

Weight-Loss Coach: 'Diets Made Me Fat'

Back when I was super morbidly obese, I was not happy. At 430 pounds, I didn't have the luxury of thinking I could eradicate my problem by going on another diet. I had figured out that diets were one of the things that had actually helped make me fat!

Why Diets Don't Work

You might say, "Wait, Teresa. A diet is a good thing. It helps you lose weight. Right?" If all you want to do is lose a few sizes to fit into that dress you want to wear to your daughter's wedding in six months, a diet might work for that one time. You might be able to fit into the dress on that one day.

However, once you've done that, you will more likely than not gain the weight back plus a little more, and that dress will once again be a distant memory.

As a matter of fact, an article on Web MD says that 80% of people who successfully lose at least 10% of their body weight will gradually regain it to end up as large or even larger than they were before they went on a diet.

Fighting Maintenance

After a person goes on a diet, their body fights against the long-term maintenance of that weight. This prompts us to eat more and gain weight. What researchers have found out is that small weight changes don't prompt those same big jumps in appetite and regain of weight plus even more weight than before.

This points solidly towards the fact that it is better to look at weight loss as a slow and steady lifestyle change process

rather than a quick fix diet.

Back when I was super morbidly obese and going on every diet imaginable, it was a constant push-pull of dieting, losing weight, going off the diet, going back to my old eating habits, gaining the weight back plus more and then starting the cycle over again.

Fighting Change

When the cardiac surgeon told me I had five years to live back in 1999, I was smart enough to know I needed to change, but how could I do it? I still was still fighting the idea of making a drastic lifestyle change.

I had five years to lose weight, though, so surely I could figure it out in that time. Had I wrapped my mind around the fact that I needed to commit to the slow, steady change, I could have done it.

Like the crazy person who returns to the scene of their crime, I went back on another diet. It was one I'd used to lose 100 pounds before, so I figured I could do it. I just wasn't sure how I was going to stay on the diet for the rest of my life.

Long-Term Problem

The problem with diets is that they are not meant to be how we eat for the rest of our lives. They are not long-term solutions. They are short-term fixes for what has become a long-term problem for us. We will need another fix really, really soon. It becomes an endless cycle.

Most of the before and after pictures you see on various websites are true in that moment, but what about a year from then? What have those dieters learned that can help them keep the weight off?

What happens when life throws them a curve ball, which it always does? Any number of things will cause them to ditch

their diets. They can be happy events such as weddings, anniversaries, graduations, birthday parties, church carry-in dinners, family reunions, holidays or just going out to eat with friends.

Or they can be sad events such as the loss of a job, loss of a family member, divorce, separation, failing a test, not getting a call-back for that job they wanted, having a bad day at work, succumbing to tempting foods brought to work or even a co-worker, friend or family member who is always bringing a new dessert and won't relent with trying to get them to try it.

More Than Weight Loss

In all these cases, we will cave in if we are just on a diet. With a diet, we figure we can just start that again tomorrow. Then, tomorrow comes, and we put it off a while longer until we have gained back all the weight we've lost plus more. Now we are desperate and feel we have to go full-fledged on that diet again.

What I finally realized is I don't want to just lose weight. I want to live the life that Christ promised me. I wanted what He came to earth, died and rose again to give me—"everything in abundance, more than [I] expect—life in its fullness until [I] overflow," as it says in John 10:10 (TPT).

I knew dropping about 20 pants sizes would be great, but what I really wanted was to live a full life.

DIET Is a Bad Word

All the resources I knew about in order to achieve this centered around going on another diet. By this time, though, I considered diet a very bad four-letter word. I didn't need another short-term fix. I needed a permanent solution. It was going to take changing more than just what I ate. It was going to take changing me completely from the inside out. (See Rom.

12:2, MSG.)

In order to change any problem, we first have to accept that we have a problem. I had always blamed my weight gain on poor genes, diabetes and high blood pressure that runs in our family, loving the delicious foods I ate as I was growing up. And to tell the truth, I also blamed God. I felt He had just made me fat. Why else would I love foods made with sugar and flour so much that I would overeat them constantly?

I knew I had a problem; I just hadn't accepted that I had created the problem. My first step toward changing my lifestyle and my habits was to accept that I am a sugar and comfort food addict and that I needed to radically change my lifestyle.

When I was able to step into that acceptance and surrender my addiction to God, everything began to change. Not only did I lose over 250 pounds, but I addressed issues that were holding me back emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically.

Journey to Transformation

In the Journey to Transformation course in Overcomers Academy, I have a test members can take that will help them define what their issues are. It also gives them some pointers about how to develop their own program to help them attack those issues.

Because I am a sugar and comfort food addict, I am driven to overeat those kinds of foods. So I am both a food addict and an overeater.

The next step for me was not to just accept this as a fact, but to begin to face that fact. This involved a time of mourning as I accepted what I had done to myself. I had to have heartfelt repentance for not just gaining weight but allowing my stomach to become my god (see Phil. 3:19).

Surrender Is Key

This is the moment of surrender when we lay everything we've done on His altar and ask Him to help us change our habits and our lifestyles. Repentance involves a complete turnaround.

It's the moment when you are going in a certain direction and all of a sudden you realize that direction will not get you where you really want to go. It won't get you your heart's desire.

My intense heart's desire was to live an everything-in-abundance, more-than-I-can-expect, full-till-it-overflows life.

Diets made me fat, but they don't have to do that to you. Make this the year you step into total lifestyle change—body, soul and spirit. {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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