

Weighing In: May 2012

The Condemnation of each other!!!

Is there condemnation of individuals who are overweight and obese in Western society? The answer to this question is **yes!** Overweight and obese people deal with terrible discrimination in many aspects of their interpersonal and social interactions. This discrimination can and often does result in an internalization of multiple negative feelings and beliefs. These feelings adversely affect their self-esteem and ultimately their self-control, which causes them to go back to their old habits of eating.

As I reviewed multiple essays for this paper, I was shocked by the amount of literature written about the condemnation of obese people. Have you ever seen an obese person at a restaurant and glanced at their plate and wondered why they are eating like that?

Do you whisper to the person you are with about them? Did you sometimes shake your head and wonder what is wrong with these folks? Well these people have a disease. The disease is obesity. The disease is addiction. The disease is loneliness. The disease is a feeling of inadequacy.

As you can see, there are multiple factors that continue to dominate a person's life, which in turn causes them to satisfy themselves with food. These people condemn themselves over and over again. Sometimes Dr. Dums and I, and the nursing and support staff, feel like we are sitting in the midst of a confessional.

Is it possible we are a little less sensitive to the obese because in the end it's self-inflicted? It was a choice for them to become like this right? NO!!! It was not a choice. It is addiction. It is emotion. It is anger. It is frustration. Are we so quick to judge that we are often guilty of being just ignorant?

As I read Weigh Station Winners, I'm sometimes amazed by people who say that they are following the program completely and have no idea why they have gained weight. Then when I see these people in the office, they admit that Little Debbie cakes just happened to sneak into their lunchbox. Not only did one or two Little Debbie cakes sneak in, little Debbie then comes here and she weighs about 400 pounds.

So why is it we are so quick to condemn others for the same mistakes we're making ourselves? If there's anything I want you to learn from the experience you're having at The Weigh Station, it is that this program is a lifestyle change **forever!!!**

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For the last seven years, I've dealt with obese and overweight people from all walks of life, professionals, laborers, administrative people, school teachers, government bureaucrats, etc. Each person comes here with his or her own set of baggage. How do you help one another? Sharing your failures or successes is vital in helping one another succeed. Please extend compassion and courtesy to people who are struggling with their obesity.

We live in an accusatory, judgmental world that reveres slim people. If we are not slim, we feel condemned. Not only do we feel condemned by the world, but we condemn ourselves out of a sense of failure. We beat ourselves up for eating too much, for not having the willpower to resist. Many people have problems in their lives. In fact, nearly everyone has problems if the truth be told, but when the problem is food, it is usually obvious. We know that people can see that we have a problem and we think that they are judging us for it. We also come under condemnation every time we step on the scales or put on tight fitting clothes, and we are reminded of our failure.

Condemnation is not a motivator, it is a de-motivator. When you fail, you feel awful about yourself and eventually start eating more as a comfort to ease the pain. Condemnation holds you back and today I hope to start you on a journey to help you become free of it.

Do not judge and you will not be judged? Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. (Luke 6:37)

Chuck Shaffer, MD

Recipe of the Month:

Roasted Red Pepper Soup

2 tbsp olive oil
2 medium size onions, finely chopped
2 large green bell peppers, finely diced
6 large garlic cloves, minced
4 containers of prepared roasted red peppers (use liquid)
4 C vegetable broth
1/2 tsp pepper
1/2 tsp chili powder
1 tbsp fresh cilantro (optional)

Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Cook onions and green pepper until lightly browned and tender, adding in garlic when nearly done to keep it from burning. Stir in Roasted red peppers, vegetable broth, pepper and chili powder. Blend with hand blender. Stir in cilantro as desired.

Makes 6 servings. Add lean ground meat to this and serve with a salad 😊

Switching behavior for a healthier life

I've been reading a book called **Switch** by Chip and Dan Heath about behavior change. We all know that we make decisions for the wrong reasons sometimes, but the book does a good job of explaining why we do this. They describe the decision making part of the brain as the elephant (the emotional part) and the rider (the logical part). Obviously, the elephant or emotional part is much larger and can easily override the rider (or the person sitting on the elephant directing it). It's interesting when you think of our decision making in terms of the elephant and the rider. How many times have you allowed your emotions to take over when you know something is not good for you?

