

The 30 Pound Club

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September 12, 2010 – Grand Rapids, MI

State of Mind

One of my goals for the month was to work up to running five miles three days a week. My goal for the first 10 days was to put away the watch and by walking/running or all running, get to five miles by the 10th. Needless to say, life happens so I had only built up to three miles on the 8th. On the 9th, I decided that I would go to the local trail after recording my radio show and run five miles without stopping. What prompted this? Part of it was watching a show about the training that Army Rangers and Green Berets go through: 24 continuous hours of physical activity. You stop, you're out. The point is to drill into their minds that fatigue is a state of mind. That was my motivation.

It wasn't easy, but it wasn't hard either. It was a matter of constantly telling my mind that there was no pain, that the latent fitness level was there, and that I could overcome my body. I finished it without stopping.

The same principle applies to eating less. You will feel hunger at some point. Your body is getting less food than it used to and it doesn't like it. But it's more mind than body—you just have to overcome it.

Paula reminded me that what I was saying could feed into the typical male mentality that you should ignore symptoms. Let me be clear. There's a difference between pain and fatigue. If you're overcoming an injury, listen to your body—as Paula's foot surgeon told her, "Respect the pain." But don't let discomfort stop you. If you have chest pain of any type—well—do I really need to say anything about what you should do? But those will be the exceptions.

If you have diabetes or hypoglycemia and you feel the usual symptoms, check your blood sugar because it may be time to eat something. When you're feeling hungry, ask yourself if it's really just that you're bored or sad or tired. Is your brain telling you that you need a brownie or some chips? That's a clue it may not be hunger. If your body says you need an apple or some soup, it's more likely to be real hunger.

The critical thing when dealing with fatigue and hunger is to get your head in the game. The way you do that is to focus on where you want to be, not where you are. I'm no different than anyone else—I catch an unflattering glimpse of myself in the mirror and I say, "What's the point?" The point is that losing weight and getting fit are journeys of endurance, not speed; re-read the 30 Pound Club message from August 15th and you'll understand. To get to where you want to be, you have to spend more time training your mind than you do your body. You have to accept that sometimes you'll ache and sometimes you'll miss all that food you used to eat. Fatigue or hunger is really just a state of mind—and you can learn to handle it.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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