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Love Affair

Let's not have a stroke just yet. Titles are meant to be provocative, to get your attention. The love affair I'm talking about is between a guy I've known for over 10 years and food. I talked to him recently and after sustaining a weight between 320 and 350 pounds, he acknowledged that every time he starts to lose weight, he sabotages himself because he loves food. He intentionally disrupts his eating plan and gains back what he lost. I understand. I really do. I love certain foods that aren't really conducive to losing and maintaining a healthy weight. As I've said before, I grew up in Buffalo and I never met a Buffalo wing I didn't like.

I told him what I tell you and what I tell myself: you can eat anything you want. It doesn't matter what food it is, whether it's chocolate or chicken wings or steak or some high-calorie dessert. What you have to do is control the amount you eat and how often you eat it. No food—and I do mean no food—is off limits. Eat your vegetables. Eat your berries. Eat your whole grains. But if you really, really must have some food that you think is verboten, have it. Just not as much as you used to eat, not as often as you used to eat it, and cut back on other calories for that day to make room for it.

Remember this: life is to be enjoyed and food is a part of it. If your best friend gets married, you're not getting into heaven any sooner because you didn't eat any wedding cake. But keep in mind that you have to love yourself, too. Giving yourself the gift of a healthy, fit body and a brighter future is worth some work and sacrifice, and when you get there, it's going to be better than any food you could possibly imagine. That's a love affair you want to have.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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