

Dealing With the (Overweight) Elephant in the Room

I watched a YouTube video the other day of a full-grown elephant strolling into a couple's backyard and schnozzeling up water out of their swimming pool. Then she casually strolled away like this was her normal routine.

To those taking the video this was not a normal day. There was an elephant in their back yard!

Today, I got an email from a woman I know. Even though her question deals with an elephant, it is similar to the ones people ask me all the time. Though I can't answer every email I receive, I'm answering this one in public because I think many will benefit.

Here's her question: "What brought you to the place of making real changes to get free of the elephant in the room? I know from reading your book you struggled with coming to that place of, 'Today, I will do this. I will deal with the truth of being unhealthy.'"

The idea of the elephant in the room is an interesting one. To whom or what does the elephant refer? When we answer that question, we may be able to get at the truth. So, let's go on an elephant hunt.

I Am the Elephant

We have met the elephant, and she is us. If we are overweight or obese and beyond, we think the elephant refers to us.

Every Sunday when I walked in the door of my church, I would automatically look around to see if I was the largest person in the room. If I was, I would cower as far back as I could. I didn't want my elephant size to be too overwhelming.

I truly hated being the largest person in the room. If there was even one person larger than me, I'd breathe a sigh of relief. Since losing weight, I know that most folk don't look around to see who the largest person is in the room. Most don't even notice.

Size is irrelevant to most. It's definitely more noticeable to us than others. We are the ones who have to live with ourselves. We know the difficulties our size brings.

If anything I find people are more considerate than accusatory. They are concerned for our health. They would genuinely like to help, but are afraid to for fear of making us angry.

She Is the Elephant

Someone else is the elephant. Someone made us angry, hurt our feelings, abused us, gossiped about us, hurt us physically, snubbed us, told lies about us, left us, fed us unhealthy food or didn't love us.

There could be any number of reasons we blame someone else for our weight gain. What they did seems like a difficulty that looms so large we cannot see around it nor can we get through it. So we stay stuck and we eat.

The reasons we turn to food can be many and varied. The truth is everyone has difficulties, but not everyone chooses to go to food to solve their problems.

This elephant remains in the room because we choose to keep it there. We feed it by rehearsing our victim status. It's easier to be a victim than a victor. It's easier to blame our pet elephant than ourselves.

Food Is the Elephant

An elephant eats a lot of food. The amounts vary from 150

pounds a day to 770 pounds a day. The larger amount of food is for elephants that live in the wild. They, of course, have to hunt for their own food, roam larger spans of area, endure the difficulties of temperature and terrain.

If an elephant eats too much or too little food, one of several things might be the reason. They don't need to consume so much food because of the environment: captivity versus free range. They can't find food or the right types of food aren't fed to them. They are sick.

All three things also effect us. Our environment dictates a lot of how we eat. If we are in an area that doesn't have access to highly processed foods, we will eat less. If we have the wrong types of foods, we will eat more. If we are sick, or metabolically broken, we will eat more.

A person who is metabolically broken can't mitigate the amounts of foods they eat, such as sugar, flour, highly processed foods and fast foods. This is typically what has become known as the American diet.

It's a mindless type of eating. Part of this is the craving mechanism in our brain is messed up or broken. It recognizes something high in sugar content or an item that will eventually turn into sugar, and once it has hit the blood stream turns on the craving mechanism for more. Once the "more" hits, there is a desire for more. It is an endless loop. It never stops.

Emotions Are the Elephant

Emotions can loom larger than an elephant in our lives. They take over everything. They invade the secret places where no one else is allowed to go. They take over our minds, wills and behaviors. They make us do exactly what we don't want to do.

We can try to reason with our emotions. We can try to force them to be silent. We can will them to be silent, but they

just scream all the louder.

Paul had something to say about this. "For what I am doing, I do not understand, for I do not practice what I will to do, but I do the very thing I hate. ... For the will to do what is right is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who does it, but sin that lives in me. I find then a law that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. ... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:15, 19, 24-25).

Our emotions become the backdrop of our life. Everything runs according to how we feel and yet, we're not really sure where those feelings came from.

God Is the Elephant

Sometimes we even blame God for our problem. We cry out to Him to fix our problem. We tell Him to make us not so hungry, to help us magically lose 250 pounds, to strike vengeance on those who wronged us. We feel if He would just do these things everything would be fine.

It's His fault for making us this way. He needs to fix us. Then all will be well with the world. We can continue eating the foods we love and be healthy if God only weren't so stubborn.

The Herd Is the Elephant

In essence, it feels as if we have not one elephant in our room, but a whole herd of elephants.

That brings us to the crux of the matter. The elephant in the room is really a complex conundrum of a set of issues that involve our physical body, our physical environment, our

reactions to situations and people, our emotions and our spiritual life.

When we understand how complex we are and how we have eaten ourselves to elephant size, we begin to believe there is no simple solution. We have eaten ourselves into a conundrum, an intricate and difficult problem.

We are like Paul in that we want to do good. We want to lose weight. We want to live and be healthy. We just can't figure out the answer.

We keep trying to get rid of the herd of elephants that seems to eat what is the equivalent of their weight. All we have to do is look down and understand the truth of this.

I tried pushing the elephants out of my life. Do you know how hard it is to push an elephant? They won't budge.

In order to solve the problem I had to embrace my elephants. I had to own the herd that is me.

Yes, I am the problem. Yes, others have wronged me. Yes, food is an issue for me. Yes, I am an emotional mess. Yes, I'm mad at God.

Admitting each one freed me to focus on the first step. For me, ownership of my issue meant I using the key God had shown me for years, if I want to live and I certainly did want to live to fulfill God's calling on my life, to use the gifts He gave me, to see my children grow up, to meet my future grandchildren, to love my husband.

I stopped looking for easy fixes and owned the fact that I am a sugar addict. That is where I started. This was the turn-around point for me.

Leading a Herd of Elephants

Then, I turned to one of the elephants in my herd and decided to once and for all make Him leader of my herd. I realized the one I had blamed for not fixing me and making me like this was the only one who could lead me to become whole, healthy and happy.

I surrendered to the one who said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness"(2 Cor. 12:9). I asked Him to lead me to the next right step and then the next and the next and the next.

I realized it was by His grace, which is and always has been sufficient, that I was alive to make this decision. The dictionary says, sufficient means, "enough to meet the needs of a situation or a proposed end."

God being enough meant I needed nothing more and so, I surrendered to Him. I surrendered processed sugar through a series of stopping my various trigger foods and starting new foods or actions in their place. Later, I did the same with gluten.

As He leads me, I continue to stop things and start other things in their place. I stop what I want to do and surrender that to Him. I start what He wants me to do and He gives me the grace, power and peace to do that. "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

My herd of elephants is corralled and led by my Creator God. There is little struggle now because I am finally Spirit-led.

If anyone can lead this herd of elephants, it's definitely Him.

If you are having difficulties navigating through the weight loss herd, Sweet Change Weight Loss Group can help you. Through Dec. 1, get our best discount for only a two-month commitment and the ability to extend at that price if you wish. We're going back to the basics starting Dec. 1. Join now

by clicking [HERE](#).

Teresa Shields Parker is an author, blogger, editor, business owner, wife and mother. Her book, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor* is available on Amazon in print, Kindle and Audible [HERE](#). This story is from her blog, .