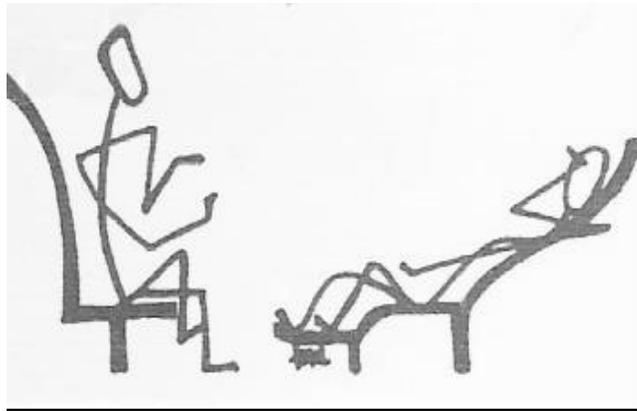


**PRE-SURGICAL WEIGHT LOSS
PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION SUPPORT
PACKAGE**



PROVIDED BY SAKOWITZ COUNSELING

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Thoughts That CAN Compromise A Weight Loss Plan

Try to think back to the last weight loss plan that you undertook and how you deviated from that plan. Did you eat something that you weren't supposed to or eat in greater quantity than you were supposed to? If this happened to you, chances are that there is something that you said to yourself to justify this action. If given the chance, it is fascinating how creative we can get in order to get something that we want. In the world of psychology, this is called *rationalization*. The following is a list of rationalizing comments we make to justify our behavior.

-----It's ok to eat this because-----

- I'm stressed
- I'm hungry
- I'm celebrating
- Everyone else is having it
- I really want it
- It looks so good
- One bite won't hurt
- I'll start again tomorrow
- I'll work out extra tomorrow
- The diets not working anyway

Even though you realize that these are not good reasons to eat if you want to be successful in your weight loss goals; at the time you are having these thoughts they can be quite compelling.



" Don't step on it... It makes you cry "

Sabotaging Thoughts

Below are examples of sabotaging thoughts that we have that can hinder our weight loss goals.

- I'm too busy to exercise.
- I can't believe I have hit the plateau. I will never lose the rest of the weight.
- I'm superstitious. If I start to think this is really working, I might jinx myself.
- I just don't know what to do. I really feel like eating.
- Eating is my only comfort.
- It's sad that I have to give up a glass of my favorite wine with meals.
- I just can't make the changes needed.

When having these sabotaging thoughts it is important to develop helpful responses to them. For example, if you have the thought "I'm too busy to exercise," a helpful response would be, "instead of sacrificing exercise today, there is another less important activity that I can shorten or forgo to fit it in."



no
negative
thoughts
allowed

Triggers to Eat

Thoughts about eating don't just happen. They are often triggered by some external cue. Typically, triggers often fall into one of five categories:

1. Biological (ex. hunger pangs)
2. Environmental (ex. seeing or smelling food)
3. Mental (ex. thinking about food)
4. Emotional (ex. anxiety)
5. Social (ex. being around people eating food)

While some triggers can be obvious (seeing an ice-cream commercial on television), others are not so obvious (craving chocolate based on a hormone surge). The goal to any successful weight loss program is to identify the triggers that lead you to eating and limiting your exposure to those triggers.



Mealtime Checklist

Changes are one of the most difficult changes you will have to make is your mealtime rituals. You will have heard your psychologist stress the importance of these behavioral changes, but you will probably not truly understand the impact of them. That's ok, because that is natural. However, mealtimes for you will never be the same. Remember the rules:

- **NO EATING AND DRINKING AT THE SAME TIME**
- **CHEW YOUR FOOD THOROUGHLY (*EACH MEAL SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 30 MINUTES*)**

To help you get into the habit, we strongly urge you to practice these principles before your surgery. **YES! BEFORE YOUR SURGERY.** To help it may be useful to develop a mealtime checklist. This can be on an index card, the back of a business card, or a poster size piece of paper on your refrigerator. On your card, you put helpful tips and statements to help you with the meal. Here is an example:

1. CHEW FOOD THOROUGHLY.
2. NO DRINK WITH MY MEAL.
3. IT'S OK IF IT TAKES LONGER THAN EVERYONE ELSE. THIS IS IMPORTANT.

Weight Loss Surgery Checklist

- Practice mealtime behavioral changes (chewing food thoroughly, no food and liquid together)
- Make one month post-surgery psychological follow-up appointment
- Attend one month post-surgery appointment
- Find a support group
- Consider attending supportive one on one counseling
- Join a gym or develop exercise plan
- Identify sabotaging thoughts
- Develop helpful responses to sabotaging thoughts
- Identify triggers to eating
- Develop mealtime checklist

This is a story posted on CNN.com on September 1, 2014.

