

When Did Your Relationship With Food Become a Stronghold?

I was doing well on my weight loss journey until I saw the scales show that I weighed 199 pounds. I didn't know why but my body did not want to go below 200 pounds.

It wasn't that I was eating anything wrong, and I was still exercising. It just felt very much like a real emotional issue.

When I shared this with my accountability group, the leader waited until all members had given their advice. Then he asked me a pivotal, life-defining question: Where did you learn your relationship with food?

I didn't have to stop and think, "Do I have a relationship with food?" I immediately knew I did have a relationship with food, and I knew I learned it from my grandma, who fed me every kind of food I wanted, including every type of dessert. At her house we could have seconds or thirds and snacks anytime.

Comfort Food

Grandma's way of approaching food defined comfort and love to me. When I was away from her and felt overwhelmed, sad, angry, lonely, fearful, worried, stressed or just plain old frustrated, I would make something she would have made and eat as much as I wanted. It would comfort me for a while until the sugar high wore off. Then I needed more to get the same feeling.

In reality, this way of coping wasn't comforting me at all. It was very discomfoting. It had caused me to gain weight and

then struggle through learning how to lose that weight. To not ever again eat or cook those foods felt like I would be dishonoring Grandma. It took me a while to process what was happening in my head and my heart.

While the adult me knew I couldn't eat all those foods in the quantities I had consumed in the past and be healthy, the emotional part of me was still stuck baking cookies with Grandma. Those foods fed my emotions more than my body.

Revelation

All of a sudden, God revealed the truth to me: I had allowed Grandma's way of cooking to become a stronghold. It was robed in what I thought was comfort, but it was still a stronghold. I felt the responsibility to pass on Grandma's love through food.

My fondest childhood memories all centered around food and Grandma. They were inseparable in my mind. I thought if I gave up throwing the grand food celebrations Grandma was famous for, I would be dishonoring her legacy.

Grandma and the foods she cooked had become enmeshed in my heart. Could I separate them? Could I still hold a place in my heart for Grandma if I turned my back on what she cooked and served?

Grandma's Love

Many people show their love for their families through the food they cook. Grandma was no exception. It was her way of showing love, but it wasn't the only way.

I remember her reading my favorite book, *Henny Penny*, over and over again. I loved the rhythm of the words. Any time I spent with Grandma was time I treasured.

My favorite time, though, was when we'd go to sleep at night. She would make me a pallet down beside her bed and hold my

hand until I fell asleep. I also got to hear her and Papaw pray together before going to sleep.

They always prayed for me and every member of the family. I knew they did that every night. It was a comfort better than any food could bring.

Breaking Through the Emotion

Grandma was a large woman. I don't know what she weighed, but I know she weighed at least 200 pounds. She had soft, mushy parts perfect for grandkids to crawl up in her lap, fall into her and feel loved. My emotions were telling me if I became smaller than Grandma had been and wasn't fixing the foods she fixed, I was rejecting her.

When I saw the truth, I realized how the enemy can use even the most loving memories to set up lies that become some of the fiercest strongholds. When they are wrapped around those we love and cherish, it makes it nearly impossible to separate the lie from the one we love. It is in separating the lies from the person that the stronghold crumbles.

Breaking this stronghold felt like watching someone saw limbs off a tree one at a time from the top down until the stump was finally gone. It took some time because there were so many things in my past that had to be redefined.

Seeing my past in an entirely new light, though, was like seeing a rainbow and sunset all at the same time. Now when I think about Grandma, I picture her as engulfing me in the kind of hug only she could give. I feel love cascading from her every pore. She was the epitome of comfort to me and our entire family. She brought us all together. Family togetherness was her gift.

Breaking the Stronghold

Breaking this stronghold freed me to continue to lose weight

and love being me. It freed me to embrace becoming healthy. It freed me to be able to cook things that won't contribute to others being unhealthy. It freed me to love my family in the right way and not by filling them full of foods that would lead them toward an early grave.

It freed me to reprioritize my memories of Grandma to include the wonderful woman she was and not just the foods she cooked. It freed me to be me. It freed me to follow God in all things.

Where did you learn your relationship with food? It's a pivotal question I ask my coaching clients because it is likely the source of why we can't seem to give up certain foods. I'd love to work with you in Overcomers Academy to get to the root of any strongholds that are holding you back on your healthy living journey.

Doors are open now. Go to {eoa}

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