

How Obesity Affects Relationships

Is extreme weight gain a legitimate cause for divorce? I used to weigh 430 pounds and as of today, have been married for 38 years. A good part of those years, I was in the super morbidly obese category.

I wouldn't have wanted to live with myself, but thank God, my husband stayed for the long haul.

I was miserable to live with. I did not love myself. I did not care about myself. I needed help with many things. My biblical version of denying myself¹ was to deny I had a problem so I could fulfill my fleshly desires² for food, specifically anything made with sugar and flour.

First Year of Marriage

I was sure marriage would solve all my problems. I would have no need to eat to stuff my emotions because my husband would meet all my emotional needs.

Since the day I met Roy, 42 years ago, he has not changed. He is calm and peaceful in the midst of any crisis or difficulty. He is calm and peaceful in good times. He is the same, consistent, unchangeable man I fell in love with.

They say opposites attract. I think this is very true of opposite personalities. I have always been attracted to my husband's peace. Well, that and his muscular forearms, large hands and soft blue eyes. He's the strong, silent type.

He told me he was attracted to the easy way I could talk to anyone without fear and the way I looked in my white jeans. I was the emotional, talkative type.

Unrealistic Expectations

I loved the first year discovering all the intricacies of each other, the ins and outs of our likes and dislikes, how to manage what little money we had, taking long walks together, learning what he liked to eat and cooking enough for three (I ate two portions) and just listening to him breathe.

My unrealistic expectation was that once we were married his peace would become my peace and all would be well. While living in a peaceful environment does help, peace³ has to be a quality from God that you embrace.

Gaining Weight

For the next 30 years I continued to battle my own emotional demons. Roy was right beside me, doing what he could, but most of the time not understanding why I had to feed those emotions that were screaming so loudly at me.

He longed to fix me, but he was wise enough to know he couldn't. So he did the one thing he is exceptionally good at—he loved me and showered me with peace.

Getting Victory

When I finally began listening to what God had been telling me all along about how to gain victory over my weight issues, surrendered sugar and flour, accepted the Holy Spirit's comfort in the place of comfort foods and began to lose weight, my husband's attitude towards me didn't change. He still loved me even though now, there was less of me to love!

His love for me has never changed, but lately I've realized a few things since I've changed physically. I am finally able to fully connect with him in every area. Perhaps it comes from living together for 38 years. Maybe it's because I've finally decided I'm all in for this relationship.

Loving an Obese Spouse

Roy has loved me through thick and thin; it's a no-matter-what love. I think he's just stubborn enough that no matter what I do, he's going to love me. That's a trait I think is contagious.

I'm so glad my husband didn't take what would look to anyone as the easy way. No one would have faulted him for throwing in the towel in those first years of marriage when I began gaining weight or in the later years when I ballooned up and up and up.

He didn't fuss at me, lecture me or give me ultimatum, but I knew he was concerned for my health. He didn't enable me, but he did love me. There is a huge difference in those two things.

Love Grows

Today, I am more in love with my husband than on our wedding day 38 years ago. I feel I am the luckiest woman in the world. When I go to sleep at night with his arms fully surrounding me, I am well aware that 10 years ago that would not have been possible. He couldn't have gotten his arms around me. He can now that I have lost 260 pounds.

The other day, this aha moment hit me and I told him. "I think God helping me lose weight wasn't because He wanted to give me a gift, but you. My weight loss is one of God's gifts to you."

Obedience blesses

My husband was obedient to love me "in sickness and in health." I was emotionally sick and making myself physically sick for most of my life. My husband continued with his patient love for me when many would have thrown up their hands and left.

I can't describe to you the level of intimacy and love we have

today. I believe it is all because my husband has loved me through thick and thin. His example of a servant's heart moved me to learn to take better care of myself with the possibility of spending more time here on earth with the one true love of my life.

I pray you will be that person in someone else's life today. I pray if you have such a person in your life, you do everything possible to not take for granted the years you have together.

I pray you truly learn how to truly love one another.⁴

¹ Matthew 16:24 NKJV

² Gal. 5:19-25 Weymouth New Testament

³ John 14:27 NKJV, Galatians 5:22-25 NKJV

⁴ John 13:34 NKJV

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, .*