

The Obsessiveness Trait with Weight Loss

...A conversation with a just-got-to-goal lowcarber

Back in 2001, I had this exchange with a just-got-to-goal lowcarber, which I thought was interesting.

I was thinking today that I still feel like losing all this weight is some magic trick. Like I'm being allowed to wear cute clothes and feel thin, but like it could all vanish by morning. Strange feeling. Anyone else who's lost quite a bit feel like this?

Absolutely. Almost every day (even after 5 years of owcarbing!)

I'm not sure if it's good or bad.

Me neither. But I try to USE it for good. It's why I weigh myself daily, whether I want to or not. No way I'm losing a grip on reality or even taking one step down the path of denial by letting myself believe I have permanently solved my weight problem and can ease up now.

I know I've lost this weight before, TWICE, and regained it. So losing weight was not the problem, was NEVER the problem. The problem was maintaining a healthy body weight and body fat percentage. So even though it turned out to be a lot tougher than I ever imagined this third (and LAST!) time, my challenge was never really to get there, it is to keep on keeping on. To stay right where I am. It's not about losing weight anymore. It's about being healthy.

bad because it doesn't link what I'm actually doing with what's happening.

Well I think staying on top of things daily and having an underlying worry, or at least an underlying acceptance of the fact that we will never ever be "done" DOES reinforce that what we're doing (eating healthy lowcarb). This directly affects my ability (at least so far!) to keep eating right and stay with my regular exercising, so I don't think of that as bad at all.

I do know I have a tendency to really get caught up in things and then suddenly lose interest. And I have been caught up in various obsessions for a lot more than 2 years. So what if being so committed to Atkins is another obsession that will end?

I can relate strongly to the various lifelong "obsessions" or projects. What you may not know yet, or maybe it will be different for you, is that you have to gradually switch this from an "obsession" to just a piece, but an absolutely ESSENTIAL piece, of your life. At least that's what I feel I am doing. While my food still has to be one of the most important tasks of every single day, it now takes up about as much time, thought and

emotion as doing the laundry. It's just in the routine. Ever felt you were becoming obsessed with the laundry?

even if it someday isn't as much fun as it is now,

Maybe that's the point? Our feelings/emotions about this *have* to level out, settle down. Maybe we have to come to grips with the fact that this is just life as we're going to know it if we want to have what we think and say we want. Ever have fun with the laundry? But we do it anyway, right?

Guess I'm being introspective tonight. I have to have faith in my good sense, don't I?

I think being introspective and working this all through is probably secondary in importance only to what we're eating every day (and I hope you know how important I think that is!) But I've found I had to make some further changes to the inside in order to hang onto the changes on the outside this time.

I think we have to have faith in our good sense, yes, but we also have to accept (by our actions) what our real life experience has taught us, most of us more than once. And that is that as addicts, our "good sense" can waver, it has faltered before with some unpleasant consequences. We are quite simply prone to denial and fall prey more easily than others to the belief that food can give us something more than it really can.

For me, at least, a big piece of this was to stop trying to get any "cheap thrills" out of eating. Nothing on the end of a fork ever made me happier, sexier, more fulfilled, more socially acceptable, comforted, or better in any other way. My thrills now come from more appropriate (for me anyway) sources. A strong, NORMAL body (that will never be perfect), a deep love, respect and enjoyment of my friends and family, a new pride in my appearance, the thrill of looking good (enough!) in most of my clothes, and simply walking around this world not hurting so much anymore, on the inside or the outside.

We have an inner dragon (addiction) that will never be killed, only put to sleep and managed day by day. Most days that's downright boring. Some days it's not fun at all. And once in a while, often out of the blue, it still takes a little old fashioned white-knuckled willpower. I'm done losing weight, but I'm still "on a diet" just as much as I was my first week of this, it's just a lot more automatic now.

However, at some point I lost—I think I had to lose—the "I'm on a diet," and the "this is my current project, my current obsession" perspective without letting it all GO. I also had to slowly but completely let go of the ideas that this isn't fair, that this isn't what OTHER people must do, poor, poor pitiful me. This is just the way I eat, no special attention please, no pity please. Most of the time this requires no more discussion or explanation than what kind of deodorant I'm currently using.

But it took a VERY long time to settle into that mind- and body-set. Stopping the diet for even a day, I believe, would have endangered—or even reversed—the whole process.

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