

# How Fear Drives Weight Gain

Fear is all about the lenses you wear that color your life. It's about perspective and perception, how you see people and how you filter situations. Fear can make you do ridiculous things, such as gain weight.

I know all about this, as ludicrous as it may sound. I wore these fear lenses for years. To eradicate fear and make sure you can lose weight and keep it off, you must change your lenses.

Three situations happened to me last week on a trip my husband and I took from Missouri to South Carolina. They stand out because I realized after the fact that my the lenses of fear I used to cling to have been exchanged.

## Putting On Lenses of Fear

If you've read my memoir *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds* you know that I was molested at age 11. More than that I had several encounters as a child and teenager with boys who wanted more than I was willing to give.

This left me with a real fear of certain types of men, which happened to be basically any kind of man who gave me a compliment that had to do with my body in any shape or form.

It became a tug of war inside me between my mind, which said you need to lose weight, and my emotions, which said you must protect yourself by getting bigger.

At one point when I was in my late 20s and I had lost 100 pounds for the first time, I got on the elevator at work. A manager I knew was the only one on the elevator. On the ride up to the sixth floor, he looked me up and down and said, "You're looking really good."

Instead of thanking him, I froze in fear while he tried to

make small talk. I couldn't wait for the door to open so I could get to my office. That very day I ditched my healthy eating for my old stand-bys, candy bars and soft drinks, and began my weight gain again ... to protect myself.

### **Do I Still Wear Fear Lenses?**

Now, after losing over 1/8 ton of weight I silently wondered how I would react if something like that happened again.

We were eating lunch in North Carolina. I got up to go to the restroom and two men sitting with their wives or girlfriends at the table across from me gave me the up and down look, eyes following me as I walked to the restroom.

I noted to myself that they looked, but they did no harm and it didn't bother me. My husband was finishing his meal unaware of their stares. I was keenly aware that my perspective had totally changed.

In Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, I found a gorgeous silver necklace I wanted to buy. The chain was 18-inch. That day I was wearing a button front shirt. The first two buttons were open, but as I tried on the necklace it was too long.

"Do you have any 16-inch chains?" I asked the lady. "I've been realizing my 18-inch are too long and they don't show."

A customer at the opposite counter, turned around and said, grinning, "Just open a few more buttons. Problem solved."

Without missing a beat, I said, "Spoken like a man." He laughed and I laughed. My husband had gone back to the car to get a bracelet of mine for the jeweler to fix so he wasn't even there to "protect" me. However, my new perception was the man just being friendly, not crude.

### **I Have New Lenses**

Somewhere in rural Illinois we stopped at a convenience store.

I was buying a bottle of water. My husband was conversing with a man outside the store.

I was paying my bill when all of sudden a man came up behind and hit me on the behind with a newspaper. Seriously, he did.

“Delores, aren’t you even gonna’ speak to me?” he said.

As I turned around, he said, “Oh I’m sorry. You sure look like Delores from behind.”

I said, “I will take that as a compliment.”

He said, “It was meant as one.”

We both laughed. I walked out of the store smiling and liking my new lenses.

Somewhere in the last 30 or more years, both my perspective and my perception of men had undergone a radical change.

It was a necessary change for me to be able to feel comfortable with my body today.

### **Fear Lenses Replaced**

I remember the fear I used to have and I’m so glad those lenses are gone. Long ago I forgave the man who molested me. However, it was less than two years ago that I asked God reveal to me the root of my fear.

He took me back even further to a childhood incident that involved a neighborhood boy. As I forgave that kid and handed my fear to Jesus, I literally felt it leave.

I sensed Jesus handing me His peace, real peace that only He has the authority to give.

This last week I had the opportunity to experience the beauty of that peace. It’s a peace that left me feeling ... normal. And I realized I no longer need that fear to protect me.

Today, I wear the lenses of peace and the world looks so much more inviting.

New lenses and I am healed.

Thank you, Jesus.

**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, .*