

The Secret to Overcoming Addictions for Good

What happens when everything changes? Transformation of any type is a process—we all know this. Many times we want it to happen in a miraculous instant, be easy and painless with the least interruption possible. This is true whether trying to get out of debt, working on a difficult relationship, discovering a career direction or overcoming a problem with alcohol, drugs, food, pornography, gambling or any other addiction. It will take time, and everything—I mean everything—will have to change!

Butterflies

It's no secret that I love butterflies. Of course they are beautiful to look at, but I love them for the analogy of transformation. They do serve a purpose in nature of pollinating flowers and plants, but I also believe God put them here on Earth to teach us about how everything must change when we surrender to His perfect design for us.

Butterflies start out in a totally different form as a caterpillar. As everyone knows, caterpillars are hungry. Their main job is to eat in order to fuel their transformation process.

When the time is right, a specific hormone is released which triggers the beginning of the chrysalis stage. This whole process is orchestrated by our more than brilliant Creator. They enter this dark time that very little is known about except that they undergo a radical change.

Everything about them changes. All that is caterpillar melts and rearranges into a creature that no one who knew them before will recognize. They used to eat leaves and crawl on the ground. Now they eat nectar and fly.

Metamorphosis

This feels very much like the process happened to me. One of the dictionary definitions of a metamorphosis is “any complete change in appearance, character, circumstances.” One only needs to look at my before and after pictures to understand my physical metamorphosis. God’s design for me was not to gain a tremendous amount of weight, be sad and unhappy. He had abundant life in store for me (John 10:10), but it seemed impossible (Luke 18:27) when I was drowning in my own fat at 430 pounds.

What I love about God is that He can take our worst messes and make them into our greatest message. He used my desire to lose weight to draw me closer to Him. I learned I couldn’t lose weight on my own and keep it off. I could only do it by allowing Him to be my strength and lead me step by step. This, then, became my process for weight loss and total transformation.

Chrysalis

I had to enter my own chrysalis where everything about me changed, and I emerged with everything totally rearranged. My mindset changed. The way I handled my emotions changed. Where I got my determination to go on changed. My ideas about what, when, how much and why I ate changed. My feelings about exercise changed. Understanding the things that gave me pleasure totally changed. (Hint: It no longer had anything to do with food.)

Most importantly, my concepts about what God wants from me and for me radically changed. I realized I had to stop trying so hard and simply surrender all that I am, including my tremendous weakness for foods made with sugar and flour, to the will and care of my almighty God who is more concerned about me than even I am.

Surrender

I learned, He works best through people who understand and fully admit their weaknesses. He says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Scriptures I knew began to come alive, jump off the page and into my life. My purpose and meaning began to become clear to me. I'm here to let others know they, too, can overcome anything with God's help.

"I know both how to face humble circumstances and how to have abundance. Everywhere and in all things I have learned the secret, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:12-13).

Grace

All my life had been about trying harder, striving more, always attempting to "earn" what I already had in Christ. It's not that I didn't know the Scriptures said I was saved by grace and not by any kind of "works" I had done or would do (Eph. 2:8-9). It's just that I couldn't fathom how God could just sit back and not require me to work harder.

I especially knew that I had fallen extremely short of doing what God had showed me I needed to do in order to lose weight. I knew I couldn't do it on my own, so I tried to earn His smile in other ways like teaching Sunday School, leading small groups, writing articles, publishing newspapers.

Love

These were all good and important works, but they had to flow out of my love for Him, not because I was trying to earn something from Him. Today, knowing I am doing what He is leading to me to do as one of His daughters is my greatest privilege and my life mission. I can truly say wherever He leads me I will follow in obedience born of love. It's His

love that forgave me for nearly eating myself to death. It's because of His love I hear His voice, listen, follow and obey (John 10:27).

This transformation has been very physical. I've lost more than 260 pounds. It's been very emotional. I've learned to embrace and manage my emotions with God's help. It's been very mental. I am allowing God to renew my mind and give me the mind of Christ. It's been very spiritual. I don't take a step without Jesus.

Weakness

I no longer try to maintain an act of strength. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that am weak. I know, though, that understanding my weakness is a really good thing. It is only when I am weak that I get out of the way and free God to be strong through me (2 Cor. 12:10).

I love butterflies because everything about them changes to make a glorious creation. I also love the fact that I was once a caterpillar and am now transformed into a butterfly. Are you ready for your transformation? {eoa}

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