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Weight Loss Discipline

Why is it so hard to lose weight and keep it off? We have all heard that weight loss is just a matter of taking in less calories than we expend. That certainly sounds very logical, but is it really that simple?

For example, I had an intention of only eating fruits and vegetables for a day or two, to counteract the recent 'junk' food I had been enjoying. This was a solid plan that practically guaranteed a decrease in caloric intake. However, a solid plan doesn't always mean an easy execution.

I figured I would be relatively safe making a trip to the health food store. So my guard against high fat foods was down. When I got to the store, my sensibilities were assailed by a well meaning clerk hawking some freshly made corned beef and cabbage. I could hardly resist the temptation. And that wasn't the end of it. Once my armour was breached, the temptation of tasty, 'health oriented' cookie samples fought for my attention.

Once again, I capitulated. My normally strong will power seemed to crumble. And once weakened, it seemed reasonable to just continue. It's like that first drink for the recovering alcoholic.

I am by no means overweight, but once in a while my diet gets out of hand and the fat around my midsection gets a little more sizable than I am comfortable with. Usually, times like these are a great opportunity to get a little detoxification in, so I like to focus on fruits and vegetables for a day or two.

This has the dual effect of decreasing my caloric intake. I was also sticking with the simple plan mentioned above. So where did things go wrong? Did I not have enough discipline? Did I lack willpower, or was it something else?

In retrospect, the problem appears to be a lack of preparation. I failed to use the power of why. Let me explain. When the chips were down, I didn't seem to have enough reason to maintain discipline. Maybe you have had a similar experience? I rationalized with, "oh, a little won't hurt me". The truth is, once you start down that road, it can be hard to turn back.

What would the right preparation be in that case? What is this power of why that I am talking about? A great way to fortify will power with any strategy is to actually write out the reasons why sticking to your plan or achieving your goal is important. It is kind of like stockpiling ammunition. The weaponry, in this case, appears in the form of a list.

With a long list of reasons supporting the plan or the goal, I would have had a lot more reserves to draw on when my front line defenses were being stressed. When the well meaning clerk was pouncing, I should have had a ready list of whys to fall back on. As the clerk was just being nice and sounding really sensible, plus it was a free sample after all, my mind should have responded with my ready made list of why I should not vary from my plan.

That didn't happen because I never made such a list. Whatever you are trying to accomplish in life, there are bound to be obstacles and obstructions that just leap into your path to stop or block you. These are the times that you need your list. The list is your power. No list, no power.

When anyone sits down to plan something or set a goal, they need a list to support them during weak times. The longer the list, the better. Even if one has to carry the list along in one's pocket, it is worth it. A list of about 50 reasons, while hard to create, can pay off in a major way.

Imagine the clerk's surprise, had I pulled out my handy list and read it off for him. My armour would not have been pierced and the clerk would have had to move on to more ready prey or risk having the spear of temptation blunted! No list, no power.

So, how long is your list?

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