

May Weighing In 2015

Denial a Lie from the Dark Side

Are you in denial about the true size of your body? Are you trying to protect yourself from the reality that you are still gaining or regaining your weight? You know you are eating out of control, but do you pretend that it isn't affecting your body size?

Emotional conflicts, stress and painful life situations---many times you want to pretend these aren't happening to you because of the misery they cause. But denying their existence only leads you to revert to your old coping mechanisms. For many of you that is to overeat in search of comfort. Then you deny that you are using food to attempt to feel better! The initial short term denial can produce a good thing; it gives you time to adjust to a painful or stressful issue. It might be a precursor to making some sort of change in your life that you needed to make for a long time. However, the denial has a dark side.

Remaining in denial for too long can prevent you from dealing with issues that require action such as trying to get your weight under control. If you refuse to acknowledge that something is wrong with the way you're coping, you will only continue to overeat to block out the painful thoughts, threatening information or feelings of anxiety. Denial is understandable as these negative occurrences in life might make you feel vulnerable or threaten your sense of control. You feel you have no control over illness, addiction, financial problems or dealing with relationship conflicts. Denial is understandable but not productive. You don't want to feel the bad feelings so you overeat to stuff them down. Then you deny you are overeating, and your weight continues to increase. Something has to stop the dark side from taking over!

A team of researchers from the University of Illinois recently asked 3,622 young men and women in Mexico to estimate their body size based on categories ranging from very underweight to obese. People who were in the normal weight range selected the correct category about 80% of the time. However, 58% of the overweight students incorrectly described themselves as normal weight. And among the truly obese, 75% placed themselves only in the overweight category; only 10% accurately described their body size as obese! You are not alone in denying you have a weight problem!

The tendency of patients to underestimate their body sizes, according to studies done in the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere, is remarkably consistent across all culture lines in all age groups. So why are so many people overweight and how did this happen? A group of scientists are only now beginning to understand the complicated process in which the brain-- in particular the posterior parietal cortex-- integrates signals from all the senses to form our image of ourselves. Many scientists believe this internal calibration system sometimes goes haywire.

Researchers do admit that some denial may simply have a lot to do with personal embarrassment. Researchers at the University of Texas Medical School found that one in three women did not know they had gained five pounds, and only about 15% were aware when they had gained 10.

Some of our patients live on the dark side of reality. We have patients now that have volume III charts. This means they have filled up three charts with restarts, returns, and more restarts! And yet never once would many of them admit that they failed to follow what we asked them to do. They denied the obvious.

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And the obvious is only a precursor to their severe health problems. The University of Illinois showed in a study group that most obese people don't think that they are fat enough to experience any weight-related health issues.

An extreme example of denial gone wild, takes place today in India. This country has seen close to a 20% increase in weight in the population between the years 1998 and 2005. A study recently found serious health complications there. One in five men and one in six women are currently seriously overweight. In some urban areas those rates are even higher. A leading cardiologist in New York, Dr. Seth, explains that in India, obesity is synonymous with prosperity. "The paradox here is that that these people are considered healthy. Thin people are considered weak in India. Most of my patients who lose weight after a heart attack come to me thinking they have become weak. Once the perception of being fat relates to good health, overweight people don't think of themselves as fat. They are like everybody around them! So it's a blending of the masses. Obesity is one of the most important causes of heart attacks. As the excessive body mass index increases, your chance for coronary artery disease also increases," explains Dr. Seth.

One of my favorite authors is Dr. Steve Phinney from UC Davis. Dr. Phinney did a study showing that it was fat that supplied almost all of the energy used by high-caliber cyclists after adaptation to the ketogenic diet. These guys had no problem performing a high level of exercise with very little dietary carbohydrate intake. So don't buy into the clever marketing scams of manufacturers who tote those sugary sports and energy drinks. The reality is you can exercise just fine without them once you have adopted the experience of ketosis adaptation. This comes from several weeks of a very low carbohydrate diet, which is what the Weigh Station promotes. And yet, despite all that overwhelming data, some patients still refuse to admit that a low carbohydrate diet will help them lose weight.

Living in denial has never contributed to one positive aspect of your life. I have patients who back onto the scale; they will not face what their true weight is. This is the epitome of denial. So how do you help yourself get out of the dark side? One option is to honestly examine what you fear. Think about the negative consequences of not taking any actions. Instead, allow yourself to express your fears and emotions in a journal, to a friend, or to a medical person. This will benefit you if the truth comes out. There's something about being truthful with yourself that makes all the difference in your weight-loss success. Open up yourself to be truthful in every aspect. Don't buy into the lie of denial.

We are here to help you face whatever you are dealing with so you can win the weight battle once and for all. We do not deny that you have a weight problem. We're here to help you solve it. For God did not give us the spirit of fear, but one of love, patience, and a sound mind. (II Timothy 1:7)

Blessings to all,
Chuck Shaffer MD

Deviations, Defeat, Devastation

Recently I have seen many upset patients during their weekly visits. When we get to talking, they tell me that they “messed up” since their last visit. Their deviation made them feel defeated, which eventually lead them to more deviations and ultimately devastation at their weekly visit.

This struck me, why is it that we allow our mistakes to destroy our weight loss progress? So you ate a cookie, why does that cookie lead to two or three more? When Eve ate the apple in the Garden of Eden sin entered the world. We all fall short and will never be perfect. Michael J Fox once said: “I am careful not to confuse excellence with perfection. Excellence, I can reach for; perfection is God's business.” God gave us forgiveness, so why is it so hard for us to do the same for ourselves?

Too many times we are quick to give up, “well I messed up, so why bother with the rest of the day or week for that matter?” This mindset leads to devastation. Instead of defeat we should strive for excellence, motivating ourselves to do better. A synonym for excellence is actually to take the lead. Take the lead of your mistakes! Do not allow them to control you, learn from them but NEVER carry them with you. The mistakes you have made are in the past, the only choice you have is to move forward. The question is how will you decide to move forward?

Try and allow your mistakes to motivate you to do better. Instead of feeling defeated over a unhealthy food choice, become determined to eat better, get refocused and move on. Look at the big picture; if you are following the program the right way 5% of the time, you are going to have results. I would consider an A excellent, wouldn't you?

So I challenge you to ask yourself, what is your dietary grade for the week? Did you pass with excellence or do you need to refocus and study harder? Studying may include picking up the phone and calling us for support, keeping a food record or planning out your meals in advance.

Finally consider this quote from Aristotle: “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence therefore is not an act but a habit.”

To your health,
Tricia Foley, MS, RD, CLT

Zucchini Pizzas

Ingredients:

1 Zucchini: sliced 1 inch thick

1/4 C Roasted red pepper sauce (homemade from a jar of marinated red peppers blended)

1/2 C shredded cheese



Simply slice your zucchini, spoon sauce onto each slice and sprinkle on cheese. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees and spray cookie sheet. Place “pizza’s” onto cookie sheet and allow to cook in oven until cheese is melted. *Makes 1 serving.