

The three secrets of weight loss

How do people lose weight and keep it off? We all know that diet, exercise, and nutrition play a part, but that's not the whole story. Every year a new diet or exercise fad sweeps the nation, and yet most people don't create the health progress they want. The truth is that being healthy and vital is not just about what you eat, it has a lot to do with how you live your life. Are you living a life of purpose and fulfillment, or are you stuck in a life of restriction?

The good news is that the solution is right here and right now.

It doesn't require tremendous willpower or nerves of steel. As you will see, it requires following some simple steps which have created dramatic results for many people.

According to Human Needs Psychology, there are three pillars (secrets) of permanent weight loss. It is these three secrets that enable some people to experience dramatic, permanent, natural weight loss while other people go for years losing and regaining the same twenty pounds. (Madanes 2011)

The first secret consists of your individual focus. What are you focusing on from day to day? Is it something that is compelling, specific, and within your control or do you focus on unreliable things that are outside of your control? Are you crystal clear about what you want to experience every day or are you fixated on fears and uncertainties? (Madanes 2011)

If you just focus on things that are outside your control (such as your irritating neighbours or the fact that your boss always listens to your colleague more than you, you will become anxious and this, in turn, can lead to comfort eating. On the other hand, if you focus on something you can control but that is also paramount for you (like getting healthy and slim for the work sports day), you will be able to ignore the day's irritations and be focused on things you can control like good diet and exercise.

The second secret consists of your tools and strategies - if you want to be successful at something, you need to clearly know which strategies work and which don't. You need to take a look at your day-to-day emotional focus. As I said before, if you focus on elements of your life that are outside your control, you may well find yourself feeling insecure and uncertain – and your strategy for feeling better about the situation is often to eat comfort food, smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol – all of which provide instant comfort but leave you feeling even worse afterwards. When events seem to be out of control, try to focus on something that is within your power to change – you probably can't get the upstairs neighbour's two year old to stop riding his tricycle over your head but you could go out for a run instead of reaching for the ice-cream. Try to work out strategies that will enhance your health, help you lose weight and improve your belief in yourself rather than instantly reaching for props that will ultimately cause you to wallow in your sense of insecurity. The next time you feel down, try to consciously choose a health-giving strategy (such as running or walking or creating an interesting meal from healthy food).

It's difficult to abandon a bad habit unless you replace it with a good one.

The third pillar of permanent weight loss is to resolve inner conflicts. You can have a powerful focus to create change, have all the right tools and strategies, and yet if you have an inner conflict that prevents you from accessing your true power to create change in your life, real change will never happen. You may maintain your focus for a while and use creative strategies to become healthier but if you don't resolve that conflict, you are likely to return to using food as a

substitute for the things you really want to get out of life. (Madanes 2001) Consider this situation: you know that really what you want to do in life is travel the world and teach English in a remote South American village but you have a mortgage to pay and you've never actually been to South America so it's all a bit scary. You spend a while thinking about how great it would be, then worry about the mortgage and the rumours of kidnapping in certain remote south American villages but then what's life all about if you do the same monotonous tasks in the bank every day. It's at this point you must be aware of which emotional state or pattern you would habitually run, would you slip in to a state of say self pity or depression - and before you know it, you've eaten a tub of Ben & Jerry's and drunk a bottle of sauvignon blanc or do decide right there and then to choose a more positive emotional state and take a different action which is congruent with your goals.

You may be absolutely certain that food will work every time to bring you certainty and comfort. The problem, of course, is that the eating habit that gives you this comfort is making you fat and unhealthy.

Without really looking inside yourself and confronting your real issues about what is really going on and which needs you are trying to meet, without resolving these issues and being as honest with yourself as you possibly can, you will more than likely run the same old patterns in life creating the same old results. If, on the other hand, you start focusing on saving the money to visit South America as a first step in your plan, you may find you also have the incentive and emotional energy to start getting fit for your trip.

The over eating or weight gain is just the tip of the iceberg, they are just the outcome of your focus, your strategies and how you deal with your inner conflicts.

So, focus on the things you can change – like your fitness, healthiness and weight. Put good coping strategies in place of the bad ones and confront your inner demons!

To learn more about weight loss and human needs psychology, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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