

November Weighing In 2015

I'm Just Too Busy

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If there's one statement that I hear on a day-to-day basis, it's "I'm just too busy." I hear reasons given for people failing to follow the program by eating the wrong things: "I'm just too busy" or "You wouldn't believe all that is going on with me this week." Do you realize that being busy with things that are not really that important is straining your ability to be successful in other more important areas of your life?

Another way to say, "I'm so busy" would be to say, "I'm under Satan's Yoke!" Do you realize that by making yourself a slave to busyness, you have tied a yoke around your neck? A yoke was used in biblical times to restrain animals and make them go in the direction that they were supposed to.

At The Weigh Station we see yokes of bondage to a host of various items. Some of you have a yoke of sugar, carbohydrates, alcohol or overeating. All of these yokes of bondage need to be broken for you to be successful. In their book "Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection," authors John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick conducted an interesting study that involved lonely people and plates of cookies. They discovered through a controlled experiment that folks who were set up to experience social rejection ate twice as many cookies as people who were told that everybody wanted to be friends with them. Part of the double cookie eaters' motivation for overeating was comfort. The comfort that comes from fatty, sugary foods that activate the pleasure center of our brain in the dopamine area. So when you're lonely, you're physiologically less inclined to "do the right thing," say the authors, whether with food or with choices that you're making with other substances.

Isn't it fascinating how we make ourselves too busy to develop intimate relationships where friends or family could help to make us accountable? Therein lies Satan's greatest power--- to distract us from what we should be doing. Instead, we become very busy. Many patients who come to The Weigh Station feel trapped by their eating and weight problems, yet they handle their struggles in an isolated fashion afraid to let anyone know how much they struggle with food. Some women are socially disconnected for other reasons. Some have quite a few friendships, but these relationships are, in fact, very surface in nature. When asked, "How many people do you feel you really know?" the standard answer was a mere three.

Emotional eating is one of the biggest problems we contend with on a regular basis. Food and feelings are so closely intertwined. If you answer the question, "How are you feeling right now?" with words like 'stressed,' 'too busy,' and 'fat,' these answers will not count as they are circumstances, not feelings. Are you actually sad, angry, hurt, guilty, ashamed, or lonely? These are the most common emotions that cause people to overeat.

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Sometimes sugars and carbohydrates become the Xanax of your life. You use them to assuage your loneliness or feelings of emotional emptiness. It's imperative to become aware of the reasons you are reaching for that food. Are you eating because you are trying to comfort your sadness or are you eating because you're afraid to say no to yourself? Are you one of the 'happy people' who think of food as a necessity to celebrate any occasion? Do you feel guilty over what you have been eating? Are you ashamed about losing control, leading you to eat more? Making decisions based on what's going on in your spirit (which tends to fluctuate) is one sure way to wreck good dietary habits. If you're an emotional eater, negative feelings will always be followed by something to eat. One of the many reasons our patients give for eating a lot of things they don't want is to feel comforted. So when you become too busy to take care of yourself, you are causing problems which will exacerbate your weight. Remember, we are here to help you to overcome your addictions to food groups. We give you all kinds of recipes to help you with your struggles. However, if you don't do what we ask you to do and follow the program to the letter, then the problem is not ours, it becomes yours. When busyness becomes a yoke of bondage, it's time to make some changes. If you need help, just ask.

As we look forward to the new holiday season of Thanksgiving with our family and friends, remember that it's just one of several holidays. We're going to enjoy a few more and then comes the first of the year. Instead of making a New Year's resolution to start losing weight, you can make a New Year's resolution to continue to keep your weight off and to follow what we ask you to do. Here's wishing you a wonderful holiday season. Don't forget our holiday menu is at the window when you check out ---all you have to do is ask for one.

Happy Thanksgiving and blessings to all,
Chuck Shaffer MD

Stuffed Mushrooms (Makes 5 Servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb Mild Italian Sausage
- 4 Large Cloves Garlic, Minced
- 1/2 C Parmesan Cheese, Grated
- 8 ounces of Full fat cream cheese (For Thanksgiving only)
- Salt and pepper & a few springs Italian Flat Leaf Parsley



Directions: De-steam mushrooms and finely chop the stems.. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add chopped mushroom stems, Italian sausage and sausage is browned and cooked through. Remove from heat and let cool. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl combine cream cheese, 1/4th C parmesan . Mix until well incorporated. Once the sausage has been cooled, add the cream cheese mixture as well as salt and pepper to taste. Spoon heaping amounts of stuffing mixture into each mushroom cap. Place the caps on a rack and bake for 30 minutes. Sprinkle the remaining parmesan cheese on top and broil for 3-5 minutes until cheese is golden brown.

Reinvent Thanksgiving

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word “Thanksgiving”? More than likely it’s one of your favorite dishes traditionally served on that day. I know many of our patients are stressed, or even fearful, of not being able to stick to the program. But why does Thanksgiving have to be defined by food? If you are stressing about staying on the program in the presence of so many temptations, this article is for you! Here are some ideas to make your Thanksgiving memorable without food as the focus!

Unplug – Chances are, you will either be traveling to see family or will have family coming in for Thanksgiving Day. Cherish this time with your relatives and friends. Turn the TV, tablets, and other electronics off and enjoy each other’s company. If your goal is to stay out of the kitchen, consider planning a fun activity with other family members like a game or even a craft.

Exercise in the Name of Family and Health – We all know that exercise is good for our health. It can help lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels. So many times we become couch potatoes, watching the Thanksgiving Parade or favorite football team. Instead, get moving by taking a nice family walk or even playing touch football outdoors. Frisbee, soccer, and basketball are also fun, active activities that most any age can enjoy. If it’s too cold to get outside, consider a dance party inside with the kids. Being silly is just part of making lasting memories!

Time for Giving – Focus on thanks and giving. Have each member of the family write something they are thankful for and keep it in a jar. Keep it until the following Thanksgiving as remembrance. Take time the following year and read these notes, then create new ones. Also, consider giving back to your community. Donating food to a homeless shelter or food pantry is a great way to give. Shifting the focus of the day to serving others will result in a grateful attitude and better appreciation for what we have.

Remember too that there will inevitably be food on Thanksgiving. Don’t forget to plan, plan, plan! Pick up a Weigh Station Thanksgiving menu at your next visit. Prepare your favorite Weigh Station dishes to have at the table and enjoy the fellowship you have with your extended family.

Be blessed and make the focus on thanks and giving (instead of food) this year!

Best,
Tricia Foley, MS, RD