

# February Weighing In 2016

## Self-Justification: The Engine That Drives the Excuse

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Throughout the month of January I have had more patients tell me why they had cheated on the program than I ever remember hearing in any given month over the last five years!

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They came in to tell me why they ate doughnuts, Hershey bars, Little Debbie cakes, milkshakes and pizza. Being shut in because of the snow was not fun. So, to take away cabin fever, they scarfed down their comfort foods. This is just one example of the many feeble attempts I heard to justify weight gain and their need to return to the program. The self-justification for why they ate the way they did was somewhat mind-boggling. What I didn't hear, though, were patients taking responsibility for their excessive eating. There were always excuses to justify why they ate.

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Our need to justify our actions and decisions, especially those inconsistent with our beliefs, comes from an unpleasant feeling called cognitive dissonance. In psychology, this is the mental stress or discomfort we feel when we hold two contrary beliefs or values at the same time. Let's look at smoking for an example. We all know smoking will shorten life, which most of us wish to live for as long as possible. Yet, so many people are still smoking three packs a day! The reasons and excuses run the gamut. In the end, though, these smokers are just trying to justify doing what they know will kill them!

Self-justification is one of the sneakiest and most subtle forms of deceit that is used in our lives to make us fail. It comes about when we are not open or eager for God to correct and refine us. We often spend much time and mental energy trying to convince ourselves that what we did was just fine and that we are perfect the way we are. It's why the smoker still picks up his cigarette. It's also the reason that patients are caught in the trap of denial, eating foods they know will harm them, yet justifying their actions saying it's not their fault! And they wonder why their weight keeps fluctuating.

So how can you avoid letting this sneaky self-justification creep into your life? Be honest with yourself. If you're not doing what you're supposed to, tell the staff at the Weigh Station straight out. Don't require us to keep digging for the answer over and over at your appointments before you become truthful enough to let us know what's taken place. Don't sulk when your conviction overcomes you and lash out at us as if it's our fault that you ate a dozen Krispy Kremes.

I encourage you to receive our correction humbly. We want to help you walk through this journey and do it successfully. Patients who are carbohydrate sensitive and insulin resistant have a real problem with eating certain food groups. As you well know, we are not here to condemn--- we are here to bless you with our help and support. We are here to help you manage your addiction to food, alcohol, sugars, and carbohydrates. It may be hard to hear the truth coming from us. Yet it is amazing to me how many patients return to the program saying, "If I just would've done what you taught me in the first place."

There is a gift in conviction. Yep, that's right. It's a gift when you hear a message that brings convictions to your heart even if it stings. But don't immediately try to justify yourself or start criticizing the person who is speaking truth into your life. Rather, walk with a humble spirit and ask God to gently refine and correct you to make you more like him. Please be willing to admit when you're wrong. Repent and walk in the other direction. Remember, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So do we here at The Weigh Station.

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Some of you have addictions, and we are aware of that factor. But that doesn't mean you can't be successful. Just don't immediately attempt to justify your actions by lashing out at the person who brought doughnuts into your house for after all, you have the ability to say no. The more you focus on the wrong that happened to you by someone who left little Debbie cakes in your cabinet, the more you can justify a compromising position of your eating habits. No one wins this argument! As we now head into February, remember that we're here to help you succeed. But we need you to be honest with yourself and with us. Do not try to justify what you did wrong. Be honest and allow God to open your eyes to how unbelievable your eating habits have become.

So the next time you're willing to eat the things that are not in the book and then give an excuse for why you were up four or five pounds or more, be prepared to take correction and go back to the start of the book and walk it out. You'll find a tremendous blessing awaits. A blessing that tastes better than any Little Debbie ever has. If you learn to follow what we teach, you will get to your goal. Remember, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." (Proverbs 16:18)

Blessings to all,

Chuck Shaffer MD

Source: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3719&context=etd>

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## Valentine's Day

It's February, the month of romance. If you're anything like me, the question of what to do for Valentine's Day usually pops in my mind shortly after February 1<sup>st</sup>. With candy, chocolate and decadent desserts, you may be discouraged about your plans this year.

We have good news for you! Valentine's Day should be about much more than food. It should be about enjoying time with the person you love! Consider the following tips when planning your special date!

Don't underestimate the power of anticipation; get excited about your date! Planning the experience with your significant other ahead of time will make you excited about the experience instead of anxious about eating off the program. If your partner isn't on The Weigh Station program, make sure to discuss foods you both like that are good for the program. If you don't want to eat out because of low carb limitations, consider making a special meal at home.

Use your dining room for the special occasion or spruce up your kitchen table with a new table cloth and pretty candles. Also consider the lighting and music to set the tone. Make the day fun, pick out something you wouldn't normally wear. You may even want to shop for a new outfit! Valentine's Day shouldn't be just about the food!

When picking out your menu options, consider incorporating the following herbs which are considered aphrodisiacs: anise, cardamom, cinnamon, cumin, curry (a blend of herbs), paprika, pepper and turmeric. Clams, mushrooms and nuts are also thought to enhance romance. Consider the following recipe for your Valentines dinner on page 3...

# Clam Stuffed Portabella Mushrooms

15 mins Cook time 50 mins Total time 1 hour 5 mins

Serves: 3 stuffed mushrooms

## Ingredients

- 3 large portabella mushrooms, cleaned, stems and gills removed, if desired
- 1 6 ounce can clams, drained (reserve  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup clam juice for stuffing), finely minced
- 1 scallion (green onion), chopped fine
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh oregano
- 1 tablespoon cooled melted butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  C finely grated Parmesan cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup plus two tablespoons finely grated mozzarella cheese, divided (I used reduced fat, which doesn't melt as well)
- \* $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup melted butter (see note)

fresh diced parsley, for garnishing

## Instructions

1. Clean mushrooms well, removing stems and also removing gills, if desired. Removing the gills isn't necessary, but if you don't the butter sauce will turn brown. Gills can be removed with the tip of a spoon lightly scraped against the mushrooms. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a mixing bowl combine clams, onions, garlic, oregano, and cooled melted butter. Mix well. Add the parmesan cheese, egg, and clam juice, stir well. Stir in 2 tablespoons grated mozzarella.

Fill the mushrooms with the stuffing. You should have enough to slightly mound the stuffing. Place the mushrooms in a square baking dish sprayed with cooking spray. Pour melted butter over the mushrooms. Cover (suggested) and bake in the preheated oven for 40-45 minutes. Uncover, sprinkle remaining mozzarella over the top of the mushroom, and bake for 5 more minutes, or until the cheese is just melted. Garnish with fresh parsley and serve hot.