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Be a happy loser

Don't let negative feelings bog you down as you work toward dropping pounds

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Anyone who has struggled with their weight knows how intense feelings can be about weight gain and weight loss. Just as the needle on the scale can fluctuate up and down, emotions can range from great highs, when we feel we're getting closer to our goals, to great lows when we suffer a setback. This emotional rollercoaster does not begin when we embark upon a weight loss plan. Chances are it started from the time we began to put on the excess weight and it continues as we try to reach our weight loss goals.

"There are a lot of different emotions that come into play in the weight gain experience and contribute to depression, anxiety and irritability. Extra weight raises your stress level, not only in the body, but mentally as well," said Damian Greer of Fit Weight Loss and More. "The reverse side of that is the experience of elation from dropping these pounds and basically getting your lifestyle back together."

Quiet, please! Put negative self-talk on mute

One of the main reasons that people experience negative moods when they are on a weight loss journey is because of negative self-talk, says Chelsea Garfield of Good Friends Group Fitness. "Seventy-five percent of this is in our head and only 25 percent is based on what our physical ability is. Seventy-five percent is total self-talk, and if we can overcome the self-talk, it's amazing what our bodies can do and how strong we really are. All we have to do is change the thinking." Some ways to get over this defeatist self-talk include:

GETTING SOME EXTRA HELP. By hiring a certified trainer, even for just one session, you can get tips on the most efficient workouts and encouragement to keep you going. A trainer can also push you out of your comfort zone, but will not push you too far, which can put you at risk for injury.

BLOGGING TO GET A BOOST. Starting a blog about your weight loss journey can be a documentation of how far you've come. When you feel discouraged, looking at old posts can remind you of the progress you've made — and help you celebrate those successes. Also, your friends and family — or even strangers — who read your blog can act as cheerleaders for you and give you an "atta girl" when you need extra encouragement.

But, of course, where weight is concerned, getting your lifestyle back together takes time. And it's not uncommon for people to hold on to these negative feelings as they go through their weight loss journey. So what can you do to get happy — and stay happy — as you are working toward your goals?

SCALE BACK

We always want to feel like our hard work is paying off, but constantly checking the scale probably isn't going to make you feel better — especially if you haven't shed as many pounds as you would like.

"Numbers don't always reflect what's going on," said Judi Taylor of Jenny Craig. "We have a lot of people at Jenny Craig who start exercising when they have never exercised

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FINDING A COMMUNITY. By taking exercise classes or joining a weight loss message board, you can share tips and tricks with those who are going through the same experiences that you are. Getting inspiration — and inspiring others — can quiet down your negative self-talk and replace it with real success stories.

before. Once they start getting into it, they start building muscle and the scale doesn't always tell them what they want it to tell them."

NOT SO FAST

Our world is getting faster and faster, and as a result, we want everything to happen as quickly as possible — including weight loss. But, unfortunately, it just doesn't work that way. Healthy weight loss takes time and being patient is an important way to keep our

moods in check along the way.

"Lasting results don't come quickly, they come with time. We didn't get overweight overnight, so we're not going to get fit overnight either. The most important thing is to remember that it is a process that requires hard work, dedication and consistency," said Chelsea Garfield of Good Friends Group Fitness.

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