

How One Woman's Weight-Loss Journey Became a Total Life Transformation

Why can't I do what I want to do? It happens with everything from losing weight to getting a degree to saving money.

I feel like it's that Romans 7:19 conundrum raising its head again. "For the good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

However, I'm realizing it's probably not that at all.

I'm Just Lazy

Many times when this happens, it is simply because I'm just too lazy to do what it really takes to save money, get a degree or lose weight. I don't want to do the hard work it takes to change something I'm doing now to obtain what I wish I had.

If we want something different to happen, we have to change something. It won't just magically happen. As Christians, we often use prayer as a crystal ball.

We want God to make things happen without any work on our part. Friends, the money won't appear in your bank account by itself. Getting a degree is going to take some effort. Losing weight is not easy. It has to be intentional.

Intentional Focus

"Intentional" means to do something deliberately or on purpose. It's not something that happens by chance. It is calculated, conscious, willful, preconceived, predetermined, premeditated, prearranged and 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 something our sights are firmly fixed on. It's at the top of our to-want list and at the top of our to-do list.

Motivation Is Key

Many people make decisions to lose weight, but they have no motivation for the work it will take to do what they think they want. They want to do it as long as it is easy.

When they find out it is going to take them actually thinking about what they want and being intentional about doing the work, they no longer want in. They were never motivated for the type of time investment it takes to change habits that have taken them a lifetime to develop.

Motivation is a major key for losing weight. Motivation comes before intention. They go hand in hand, along with total commitment, to the entire process. This means we have to have a really big reason for wanting to lose weight.

'I Want to Look Better'

One of the main motivations to losing weight is to look better. I've found this motivation doesn't last long when faced with something really tempting. Those with this motivation want to look better in order to feel better, but when tempted they think they will feel better if they just eat that piece of cake.

Many, especially those who suffer with sugar addiction, binge eating or overeating, cannot just stop with one piece.

One piece is too many, and 10,000 is never enough. For me, and

others with sugar addiction, I must abstain from foods made with flour and sugar. They taste too good to me, and then, I need more. Then my addiction has been triggered, and it will take me months to get back on track.

How I Gained Peace

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

Today, I no longer crave the rich decadent desserts I thought I couldn't live without. 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.

Why I Decided to Change

My motivation for 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 it was my time to go. I didn't want that to happen. My major motivation was that I wanted 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 the woman 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. God's transformation process has touched every single part of me. I've changed mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

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

I Needed a Coach

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 coach who had been there.

Without the guidance of my coach, I would have never been successful. Even if I had lost the weight, by now I would have gained every ounce back plus more if I hadn't stayed connected to my coach. That is a truth I rarely say out loud. However, I know it to be true with every fiber of my being because it was my *modus operandi* for years before then.

My coach 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 coach you choose. To be successful on your journey, you need a long-term commitment to a coach.

Looking Forward

Many I have coached have had a hard time looking anywhere but at the mess they made of their lives. They're looking backward. I did too, for a long time. I discovered, though, that there's nothing to be gained from mourning what I did to

myself.

The only place I'm looking now is forward. Even though I've lost 250 pounds, my main motivation right now is to live a better life tomorrow than I have lived today. If I do that, it will be enough.

I have goals for the next five years and the next. I'm not stopping. I'm committed. I'm focused. I'm being intentional.

What Are Your Goals?

What about you? What are your goals? What is your motivation? Who will be your coach? {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 bestseller, *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 . Check out her new podcast, *Sweet Grace for Your Journey*.

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