

The 30 Pound Club

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August 1, 2010 – Santa Clara, CA

Success and Happiness

This is one of my favorite stories—my encounter with management consultant Randy Jones. Of all places, we met in the bathroom in the Sky Club of the Atlanta airport. Most women don't know the rules about urinal use: if there are more than two of them, you never take the one next to another guy. You always leave one space between. So as I was using the facility, a guy a couple stalls down was talking. I didn't hear the whole thing, but whatever he said at the end made me laugh.

He then said that he'd met his goal for the day—to make someone laugh. After we washed our hands, we kept talking about success and happiness. In his management consulting business, people aren't generally very happy. Colleagues kept asking him how he could be so happy. He decided that he would think about it on a flight to Japan. He said that you could get drunk and sober up three times on that long a flight, or you could just think about what it took to be successful and happy. So he contemplated it and came up with these three things:

- First, enjoy what you're doing. It should make you happy. My interpretation was that enjoying what you're doing will help you get through the challenging times—and there will always be challenging times.
- Second, mistakes are okay—they give you experience. Sure, you should learn from them, but they should never stop you dead in your tracks. They happen, so learn and move on.
- Finally, set some goals—for the day, for the week, for the month, for the year, for your lifetime. You have to know where you're going or you'll never get there.

That conversation is just as clear today as it was over a year ago when it happened. So what does that have to do with the 30 Pound Club? Everything.

We look at losing weight and getting fit as something we dread. The process may not be something we enjoy, but we sure will enjoy those smaller clothes and being able to do more. So the end point makes us happy; it's the journey we don't like so much.

That brings us to the second point: we've all made mistakes. We let our frustrations dictate our eating habits. We drove thru when we knew the choices were not the best. In other words, we've made numerous mistakes, so we know a lot of ways not to lose weight and get fit. We just need to use all that information we've collected.

To me, what we also don't do is make our health a goal—something we can focus on. Achieving a healthy weight is more than a number on a scale, but keeping track of our weight makes it easier to quantify. It can be broken down into discrete steps. Think about it. If you want to lose one pound every week, you have to take in 3,500 fewer calories in a week. Or you have to burn 3,500 more calories than you take in. Or some combination of each. Create a deficit of 500 calories per day every day for a week and you lose a pound. It's quantifiable and it can be tracked. That's as complicated as is. Every day, you know exactly what you have to do to lose one pound per week. You also have to know that weight loss is not linear. It won't come off exactly one pound per week, but it will come off. You can do this if you set a goal and focus on it.

So think about Randy's story and your own story. Then take some time to set your goals for abandoning those 30 (or however many) pounds, and get about doing it. We've got too many other things to accomplish to keep thinking about our weight year after year after year. More than ever, it's One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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