

For Weight-Loss Success, Here's What You Need Most

Why can't I do what I am telling myself I want to do? It happens with everything from losing weight to getting a degree to saving money to doing the laundry.

Here's the hard truth, it's because you do not have intentional focus. In other words, you don't really want it if it means you may have to change something you're doing now to get it.

Doesn't Happen by Chance

"Intentional" means "to do something deliberately or on purpose." It's not something that happens by chance. It is calculated, conscious, willful, preconceived, predetermined, premeditate, prearranged, thought out in advance.

Now pair that with the word "focus," which essentially means "the center of attention, focal point, kingpin or bedrock."

To intentionally focus on something means that one thing is the calculated, well thought out, deliberate center of our attention. For us to do what we are telling ourselves to do, it must be something we don't just want, but that we are fixated on.

Motivation Is Key

I see so many people who make decisions such as deciding to lose weight, but they have no motivation for the work it will take to do what they think they want to do. They want to do it as long as it is easy or someone else is telling them exactly what to do.

When they find out it is going to take them more work than just following a specific menu for a few months, they no

longer want in. They were never motivated for the type of time investment it takes to change habits that have taken a lifetime to develop.

Motivation, then, becomes a major key for losing weight. Intentional focus will not happen unless we are motivated. This means we have to have a really big reason for wanting to lose weight.

What Motivates You?

I've found those who just want to lose weight to look better set motivation quickly aside when faced with that big piece of their favorite dessert. They want to look better in order to feel better, but at the moment, they think they will feel better if they can eat that piece of cake.

Of course, they have free will and can do that, but for many, especially those who suffer with sugar addiction, binge eating or overeating syndromes, they cannot just stop with one piece.

As I've said before, for me, one is too many, and 10,000 is never enough. I simply have to abstain from foods made with flour and sugar. They taste too good to me, and then I need more, and my addiction has been triggered.

Abstinence Brings Peace

To live in peace with myself and keep my addiction at bay, I choose not to start in the first place. It's been over six years since I've had a traditional dessert. I simply abstain from processed sugar and pretty much all sugars, except fruit.

Today I no longer crave the rich, decadent desserts. I don't even have a desire for them. Just thinking about eating something like that makes me sick. This is a huge change from where I was for most of my adult life. I lived to eat those things.

Instead, I eat strawberries, apples, oranges, peaches and

other fruits. Sometimes I will make gluten-free desserts with bananas and Stevia, but none of them are sickeningly sweet. They just have a slight sweet taste.

Motivation for Change

My motivation for the change was simple. I didn't want to cause myself to die sooner because of my poor food choices. It would have been extremely selfish of me to continue to stuff myself with the types of death-giving foods when I could actually have a chance of living longer if I abstained.

I would have taken myself from my family before my time. I didn't want that to happen. The major motivation for me, then, was to live.

I wanted to be present for my children and hopefully one day meet future grandchildren. I wanted to fulfill the destiny God has on my life. I wanted to write books. I wanted to be whom I knew God called me to be.

God's Desire

More than anything I knew that God wanted to change me. I didn't know at the time that God wanted to take me on a total transformation journey—body, soul and spirit. Romans 12:2 (MSG) sums up the process. "Fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."

To be honest, I thought I only needed to change the outside of me. Oh, how wrong I was. The transformation has touched every single part of me. I've changed mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

All of that occurred at the same time as I was working on changing physically by losing over 250 pounds, but it all happened because I was allowing God to transform me rather than me trying to make it happen.

My Secret Truth

During the journey, I encountered many obstacles that in the past would have simply stopped me in my tracks. This time, though, I was working with a mentor who had been there and a group who also wanted to go forward.

Without the guidance of my mentor, I would have never been successful, and even if I had lost the weight by now, I would have gained every ounce back plus more. That is a truth I've never voiced before. However, I know it to be true with every fiber of my being because it was my *modus operandi* up until then.

My mentor is my life insurance. He speaks truth into my life and challenges me at that deep core level where motivation meets intention. The same will be true for the mentor you choose. And to be successful, you do need a mentor.

I'm looking toward my future with intentional focus. My main motivation is to live a better life tomorrow than I have lived today.

I have goals for the next five years and the next. I'm not stopping. I'm intentionally focused.

What about you? What are your goals? What is your motivation? Who will be your mentor? {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, *Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy*, and her No. 1 best-seller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach (check out her coaching group, *Overcomers Academy*) and speaker at .

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