



Meredith Terpeluk

Core Wellness Life Coaching LLC
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“Why do we have so much trouble losing weight or keeping it off?”

—Meredith Terpeluk

Above all, why is it so easy to understand the need to achieve an energy balance between the calories we take in and the calories that we burn—and yet we find it so hard to do?

The answer is that we work very hard to fix the surface without focusing on what’s happening on the inside, on how we think and feel about what we eat.

I learned this the hard way. I was an overweight kid who at age seven turned to food to compensate for feelings that emerged when my parents divorce. As an adult, I engaged in binge-eating that gave me little satisfaction, and an unhealthy relationship with food that was leaving me feeling out of control. I was running excessively to help burn the calories I ate, but I still felt this immense shame about how much I was eating. It took me half-a-lifetime to understand that my relationship with food was like any bad relationship—very one-sided and abusive.

Like many alcoholics, I eventually had to hit bottom. I realized that I could no longer take this feeling of being out of control. As I resolved to get well, I discovered that in order for the surface to change, I had to work on my thought and feelings related to food.

What might that mean to you?

When you live in a culture that tells you it’s your willpower that is the problem, you can no more win such a struggle through sheer willpower than you can pull yourself an inch off the floor by tugging at your boots. When you define weight loss in these terms, you have set out on a grim, unwinnable task. Sheer willpower alone isn’t strong enough.

The key to healthy eating is to do the exact opposite of a grim task—focus, instead, on the positive side, on the parts of a healthy lifestyle that make you feel good. Think about what you CAN control, what you CAN take in and what you CAN put out that feels good to you, instead of focusing on what has power over you like your weight, the foods you can’t resist or your lack of motivation to exercise.

For more information go to
www.healthyweightcommit.org



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A positive attitude - listening to something called “Your Healthy Voice” will help you walk away from your unhealthy, abusive relationship with food. And as you walk away, you will find that self-control is not about willpower or painful denial. It is not about trying to control everything. Self-control is really about simply knowing your boundaries.

There is a cheerful paradox here. When we acknowledge our powerlessness before certain foods, we gain more power over ourselves. For myself, I know that I am utterly powerless before a buffet. Stand me in front of a steam table full of delicious meats, sweets and snacks, and I will have a hard time not wanting to eat everything. I know this about myself. And so when friends invite me to a buffet, I choose something off the menu, because that will feel better to my body.

So admitting your powerlessness does not make you weak or without resources. In fact, admitting that you are powerless before certain foods helps you to readily seek the help you need. That help should come from supportive friends and perhaps a support group. And help can come, as with Alcoholics Anonymous, from a Higher Power—however you define that term.

As you listen to the struggles of others, and offer them your support as they support you, a little miracle will occur. You will be able to let go of your shame. Your shame is driven by fear and an Unhealthy Voice that wants to keep you in that abusive relationship with the food. When that shame or that unhealthy voice aren’t running your life, you are free to be the person you want to be, guided by “Your Healthy Voice.”

You will realize that food is a pleasure that should be enjoyed. It is a pleasure that can be enjoyed without expecting it to love you back. Food, after all, is not a person. You can relish food all you like. But you can learn not to turn to food to make up for a bad day, to cure loneliness, or to serve as a reward for a bad day at work.

You need the support and friendships of others to fill the emotional void that you used to try to fulfill with food. Along the way, your closest friend of all will be your internal “healthy voice,” that messenger who gently urges you to make good choices. This internal voice comes not from a place of shame, but from a place of unconditional love.



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Remember these tips:

If you stumble, don't beat yourself up. Don't dive into the shame. Think about the next right thing you can do to pick yourself up. What would your healthy voice say to you? Maybe, "You are loved no matter what. Do the next thing that doesn't feel good to your emotions, but feels good for your well-being."

The next time you are presented with a trigger food, learn to cultivate and listen to your healthy voice, "Are we going to this to fill an emotional need or habit? Or would something else feel better - like connecting with a friend."

Think about why you're gravitating toward an unhealthy food. If you do, you will usually find that you don't need to feed your feelings. Maybe even think about that moment that you started going to it and maybe your unhealthy voice can help you disconnect from it to a healthier habit.

With a little self-awareness, you can achieve energy balance. You can be at peace with food.

— *By Meredith Terpeluk*