

# This Life-Changing Truth Will Help You Escape Addiction's Evil Grip

Built in the '70s, the wooden exterior was old and weathered. The rails were splintery. Long narrow steps led down to a dark room filled with people I didn't know. It was the kick off of the Harmful Life Patterns group. I knew those there had some prevailing issues in their lives, such as alcohol, drugs, smoking, pornography, gambling, food and other things. Little did I know, this place would house the birth of my unexpected transformation.

I told myself I had come to support a friend who had issues with food. Truth be told, I was the one who needed help. I had been gaining weight after losing quite a bit.

## Modus Operandi

It was my *modus operandi*—lose, gain it all back plus more, then lose again. More than five years before, I weighed over 430 pounds and had been told if I didn't lose at least 100 pounds and keep it off, I would be dead in five years.

My heart was never designed to pump blood through a body of my size. It would give out, and that would be the end of my story.

I had lost weight, but I also had been kicking mad about having to give up sugar, realizing it would be for the rest of my life. Now, after going back to the white stuff, I had a good start on gaining most of the weight back. I knew living in denial would cost me my life. Hey, though, I was still alive. I could still eat sugar, so what's the problem?

It was as if part of me craved finding the help I needed to

get healthy. The other part was stubbornly rebelling against giving up what I felt was my only friend—sugar and lots of it, anytime I wanted it.

## **The Story**

The leader began telling his story. At that time, he was over 20 years sober from alcohol. While his story was interesting, I was halfway listening. Alcohol had never been my problem. My dad had drilled into me to stay away from alcohol. My paternal grandfather died from diseases related to alcoholism.

I remember saying at one time in my life that I wish alcohol was my problem because then I could just stop drinking alcohol. With food issues, though, one can't just stop eating.

I heard most of what Russ said about how alcohol had compromised his life, how he knew overindulgence of alcohol had the possibility of making him bed-ridden and dependent on his family, how he wanted to be an effective role model to his seven children and the generations to come, how as a counselor he wanted to have integrity in his chosen career.

## **Words That Changed My Life**

Then, almost out of the blue, his next words slammed into my heart. "Alcohol is one molecule away from sugar. Alcohol is liquid sugar."

With those few words, my entire world came to a screeching halt.

In my mind, all the pieces of my life snapped together like a magnetic puzzle. I saw how I would eat all the leftovers when cleaning up after eating a full meal. I saw how sugar-laden desserts seemed to call my name if they were anywhere in the house, even in box form. I'd be compelled to whip up a pan of brownies, banana bread, cinnamon rolls or cookies and consume them all. Then wash the dishes so no one would know.

I saw how I felt the sugar helped me get rid of negative emotions. I also saw how it numbed every emotion even the positive ones, so that love, joy and peace had become foreign experiences.

## **Diets**

I saw all the times I had gone on diets where I didn't eat sugar and greatly limited my choices to chicken breasts, squash and salads.

I am a really good dieter. I'd lose my goal of 100 pounds and immediately celebrate with Mammaw's oatmeal cake. Then I'd go back to the way I'd always eaten and gain the weight back plus more. That's because for me, or any food addict, diets are a short-term fix for a long-term problem.

This had happened at least five times during my life. What was clear to me, as the movie of my life played out in my mind, was that not eating sugar had worked, but rewarding myself with the white stuff didn't. It always backfired on me.

## **Could I Be A Sugar Addict?**

I was listening to Russ' story at a time well before hearing anything about sugar addiction. All the information we hear today was not common knowledge back then.

I didn't know if a person could be addicted to sugar. So at the end of his talk, I asked, "Is it possible to be addicted to sugar?"

The answer was critical for me. "I don't know the physical nature of it exactly," he said, "but I know this. You can be addicted to anything that controls you."

That was it. My weakness had been unmasked.

Sugar controlled me. It told me what to eat, when to eat it and that I could eat it, and anything else I loved, in

unlimited quantities.

That day was a pivotal moment in my life. All the pieces were there to quantify my findings.

There in that dark, outdated, dusty basement, I owned the realization that I knew would define and change the rest of my life.

I am a sugar addict.

### **Walking Out the Journey**

From then on I began to learn how to walk out my personal journey, to act against my weakness and tap into God's strength.

It has only been by God's grace that today I have lost more than 250 pounds. On my Facebook page, in my free group, in my coaching groups, every time I speak and even when I am exercising by walking in the pool, people ask this one question in many different ways. "Why can't I stop eating? It's like I'm weak around food."

There are many ways to answer that question that sound more logical and professional, but it all starts with this one foundational Scripture.

"So I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in hardships, in persecutions, and in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

### **I Am No One Special**

I can't do it. I can't stop eating. That was what I told myself and I proved it time and time again. So how did I do it?

I owned my weakness and I allowed God's grace-power to propel me forward.

I am no one special. What God did for me, He will do for you. My transformation is still hard for me to believe. It was unexpected. I was acting against it in every way. But God had a plan to get my attention and then take me to the place I am now. It's from the experience of losing weight and keeping it off that I am privileged to lead you to discover God's plan for your own transformation.

You may not have 250 pounds to lose. You may be like I was back in 1977 when God plainly told me to stop eating sugar and I ignored Him. You may only have 50 or less pounds to lose. Or you may have more to lose than I have lost.

It doesn't matter. God cares about you and your situation. He knows you feel stuck, and more than anything, He wants you to get unstuck. {eo}

**Teresa Shields Parker** is the author of seven books, all available on Amazon. Her latest book, *Sweet Hunger: Developing an Appetite for God*, is available now, and *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds* is the No. 1 Christian weight-loss memoir. She is also a writing and weight-loss coach, blogger, speaker, wife and mother. Visit her online at [www.tereshieldsparker.com](http://www.tereshieldsparker.com) to find her books, coaching programs and free gifts.

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