

Why You May NOT Want To Lose Weight

Let's say you are stressed, frustrated, angry, sad, lonely, tired or depressed. You want to feel better and you find yourself mindlessly reaching for food. You eat quickly, paying little attention to the type of food or how much you're eating. At some point, what you've just done registers physically, mentally and emotionally. You feel disgusted, angry, guilty, upset and discouraged with yourself and resign yourself to believing that this unhealthy habit will never change.

There are a few things happening here. First, you're trying to find a fast, easy way to self soothe which doesn't require any thought or pre planning. It's easy, it temporarily numbs the pain, calms the anxiety, reduces the anger, keeps the fear down and provides a temporary distraction so you don't have to evaluate, fix or solve your problem. Yes it keeps you overweight, but it also provides an opportunity to remove yourself from feeling, thinking and dealing with your fears, doubts and insecurities. You may even be unaware that you do this or you may not know why you've chosen this coping strategy. What you do know however is that eating emotionally leaves you overweight and unhappy.

There are many reasons why we may eat emotionally, ranging from staying with conditioned behaviors we were taught to having poor coping skills or outlets to help us handle our problems and ourselves in a more effective way. While it seems natural to want to kick the emotional eating habit in order to lose weight, many of us may need to consider why we may feel the need to keep the weight on.

Weight provides a protective barrier. Remember when you would hide behind your mom's leg when you were scared? Our extra layers of weight may be providing that same security. For many, losing weight may leave us feeling insecure or uncertain because our role may change once the weight is lost. Expectations by others and ourselves may change as a result of weight loss success and we may feel that we are expected to accomplish more, perform or behave differently as a result. This feeling can generate fear and it may seem easier to stay with what is familiar than to venture into the unknown.

The extra weight also keeps us out of the game of life, giving us an excuse to avoid something rather than risk failure. With the weight, you may justify being rejected, overlooked or disregarded as being a result of the excess weight rather than deal with the pain of not being liked, wanted or valued.

Yet another reason why we may keep the weight on is to stand our ground. Maybe you dislike your husband's, partner's, parent's or coworker's comments, criticism or judgment about your weight. Keeping the weight on may be your passive/aggressive way of talking back.

Finally, for some of us, keeping the weight on as a way to test our spouse's love for us and we use it to see if the relationship will withstand the weight. When you're overweight yet confident, loving and supportive, relationships can survive almost anything. When you're

negative, pessimistic and using your weight as a testing tool, you may want to consider what the real reason is that you're putting your relationship through this test.

It takes some real soul searching to look deep within and try to understand what the excess weight provides. Does it provide security, protection, an excuse to avoid a perceived failure? Whatever the reason, it's important to discover and understand why you've chosen to keep the weight on. Now try to see if you're trying to punish anyone other than yourself, if it's rational and worthy of continuing. If you discover something traumatizing or it feels too difficult for you to handle alone, get the help and support you need to get you through. By uncovering the reason for your weight, you're taking the first step to doing anything to change it.

Very often, excess weight is an *outward* sign that something is going on *inside*. For many moms, excess weight provides nothing more than a lack of energy, frustration and larger clothes. For others however, the excess weight provides much more. It's up to you to determine what the extra weight is giving you and what price you're willing to pay to keep it there.

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