

Save Yourself: Don't Diet - Change!

I'm getting tired of all these spam emails that are pushing some diet strategy, with subject lines like, "Melt away fat easily!" or "Shed those unwanted pounds!"

I'm tired of infomercials, commercials and booklets about "dieting" and the "Ultimate Weight Loss" programs that spring up all over the place. Products designed to "help you shed all that unwanted fat!" Keep in mind folks, that's marketing, and marketers stand to make money whether their plans and products help us or not! What matters most to companies selling books and exercise products? Their bottom-line... Profit.

These are your Top Priorities: think for yourself, educate yourself, do your homework, and don't believe what TV or tabloids tells you. Learn! YOU are in charge of your life, no one else.

I'm not overweight, so I don't really need to take my own advice. But I'm not skinny either, and I'm far from perfect. I have love handles and a moderate gut (depending on how many beers I drink that week) but I'm trying to keep my man-boobs at bay. When I started at a desk job back in 2001 I put on 23 lbs. within six months.

I have been successful in shedding most of that extra weight and I'll let you know how I did that shortly.

While some diet programs do help a lot of people, there are plenty of scams that just know their plan won't work for everybody, but will happily take your money anyway.

The key to those who benefit from these weight loss programs is will power. Bottom line folks, you can "diet" all you want but you won't see a damn result unless you have the will power to see it through. I know there are people out there who are really struggling with their weight and would love to feel better and get in better shape. It's tough to undo what's been overdone for years.

Maybe you don't have enough will power, maybe you do. Maybe you will succeed in losing weight, maybe you won't. The answer does not lie in what "diet" product you use, or what program you follow, it lies in you: your determination, and resolve. I offer my weight loss advise here FREE OF CHARGE! But it requires that you are willing to accept change and willing to take control of your actions.

I am not a weight loss expert, personal trainer, or life coach (whatever the hell that is)! I use common sense, and a little research and studying to understand how the body works and what the heck we do to it that causes us to gain weight. You know what I found out? It's really quite amazing. We eat too much and we don't exercise enough. Yes, metabolism has a lot to do with it, but exercise will increase your metabolism so a slow metabolism should not be an excuse. In fact, you need to stop making excuses for it anyway.

Notice I did say "we" and I meant it. I could benefit greatly from long evening walks. I could take them with my wife. Do we? Not often enough! I also love desert, and eat like a shark most of the time, so I need to be responsible for my actions. If I sit on my but and watch TV every night while snacking there is only one thing that will happen. I will gain weight!

If we eat in moderation -- in other words, DON'T OVEREAT -- reduce our consumption of between-meal snacks (or between-meal meals!) then we're on the right track to controlling our weight.

Contrary to popular misconception, you will not lose weight by drinking Diet Cola, chewing sugar-free gum or breath mints. In fact those products can actually do you harm if you consume large quantities! Many "diet" products contain a sugar substitute called aspartame. The FDA requires manufacturers to include a warning label on any products containing this substitute. Why on earth would you want to drink something that has a warning label on it?

You could say the same thing about cigarettes but that's another story in itself.

The point is that manufacturers and marketers saw profit in the booming diet market, so they introduced their "diet" sodas and sugar-free products to appeal to that audience, in order to MAKE MONEY!

A very informative website about the dangers of aspartame is SweetPoison.com. I'd like to share a couple of items quoted from that site:

"Phenylalanine is a hidden danger to anyone consuming aspartame. Most consumers don't know that too much Phenylalanine is a neurotoxin and excites the neurons in the brain to the point of cellular death."

"ADD/ADHD, emotional and behavioral disorders can all be triggered by too much Phenylalanine in the daily diet."

"The 1976 Groliers encyclopedia states cancer cannot live without phenylalanine. Phenylalanine makes up 50% of aspartame."

Oh, what do the labels do? If someone has severe side effects of consuming large amounts of aspartame because they're too ignorant of the facts, they have no claim because the product manufacture put a warning on the can. So, lowly consumer, shall we pay more attention to what's going into our bodies, or should we trust manufacturers who could care less about anything other than their bottom line?

Our body responds to what we put in it. It doesn't make things up on its own, unless there is some specific genetic defect or disorder present. I'll bet that more than 80% of overweight people can help their situation through a change in their eating and living habits. But who wants to change?

Do you want to live to a ripe old age? I do. I want to be a wise and healthy old man, so I choose to educate myself and control my dietary intake. No, I don't count calories, I don't measure my portions, and I don't eat "diet" foods.

How did I lose my extra weight and keep it off? I used common sense. I took a little look at my eating behavior and noticed all the extra crap I was consuming that I just didn't need. I also took a look at the portions I was eating and deemed them a bit too large. There's no reason I need to fill my damn plate to fill my belly, my belly doesn't need to be that big, and the fact is it will shrink to a more normal size if I consistently eat portions that satisfy my hunger and provide nutrition.

Yes, a stomach will shrink. And you'd better believe the sucker will expand too, if you eat large portions and keep loading it with snacks and stuff!

Here's a little known fact that is key to over-eating and weight gain: Your stomach is quick to tell your brain when it's empty, but it's significantly slower at notifying your brain when it's had enough. The problem here is that most people eat real fast, and by the time the brain receives the message they've succeeded in over-filling their stomach, which has stretched to accommodate the larger portion of food.

Keep that routine going and the stomach will continue to enlarge, allowing more and more food intake. And the extra food, which your body can't convert and burn right away, will be stored as fat, or just sent right through to the exit in which case many people may end up with digestive problems and issues with bowel disorders.

So, what do we avoid? I'm not going to make some list for you of what you should and shouldn't eat. Most foods, unless you have a specific allergy, are perfectly suitable for most people. Personal tastes and preferences aside, basic foods can easily be obtained and prepared for consumption.

There are only two things that can make this more of a challenge than it needs to be: an overly busy schedule, or complete laziness. Slow down and take time to take care of yourself, and get the hell out of the drive-thru at that fast food joint! Or get off your butt and stop at the store, learn how to cook, it's not that hard!

Bottom line: Take care of yourself! Use common sense, eat normal meals -- no need to get up for seconds, or THIRDS! Do not eat to make yourself happy, eat to make yourself healthy. Your body needs fuel to function, that "comfort food" your eating isn't doing you any good.

Sure, we all splurge from time to time. I'm notorious, just ask my wife. I'll get done with dinner and say I'm full, but 5 minutes later I'm looking for desert. And I'm the worst at late evening snacking. I do like to watch TV sometimes, and when I'm there I like to have a snack.

You know what? Do it. Have a snack if you want, but don't make it a habit! And you're better off if that snack is celery sticks and peanut butter, or ranch dressing. Oh, and you don't need a tub of the stuff either.

The only person who can help you lose some weight is you. Observe your daily habits and start trying to make a change. You don't need to "diet," you just need to change some habits. With some will power you can take control of your life and your situation. And lay off the diet soda. Drink more water, and if you need a soda go for the regular Cola or Ginger Ale. Ginger Ale is better, because even though it has sugar, it is naturally caffeine-free.

Well, that's my gripe on the "diet" industry. The next time you watch one of those infomercials with the fast talking moron trying to sell you a sit-up machine or a food processor with great health benefits, or a diet plan for only \$49.99 per month, sit back and look at what they're really doing: trying to make money.

Save yourself. Think for yourself, and help yourself. Your life is about you!

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