

The Real Reason You Should Disconnect From Your Diet

"I'll start my diet after the holidays," the message from the woman said. "I'll lose weight then." I heard those words numerous times in different ways just last week with Thanksgiving having just passed and Christmas looming on the horizon.

The Flip Side

Thankfully, I also heard the flip side. I heard from many women who decided they wanted the help of a coach and a coaching group to make sure they began a weight loss change plan immediately!

They wanted to change their lives and they knew the best time to start was right then. They understood the difficulties of the holidays and wanted to go through them without eating everything in sight like they'd done in the past.

No, they didn't want to start a diet. They were all ready for lifestyle change. The two are vastly different.

Diet Definition

There are two definitions of a diet. One is the type of food a person habitually eats. The other is to restrict yourself to small amounts or special kinds of food in order to lose weight.

The first defines how you would normally eat when left to your own devices. It's how you automatically eat. It's the habits you've fallen into over years and years of eating whatever you desire.

The second is the opposite of that. It's when you intentionally stop eating in your habitual way and, for a

short time, restrict yourself to small amounts or different types of food to lose weight.

Diet Disconnect

The disconnect with dieting, no matter what form of dieting we are doing, is that we have always been eating one way and have ingrained habits toward that, even habits formed since birth.

Then, all of a sudden we stop eating that way, and the next day we eat totally different. Of course we don't want to do that during the holidays. We know there will be all kinds of things we habitually eat during special times, and we don't want to feel left out.

Where Diets Fail

Diets are short-term fixes for a long-term problem. They were never meant to last any longer than it might take to lose 20, 50, 100 or more pounds. I could lose weight pretty quickly back when I weighed over 400 pounds.

The problem is, I would put the weight back on plus more when I stopped the diet. I learned nothing except that I didn't like restricted eating. What I did want was to just get the weight off and go back to eating what I wanted.

I was all about the quickest and easiest way to lose weight. I didn't think about the fact that what I really wanted was to keep the weight off for good. I really didn't want those pounds to find their way back to me and bring their friends with them.

All my life, I had been told a diet is the only way to do that. After 30 some years of dieting, I learned a hard truth. Diets don't work unless you stay on them for good, but I never could do that, and they weren't designed for that.

Change Me, Please

That's when I began to understand the only way to lose weight and keep it off was via a lifestyle change. This involved changing the way I had been eating as well as incorporating better habits for exercise, sleep, work, play and recharging myself mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

I learned quickly that lifestyle change is a process that takes time and good support from others, especially those who are committed to the journey and are doing it successfully. It wouldn't work without my total surrender to doing things God's way.

That involved being committed to do the work and staying with the process even through difficult seasons, including holidays, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, church potluck dinners and get-togethers with family and friends.

How Lifestyle Change Works

There are some elements of lifestyle change that are the same for everyone, but each person really needs to individualize their own change plan. Just as there is no one-size-fits-all diet, there is no one-size-fits-all change plan.

First, everyone's goals will be different. So right off the bat, the plan has to be personal. Second, everyone's habits are different. The kinds of foods we eat to relieve stress, anxiety, overwhelm, sadness or even to help us celebrate are different for each of us. Third, the stay-at-home mom has a totally different kind of pressure from a busy executive or a small business owner.

Each of these elements, plus many more, play a factor in how each person develops their plan, but the tools to get there are pretty much the same. They involve setting goals, learning how to stop a bad habit, focusing on starting a good habit, taking one step at a time, recognizing why we do what we do,

understanding how to allow God to help us change those habits, learning how to intentionally focus on what we really want and so much more.

Commitment to Change

The biggest thing I had to want was a total lifestyle change. I was done with short-term fixes. I wanted a lasting fix, and to get that, I had to be committed to beginning my lifestyle change journey and then continuing it for the rest of my life.

For me it became all about changing that very first definition of diet so that what I habitually eat is good for my health rather than harmful. It's about stopping to think. It was also about knowing deep down inside that God wants me healthy.

He wants the same thing for you, my friend. He's got work for you to do. You can do some of it now, but when you get healthier, oh, the plans He has for you!

How God Helps Us Change

Scripture has been some of the biggest encouragement to me as I lost more than 250 pounds. This verse in Proverbs encourages me because I love how it tells me that God really does have plans just for me and, of course, just for you, too.

"You will find true success when you find Me, for I have insight into wise plans that are designed just for you. I hold in My hands living-understanding, courage, and strength" (Prov. 8:14, TPT).

Not only does He have plans for us, He promises to help us. He will give us understanding. I don't know about you, but to know God will help me know what I need to do and that He understands me gives me great encouragement.

Courage and Strength

Courage is another big thing I needed for this journey. The

definition means the ability to do something that frightens you. So to have courage means to do that thing even though you are afraid.

I was really afraid of failing on my journey. I didn't know how to give up sugar, which was one of my first goals. However, I knew it was what I had to do.

That's where the other thing God was holding in His hands just for me comes in. I needed His strength. When I gave up and admitted my weakness in the face of trying to change my inbred habits and lose one-eighth of a ton of weight, that's when His strength was completely available to help me, as it says in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

God's Got Plans for Us

There are so many times in Scripture where God promises to take care of us. He tells us in Jeremiah 29:11 that He's got everything planned out for us. He won't abandon us. He has plans to give us a future and a hope.

He even saw us before we were born and had every day of our lives recorded in His book. He knows everything about us. (See Ps. 139:13-16, NLT.)

He is taking care of every single detail of our lives. Everything that happens to us, even if it seems like a disaster and we can't tell how anything good will come of it, God will weave it into His perfect plan to bring good into our lives. He does this because we love Him and have been called to fulfill His designed purpose. (See Rom. 8:28, TPT.)

I want to encourage you today that God can bring good out of even something like gaining and then losing weight. He has done this in my life. I can't wait to see what He will do in yours! {eoa}

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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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