

3 Things That Must Change in Order to Maintain Weight Loss

I recently saw the “Queen of Soul,” Aretha Franklin, sing “Natural Woman” at the Kennedy Center Honors program. Her performance stunned me. I also noticed that she’d lost a lot of weight since the last time I saw her on T.V.

Curious to see how she did it, I did an online search for “Aretha Franklin weight loss.” I discovered that she lost 85 pounds—the same amount I lost many years ago from my highest weight of 240 pounds.

Back in 2010, Aretha had surgery for an undisclosed ailment. While many speculated that she had weight-loss surgery, Aretha herself has not confirmed that.

However, she did confirm on *The View* T.V. program that she changed her lifestyle after her health scare. She said: “I feel wonderful, I’ve got more energy, I’ve changed my diet, going to whole foods now, getting the best stuff ... Dropped the chitlins, drop the ham hocks, getting some—I won’t say better food, I’ll say other food.”

Uh-oh. After reading that last phrase, some alarm bells went off in me.

If you are seeking permanent weight loss, here are three things for which you need to watch out. Aretha needs to heed these things too, otherwise the weight she lost may come back.

1. Regardless of how you lost weight, your daily habits must change permanently to keep it off. Many people have the classic diet mentality:

I’ll go on a diet and lose the weight. Then I can go back to the same eating habits that made me gain weight in the first

place.”

If you start with that mentality, you are bound to gain back all the weight you lost – plus more.

Your body is giving you valuable feedback when you gain excess fat. It is telling you that something is out of order.

Most of the time, our bodies are working exactly the way God designed them. The likely thing that is out of order is your daily health habits.

It does little good to address the symptoms (fat) without addressing the source (habits). You see, you probably did not wake up with the excess fat on your body overnight; the fat gain happened over time. It was the compounding effect of your daily habits.

These habits can be either in the foods you chose to eat consistently, the portion sizes you chose to eat consistently, or the exercise you chose not to do consistently.

The operative word is *consistently*.

Your previous habit pattern has already shown you where it leads. Going back to that same pattern (as in the diet mentality) will only lead you to back to the same place.

If you want to go to a different place, then you need a new route.

2. Your identity needs updating. Aretha was quoted as saying that she lost weight because, “I was too fat.” Having formerly been obese, I cringe when someone says, “I am fat” or even “I was fat.”

Even though you may have excess fat on your body, that is not who you are. Fat is not your identity. Saying, “I am fat” is just as ridiculous in saying, “I am bone” or “I am blood.”

However, some people live in a body with excess fat for so long that “fat” becomes their identity. They can’t even see themselves in a smaller body.

Some have experienced emotional hurts, abuse, or neglect. So food becomes a source of comfort for them. Subconsciously, they think if they don’t eat certain foods, then they will be left without comfort.

Finally, some think losing weight will make them emotionally vulnerable. Their weight has become “emotional insulation” to them.

I had that issue. When I was a teen, I received a lot of male attention and once even felt my safety was threatened. On some level, I believed becoming heavier would make me less exposed to that attention.

In those cases, you can give such people the best diet in the world but they will not change because the above things are issues of the heart, not the body.

In my case, I gained a new identity in my relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I learned to see myself as the precious daughter of the most High God. He gave me a new vision of myself as a fit, healthy person,

I received my comfort from Him, not through food. I learned that God could heal my emotional hurt—and I allowed Him full access to my heart so that He could.

3. Your attitude toward healthy living must change too. Based on one of her quotes, Aretha’s attitude toward healthy eating concerns me. She said, “... Dropped the chitlins, drop the ham hocks, getting some—I won’t say better food, I’ll say other food.”

I could be wrong, but it sounds like Aretha’s preference remains on the foods that made her gain weight. I wonder:

How does she define “better” food?

Does “better” mean better to her taste buds? Better for her body? Or both?

I’m thinking she means better to her taste buds. But in terms of “better” for her health and weight, they likely aren’t.

The truth is that Aretha could eat ham hocks and chitlins if she wanted, but to be compatible with the weight she wants to maintain, I’d advise her to think differently.

Maybe she could save those for special occasions and not try to make a consistent diet of them. For most of us, what gets us in trouble are our daily habits, not the things we do once in a while!

Here is an interesting fact about taste buds: Did you know that the lifecycle of tastebuds is between 10 days to 2 weeks? To me, that means our taste buds can be retrained.

With the amount of healthy recipes and tasty spices out there, there is no need to choke down food you don’t like, even if it does help you lose weight!

You can make it an adventure to discover foods that you like, plus keep you healthy. I call that your healthy “sweet spot.”

You eat food you like, but that is also good for you. That is the best of both worlds!

I believe Aretha can maintain her weight loss. But that won’t happen without her deciding to make changes in the way she approaches her daily life.

A quote I love by author Rory Vaden applies here: “Success is not owned, it is only rented. And the rent is due every day.”

Aretha needs to make changes her daily habits, make her identity that of a fit/healthy person, and have a positive

attitude toward healthy choices.

May God bless Aretha on her journey to wellness!

Kimberly Taylor is the author of The Weight Loss Scriptures and many other books. Once 240 pounds and a size 22, she can testify to God's goodness and healing power. Visit and receive more free health and weight-loss tips.

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