

Why This Woman Doesn't Have a Fast Answer for 'How Long Did It Take You to Lose 250 Pounds?'

One of the questions I'm asked the most is how long did it take you to lose 250 pounds? When people ask me that whether it is in an email or in person, I know what they want. They want a precise answer that ensures them they can lose weight quickly because I did.

I hesitate to answer because I don't have the nice and neat answer they want. It's actually why I have almost 1,000 blog posts on my website, have 200 video lessons available for those in my coaching group and have written five books and two study guides. There is no easy answer.

Sometimes I tell them it took me 66 years or one second, however you want to look at it. I am now 66 years young and there will never be a day until I get to heaven where I am not battling with this body of flesh. It's where we are tempted and tested. It's where we learn to overcome by God's strength alone.

One does not arrive at a weight loss goal and say, "There, it's done." I lost 100 pounds many times and tried to be done with weight loss, but I wasn't because I had not surrendered the foods I love to God. I still held them in high esteem in my life.

How Food Addiction Affected Me

All right; let's be gut-level honest here: My god was my stomach, my belly or my appetite, however you want to translate Philippians 3:19. The Passion Translation says it a

bit differently. "Their god has possessed them and made them mute. Their boast is in their shameful lifestyles and their minds are in the dirt!"

That's a bigger ouch than my stomach in my god. It is basically saying that my desire for food had possessed me to the point that I didn't even talk to God. When that happened, my mind was full of everything I wanted and nothing He wanted for me.

See, why I don't answer people who ask me this question? They really don't want to know the depth of how food addiction affected me—body, soul and spirit.

Saying No

Although today, I can say no to free cupcakes, donuts and candy that seems to be present at every women's conference and be okay.

I can say yes to cashews, almonds or a healthy mix that involves some dried fruit and a smoothie made with Stevia. I can choose these and say no to the other things because I know once I start eating those other kinds of things, I can't stop.

I know I am addicted to foods made with sugar and flour. When others joke about how many doughnuts they've eaten in a day, I can praise God that He gave me the grace and the anointing to not even want to go there.

The Second That Made All the Difference

That was not always the case. There have been plenty of times when I have pigged out and regretted it. However, there was a second in time when God showed up in my life in such a profound and unexpected way that I have never been the same again.

I've told the story many times, but it was the moment when my entire life pivoted and went from dull and mundane grays to

bright and vivid colors.

It was in that second hat I realized I was a sugar addict. I was like an alcoholic, only with sugar and high-carbohydrate-content foods. This meant I was going to have to give these up by changing my habits.

Although it would have been awesome to have a quick fix, walk through a prayer line and hope 250 pounds would magically fall off of me, I knew myself well enough to know if that did happen, I would just put all the weight back on again.

Addiction Is A Stinky Mess

Addiction has to be addressed through habit change. It cannot be and will not involve a quick and easy dietary fix. Addiction will involve every single stinky and messy part of us—body, soul and spirit. Believe me, I had a lot of stinky messes that had to be cleaned up, changed and dealt with.

Am I fixed now? No, I can't say that. I can never say that. Have I changed? Oh thank God, I can say yes! My eyes are opened to my weaknesses. I know my triggers, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. I know what is likely to cause me to want to eat what I shouldn't.

I anticipate that happening, and I plan for it. The devil is a sly old fox, but he has habits too. He will always try to tempt me, so I plan for that to happen, just as I plan what to wear.

Last week, I was at a conference. I wasn't sure what was happening for lunch, so I brought my protein bars with me. That was helpful on every level. There were plenty of temptations, but I had my go-to resource. I was satiated and never hungry.

The Ongoing Journey

Living healthy and losing weight are an ongoing journey. There

are days I gain weight and days I lose. Most of those days are a result of a combination of things, many of which I may or may not understand. I don't ask why, I just ask God, "What's the next step?"

If I sense He's saying to keep going, then I keep doing what I'm doing. If I sense He's course-correcting me in some way, I implement the change. To me in any given moment all that matters is that I am doing what God showed me and has led me to do.

Whatever happens in my life is up to Him. The very best piece of advice I can give you is to allow God, not the latest, greatest diet, to change you. Allow Him to help start you on His phenomenal journey to transformation—body, soul and spirit.

You'll never regret it. Remember, it's not how long it takes to get there, it's about who you are following and choose to continue to follow for the rest of your life. {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 best-seller, *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 .

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