

## Love Yourself - Lose Weight

By  
Loretta M. Siani, Ph.D.

Research indicates that 56% of the population of the United States is overweight. Moreover it is estimated that Americans spend approximately \$35 billion a year on weight loss programs, products, and potions. Much confusion, not to mention guilt, abounds regarding what and what not to eat. Meanwhile, the number of overweight people in the United States increases at a phenomenal rate.

So exactly what is the problem?

Strangely enough, I would like to suggest that all this focus on *what and what not* to eat obscures the real problem. The real problem does not lie in the food we eat. The real problem lies in our minds. Excluding those who are genetically destined to be larger people, I would like you to consider that our weight problems stem from the fact that we have judged ourselves unworthy at some level. Once judged unworthy, we harbor unconscious fears of being hurt or rejected for our imagined unworthiness and believe at some level that weight gain protects our core being in some way. It's common knowledge how the sexually abused, or those who have problems with their sexual identity or body image issues often falsely suffer from this same deep sense of unworthiness, isolation and guilt.

All of these false fears and judgments create an emotional toxicity in the mind-body system that upsets its equilibrium. Unloving thoughts create a state of anxiousness and imbalance that actually changes our relationship to food and the way our bodies process it. Under the guise of "protecting" our core being our toxic thoughts actually cause the body to put on more weight in order to carry out the unconscious judgment of unworthiness. Then, to make matters worse, our self-hatred and unworthiness get corroborated when we feel guilty and shameful for gaining weight, thus further separating us from self-love and perpetrating the cycle.

What can we do to change this?

To change our bodies we must first change our thinking. If unloving, self-condemning thoughts create a state of *anxiety* and *lack of balance* in the body, then loving, self-accepting thoughts create a state of *peace* and *balance* in the body. When we think loving accepting thoughts about ourselves and eat with love instead of with guilt, the meaning of the food and our hunger for it changes. Additionally, our bodies are able to process only what they need from the food we eat and let the rest go because they no longer need to use food as a defense mechanism or to fulfill the mind's prophecy of unworthiness.

So I suggest the first step in conquering our overweight problem is to let go of hating ourselves for being over weight. We must begin by accepting ourselves, as we are - heavy thighs, "spare tires" and all. We can't hate ourselves into being thin. Hating our fat only adds emotional intensity to the thought of being fat. Since we become what we think about all day long, adding emotional intensity to the thought of being fat simply

causes more of “I hate being fat” to show up in our lives. It doesn’t make it go away. Hating our over weight bodies only substantiates our self-hatred, thus once again perpetrating the vicious cycle. To break this cycle and transform our bodies we must love ourselves fat and all.

How can we begin this process?

We can start by forgiving ourselves and by letting go of guilt and the misguided notion that we must continue to pay a price for any and all mistakes we’ve made in our lives. We must come to see life as nothing more than a classroom that presents us with lessons to learn. The truth is, all of our wisdom comes from the mistakes we have made in the classroom of our lives. As Gandhi put it, we must be *forgiving of our own evolution*. *Failure is only one form of feedback*. When we hold on to guilt for our so-called “failures” we keep ourselves (and our bodies) stuck in the past. We can’t expect different results in life if we keep responding to its challenges with the same old solutions. When we change our thinking and forgive ourselves for our mistakes, we release ourselves (and our bodies) from having to repeat the same lesson over and over again. It opens us up to the next level of learning in life.

We can further this process along by forgiving others as well, and letting go of any and all resentment we might hold. No matter how justified we feel our resentment is, continuing to hold on to it holds us back in life and places long-term stress on the body. Letting go of resentment does not mean that we are justifying, condoning or accepting the clear misbehavior of others. It simply means we are releasing ourselves from the prison of resentment, and the effects it has on us. The psychological stress caused by holding on to resentment is another way of destabilizing the body’s equilibrium and proper functioning. It contributes to weight gain and/or to the manifestation of other symptoms produced by psychological stress.

In the long run, we can never escape the feelings of anxiousness and imbalance that distort our body’s relationship with food by merely focusing on the food we eat. Nor can we let go of unwanted pounds, and keep them off, if our goal is to simply become thin so we can feel better about ourselves. This notion mistakenly presumes that the body rules the emotions. The truth is, it is the emotions that rule the body. To find the peace and balance that will ultimately transform our relationship with food and allow us to let go of unwanted pounds, and keep them off, we have to begin by accepting ourselves as we are. When we do this, food becomes something other than an unconscious way of proving our guilt, disguising our fears, or covering up our deep sense of isolation and unworthiness. When we accept ourselves we quite naturally become more active, eat right and feel happier. When we let go of fear, guilt, and feelings of unworthiness and resentment, we make more room in our hearts for love. Love doesn’t attack. Love accepts. Love transforms. Love enables the body to take what it needs from the food and allows the problem of excess weight to naturally disappear from our lives.