Story by Shannon Britton.

What they never tell you about losing a lot of weight

At 27 years old, I weighed 486 pounds and decided to have gastric bypass surgery. I know what you might be thinking: "Oh, you took the easy way out."

Let me tell you, having weight loss surgery is far from easy. It involves a total commitment to a lifestyle change.

Before my surgery nearly three years ago, I met with my surgeon, nutritionists, exercise coaches and a psychologist. I went to classes and learned about meals, exercise and how my body would change. We learned about plastic surgery -- how many weight loss patients have their skin tucked because they have all this excess skin hanging from your body in weird places.

I was prepared, or so I thought.

On November 23, 2011, the day before Thanksgiving, I went under the knife. Since then, I've lost 268 pounds.

But the thing they do not prepare you for is how you change emotionally after losing a large amount of weight. At first, I thought I would just have this newfound confidence. I'd be thinner and want to run around naked. OK, maybe not naked, but I had this fantasy in my head that one day I would wake up with a body that I loved and would feel comfortable putting into a bikini -- that I'd have no body shame whatsoever.

People would accept me more because I wasn't seen as obese and unhealthy. Dating would get easier. Clothes would fit better. I wouldn't be judgmental toward other extremely obese people because I was once huge.

Boy, was I wrong.

First off, even though I feel amazing and I am starting to like the way I look, there are days in which I hate my body. I hate how certain clothes push against my excess skin, making it bulge out (think muffin top, but worse). I hate the way the skin hangs down on my arms, and thighs, back and stomach. I hate that it will take at least \$15,000 (if not more) in plastic surgery to rid these last 30 to 40 pounds off of my body.

I also have stretch marks and surgery scars across my abdomen and stomach, so being intimate with my boyfriend can be intimidating at times. I knew what I was getting into when I signed up for this, but that knowledge doesn't erase the self-consciousness I feel when I get out of the shower, or when a stranger or child snickers because they don't understand why my body looks the way it does.

My relationships also changed. When I first had my surgery, the guy I was with had been a best friend of seven years. He found me attractive at 486 pounds, though I'm not sure why. But once I lost my first 68 pounds, he left.

My surgeon explained that this is common among his bariatric patients. For some reason, it can shake the other partner psychologically when one loses weight, gains confidence and starts getting more attention. But the experience taught me that someone who is jealous of something that makes me better, healthier and stronger never had my best interests at heart.

Dating after that was a struggle, until I met my current boyfriend six months ago. Most guys got scared because they were afraid to take me to dinner, afraid they would break my new diet resolve, and when they saw a picture of what I used to look like, they started to wonder what would happen if I gained a few pounds again.

What else has surprised me about losing weight? No one ever told me that it would upset me when severely obese people get special attention because they choose to be heavy -- like when TV shows feature people who are happy to weigh 600 pounds, or people who post YouTube videos professing love of their excess weight.

Don't get me wrong, I think it is great that people are comfortable in their own skin, because many times I'm not always comfortable in my own skin. But for me, being heavy wasn't a choice. So I guess I have a hard time identifying with them.

Obesity is debilitating to your health. I used gastric bypass surgery as a tool to save my life so that I wouldn't develop diabetes, have a heart attack at age 35, have a stroke, and to hopefully lower my risk of cancer. Now I have no tolerance for excuses about not being able to eat healthy and exercise.

See, here's the bottom line: The biggest thing that no one ever tells you about losing weight is that eventually, the number on the scale no longer matters.

What matters is how you feel, how you look and how happy you are. I know at my current weight I am still medically obese, but I have a clean bill of health. Through my bad days and my good days, I am happier now than I have ever been. When I struggle or feel myself about to slip into old habits, I pull out a picture of what I used to look like.

And I remind myself that nothing tastes as good as being healthy feels.

Link to the story –

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/01/health/irpt-weight-loss-shannon-britton/index.html>