'd love to offer one of the smoothies that is my most popular. I call it, "CJs Original Blend" and it's within the "Smoothies for Runners" book but I also have it back of a business sized card that has

the recipe and the website on the front. I'd love, if you're able to, to post that recipe for anybody to be able to enjoy.

Kimberley

That would be fantastic.

CJ

Yeah it was the thing that sort of got me started. I found myself using it especially after every hard workout and it was just a great recovery smoothie. It made me feel so good afterwards and I think it would be a neat one for any of your listeners to try if they want to enter the realm of the smoothie world.

Kimberley

I really appreciate that, I look forward to it myself. I will put it in the Show Notes when this goes up on my website. Thanks again to CJ Hitz for his expert advice and thank you for joining us today.

This interview has been brought to you by [*Fit for Faith – 7 weeks to improved spiritual & physical health.*](#) You can discover more about this book and other health programs at www.kimberleypayne.com.

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This has been the Health Matters Podcast, believing that prayer & Bible study are to the spirit what exercise and healthy eating are to the body.

Blessings on your journey to health.

About Kimberley Payne

Kimberley Payne is the host of the *Health Matters – Healthy Spirit Healthy Body* podcast. She is author of *Fit for Faith – a 7-week program to improve spiritual and physical health* and is a motivational speaker offering workshops and online courses based on her book. She hopes to inspire women to live happier, healthier lives that glorify God. She is happily married and lives with her husband in a village east of Toronto, Canada where she hikes and bikes. Visit her website at www.kimberleypayne.com

