

The Psychology of weight loss.

I have always carried a bit of weight, for most of my life I had 'a bit of a belly.' It wasn't a problem, I never considered myself as fat, I was just someone that was carrying an extra kilo or so. No big problem.

Then one morning I woke up and looked at myself in the mirror and realised I was no longer just carrying a bit of weight. I was fat. Not long after this realisation I was visiting the doctor for some ailment or another and was asked to step on the scales. It seems that I wasn't just fat, I was clinically obese.

Weight loss is easy

Obviously, I was going to have to do something about this. Perhaps, I would start tomorrow, or the day after that. Or even next week, but then again Christmas is coming up, so maybe it would be best left until next year. And of course, there is January as well, it is such a cold dark month, maybe in the Spring would be best.

And so, it goes. This was my first psychological hurdle. It is simple to keep telling yourself that tomorrow is a good day to start, I mean losing weight is easy, right? All you have to do is consume less calories than you eat. What could be simpler?

Psychology is ninety-five percent of the battle

And therein lies the problem. At its heart, the physical process of losing weight is so simple even a child can understand. If you put less fuel into your system your body will begin to burn excess fat. And if you exercise more you use more fuel and hence burn your fat faster.

That wasn't the problem. I knew all this; I also knew that I was now classified as clinically obese. I didn't like the look of myself in the mirror. I was a dog owner, a big dog that needed a lot of exercise. I used to take him long walks up into the hills, but latterly I was tending to take him on walks that were less strenuous because my health was being affected.

I had every reason to lose weight, yet still I resisted. Tomorrow I would start.

I realised that the battle to lose weight was not going to be trying to stay away from the chocolate and ice-cream shelves in the supermarket. The real battle was going to be in my head.

The mental battle begins

Once I'd realised this it was then a case of overcoming it. It should have been easy; I knew I was overweight, and I realised that the cure lay within myself. All I had to do was sit down and tell myself to stop procrastinating and get on with it. Which I did, whilst tucking into a big bowl of chocolate ice-cream.

And then one day, it just happened. I decided that today was the day. I couldn't delay anymore; it was time to face facts. I was clinically obese and the only person who could anything about it was me.

The first few days

Those first few days were the hardest. It all seemed so pointless; I could see no difference (of course not). I felt no different. What was the point? The only affect it seemed to have on my life was detrimental. I could no longer eat the same foods; I was hungry all the time. I was miserable.

There just didn't seem to be any purpose to it. Each day had become a mental struggle, but somehow I stuck with it. And gradually I noticed little things, I was looking a bit thinner, I was starting to feel a bit better.

It became easier to avoid chocolate and cake and I was starting to take pride in this fact.

So, the battle is won

Well, no actually. Unfortunately, the battle is never won. Over the next few days, weeks, and months the weight continued to fall from me. I took the dog on longer and longer walks, striding up hills that I hadn't tackled for years, always pushing myself to go that bit further and that bit faster.

People were mentioning my weight loss. I had to buy a belt, then I had to use ever decreasing notches on it. I was on top of the world, I didn't even look at chocolate anymore. Then family came to visit and when they left, they presented me with a nice big box of chocolates.

I ate the whole box in one sitting.

I realised then that the fight would never be over. Whatever mental battles I'd fought and supposedly won. The war would never be over. I was in this for the long haul.

It is a war I still fight.

Psychology and dieting

That's the thing about weight loss. It doesn't matter what miracle diet you adhere to, or what weight loss classes you attend. If you don't look at the psychological aspect of weight loss then you are neglecting the biggest aspect of dieting.

The two fields go hand-in-hand, they need to work together, they need to be in harmony if proper long-term weight loss is to be achieved.

Over the years I have justified my eating habits in so many ways – It would be waste to throw that away, it's stressful being on a diet, just one bar of chocolate, to name a very few.

It is a common story, most people who have had similar experiences will tell you the same thing.

Is the war won?

Unfortunately, the war is never won. But, don't despair, it gets easier. Although my weight still tends to fluctuate, I have never let it get as bad again. I am prepared for the psychology. I know what tricks my brain is going to throw at me. And I know how to beat them.

It is a far bigger part of losing weight than the mechanics of the process. But you can learn it. Starting today. Not tomorrow, but today, see easy. Isn't it?