We have all fallen victim to a lack of willpower for one reason or another but did you ever think of what else in your life may have led to this? Did you know that willpower can wear out? There was a study shared in this book about two groups of people placed in a room together. The first group was asked to eat freshly baked chocolate chip cookies. The second group could only smell the cookies, and instead were asked to eat radishes. After this, both groups were asked to participate in a maze (unknown to them, the maze was unsolvable). The researchers found that those who ate the cookies (and did not have to use any willpower) worked on the maze twice as long as those in the radish group. The researchers concluded that the radish group used so much willpower not eating the cookies that they had little left when it was time to work the maze. I found this very interesting. Who knew that decisions made earlier in the day could dictate how you approach other decisions that may be totally unrelated!

Other research shared in the book related to decision making. When doctors were asked to either place their patient on a specific medication or put them through surgery, the doctors obviously chose the medication. However, when given a choice between two different medications or surgery, the doctors chose surgery. The author explained that the doctors were suffering from decision paralysis between the two medications. The author made clear that decisions to change a behavior needed to be specific. This made me think about why The Weigh Station's program is so successful, it is black and white. Here is the list of food, no ifs, ands or buts about it. Unlike the food guide pyramid, which is very vague in its recommendations, our recommendations are clear, measurable and specific. The general public is easily confused and frustrated with the food guide pyramid since it is color coded and has no real meaning. Pyramids often signify hierarchy (the food guide pyramid's lines are vertical with no hierarchical meaning). The pyramid also fails to provide serving sizes and if you aren't familiar with what goes in each food group, then you are totally out of luck! No wonder the general public relies on their elephant to make food decisions, their rider is worn out!

It also made me think more about maintenance. In maintenance, you have more food choices and therefore more decisions to make. This for some people may be more overwhelming, and therefore makes it easier for their elephant to lead the way. If you feel this way, the best way to address the issue is to map out a plan. Decide in your maintenance meeting exactly which new foods you plan to have at which meal and on which days of the week! I am happy to help you with this. If the elephant is still stomping your success, remember that accountability and ongoing support are equally important for long-term weight maintenance. It's not just about food.

I have learned a lot from this book and I'm not even half way through it. Let your rider lead the way and don't let your elephant take over! I highly recommend this book. I personally can't wait to finish it.

-Tricia Foley, Registered Dietitian

Evening Exercise Classes!

I am excited to announce the start of an evening exercise class designed around the needs of stage two patients! This class is a beginner/intermediate class that incorporates full body motion, use of bands and balls and low impact aerobic exercise to help you get the body you desire. Together we will create a fun and active environment that makes getting in shape something to look forward to.

Currently, evening classes are being held at Pathway's gym (located in the same mall as The Weigh Station in Christiansburg) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. These classes start at 5:30pm and last 30-45 minutes.

The Weigh Station exercise class schedule:

Monday	Fitness for Beginners 11:00am-12:00pm Motor Mile Fitness Center 5:30pm-6:30pm Pathway Christian Academy
Tuesday	Core Fusion: Upper body 10:30am-11:15am Motor Mile Fitness Center
Wednesday	Cardio: 11:00am-12:00pm Motor Mile Fitness Center 5:30pm-6:30pm Pathway Christian Academy
Thursday	Core Fusion: Lower body 10:30am-11:15am Motor Mile Fitness Center
Friday	General Fitness: 11:00am-12:00pm Motor Mile Fitness Center 5:30pm-6:30pm Pathway Christian Academy

Additional Activities:

We offer monthly cooking classes on Wednesdays in Christiansburg. Be sure to ask our receptionist when the next class is.

Sharing The Journey:

Sharing the Journey is a support group where you can get together with people in situations similar to yours, talk about problems you may have had in the past, help others overcome their obstacles or maybe just vent your frustrations. We want you to know that you are not alone in your struggles and EVERYONE is invited to attend!

Linda Snead will be directing these meetings and you can read more about her on our website at www.weighstation.net.

Sharing the Journey meetings are held Thursday nights from 7:00pm-8:00pm. The first and third Thursdays are at the Christiansburg Weigh Station. The second and forth Thursdays are at the Valley View Holiday Inn in Roanoke.