

Health & Fitness

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Sunday, August 2, 1998

Small changes can translate into big results

TALK TO THE MIRROR



FLORINE MARK

don't need to involve drastic changes. In fact, you don't have to give up all your favorite foods or spend a lot of time exercising to lose weight. You not only have to eat right but think right as well. Small changes can really add up to big results.

Set goals
Take the first step and identify your weight goals and the reasons for wanting to lose weight.

Short-term vs. long-term goals
Do you want to fit into your favorite suit or look good for an upcoming event? These are examples of short-term goals. Do you want to improve your health or

feel more confident? These are examples of long-term goals.

Looking good vs. a healthy lifestyle - If appearance is the incentive, be sure your expectations are realistic and not a fantasy. Balance the desire to look good with the long-term benefits of a healthier lifestyle. Adopting healthier habits alone is a reason to celebrate.

Focus on you first - Are you losing weight for you or to please others? Friends, family, or your doctor may help motivate you to start losing weight, but deciding what you want to accomplish will help you stay focused on achieving your goals.

Think smart
Do a reality check - What are your expectations? Many people want the weight off immediately, but steady, gradual weight loss is more likely to stay off. Unrealistic expectations can set you up for a fall. Set small, reasonable goals that can be realistically met instead. It took a long time to gain the weight, so don't try to make it go away overnight.

Avoid good-food, bad-food issues
Choosing a wide variety of good-tasting foods can help you think positively

about eating. While no single food will provide all of your daily nutritional needs, no one food will throw off healthy eating either. Good-food and bad-food thinking can hurt long-term success. Instead, try to keep a clear perspective about what you are eating and why. Don't think to yourself, "I was bad today because I ate such and such." Try to take control of your actions and say, "Today I chose to eat such and such."

All-or-nothing thinking - This is the most common downfall for anyone trying to lose weight. You've managed your weight loss terrifically for four weeks. But at a recent wedding, you went a little overboard. Do you throw in the towel? No way! It's this kind of thinking that can make you feel like a failure and weaken your control. Lapses are bound to happen once in a while. Look at a setback as part of the process, don't beat yourself up, and just get right back on track.

Satisfaction not deprivation - The key to long-term success is not to give up all of your favorite foods. If you feel deprived, you're more likely to overeat. Learn how to work an occasional indulgence into your eating plan. For example, if you're planning a special dinner

eat lighter the rest of the day. Satisfaction helps you establish a healthier attitude toward food, so you can savor each bite without polishing off the whole box. And think about balancing food and exercise: On days when you do eat a little more, try to squeeze in a little more activity.

High-risk situations - How often do you eat in response to specific events, feelings or situations? Do you overeat at parties or overdo it when you're alone? Are you challenged by the office vending machine, movie theater or local bakery? The best way to increase awareness of your particular temptations - so you can guard against them - is to keep a record. Write down which foods and how much you eat, when you eat, what you are doing at the time, and how you feel when you're eating. You'll soon see patterns that can help you identify your triggers to overeating and you can begin to work on strategies for handling these high-risk situations.

Cope with feelings, don't feed them - If you seek comfort in a bag of potato chips, try to understand why. Does it help you cope with boredom or stress? Identifying the feelings that cause you to eat is the first step in

learning to manage them without turning to food. Discover other ways to comfort yourself, such as taking a walk or calling a friend.

Celebrate your successes - Keep track of your progress and note any changes. Look for signs of success other than the scale, such as your clothes are looser or you don't tire as easily. Reward yourself along the way with special treats like movie tickets, a new book, or even 15 minutes by yourself in the garden. Remember nothing succeeds like success, so celebrate small successes. Achieve your goals, and as Louis would say, inch your way toward victory!

I read every one of your letters and I love your comment. Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to: "Talk to the Mirror," Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2974. For more information on Weight Watchers, call 1-888-3FLORINE.

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Emotions and intelligence illustrate a successful combination

TO YOUR HEALTH



DR. KEITH LEVICK

or voicing opinions at board meetings, my ideas represent a softer side. I find it ironic and humorous that this once-competitive warrior is

now viewed as too "touchy-feely." Deviation from the what can be called the "bottom line" or traditional competitive wisdom is intolerable for many people. From athletic fields to boardrooms, compassion, empathy and other such emotions are signs of weakness. Of course, yelling at a player or making an automatic position with employees are acceptable forms of emotional behavior.

Traditional wisdom states that emotions should be separated and set aside. Suppress your feelings and listen to your head is accepted practice in business and other organizational settings. Certainly, the bottom line and other intellectual factors play an important role in these settings. The missing piece to the puzzle, however, is the role of emotions. Studies estimate that 80 percent of life's success is attributed to emotional intelligence, which is the ability to sense, understand, value and

apply the power of emotions to everyday life, and 20 percent is attributed to intellect or what we call the intelligence quotient (IQ).

The ability to utilize emotional intelligence (EQ) is what stimulates our creativity and keeps us honest and trustworthy. It's the driving force behind intuitive wisdom. Everyone feels but using feelings appropriately is the key. Or as Aristotle said so eloquently: "Anyone with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not easy."

The reason are numerous as to why society is trained not to listen with its heart. Much of it can be explained by our hypercompetitive culture. Emphasis is based on competitive individualism, where we try to beat each other to prove our own self-worth. This need to compete is deeply entrenched in society - in the work-

place, athletics, politics, schools and play. This belief is so ingrained that challenging the negative effects of competition is quickly rationalized by erroneous statements like, "It's human nature" or "It's healthy to compete" or "It creates motivation and productivity."

Yet study after study clearly finds just the opposite. It's cooperation, not competition, that motivates people and increases quality, performance and empathy. We speak loudly about the need to cooperate, yet we emphasize and structurally create more competition. A paradox exists when cooperation is defined as the success of each person as linked to every other person. How do you cooperate when we're conditioned to beat them? How do you show compassion to them? How do you speak from the heart to them? Our competitive beliefs do not allow these emotions to exist or be openly addressed.

When I give speeches or make suggestions at

meetings, I try hard to bring out the interpersonal side of a problem. Issues like self-esteem, trust, integrity and social values represent the murk that solidifies relationships. Suppression of these issues is analogous to using one eye or one arm. We no longer can afford to solely rely on our heads. To borrow a line from Albert Einstein, "Problems cannot be solved with the same kind of intelligence which created them."

No, I won't apologize for being "touchy-feely." Nor will I try to justify my position. I will, however, try to find solutions to problems by using both my IQ and EQ, knowing that together they will enhance my possibility for success.

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