

Creating Motivation

**Another FREE Report
from MedSmart Members**



medSMARTmembers.com

Introduction

This report is largely excerpted from *MedSmart Diet*, with minor revisions for broader application beyond just weight loss and control.

Some dietary and weight loss best practices are retained to provide concrete examples of how you can reduce your need for motivation by removing temptations that test your willpower.

Many of us tend to overestimate our willpower and underestimate our ability to achieve healthful changes in our diet and lifestyle behaviors. We also overestimate how much we need to change to achieve a meaningful health benefit.

As you'll see in this report, even modest changes can produce major health benefits. Understanding this enormous leverage itself is motivating because you realize even minor success produces major benefit.

Don't let unrealistic expectations or inflated goals stop you from getting started on the road to a healthier, happier, and more financially secure future for you and your family.

Read this brief report and then act on it - because knowledge and understanding is meaningless unless you put it to use.

Doing so will put you well on the road to Becoming CEO of the Rest of Your Life.™

CREATING Motivation

Most of us know we should eat better, exercise more, and – for 2/3 of Americans – lose weight. *But we don't do it!* The reasons for this are as deep as they are wide.

For starters, our entire culture is de-motivating.

We now consume quantities of food that are unmatched in human history, paired with the lowest levels of physical activity in human history - a deadly pairing at the root of our body weight dysfunction.

The human genome, developed over millions of years, simply isn't equipped to respond to this modern lifestyle assault in any way other than our current epidemics of obesity and obesity-related chronic diseases. These now threaten to reverse our history of longer and more prosperous life-spans than those of previous generations.

And the prognosis isn't good because this unholy pairing of more calories in and less calories out is

Over-consumption is endlessly promoted in our 24/7 media culture

inculcated into every fiber of our culture...promoted endlessly by a media culture that glorifies over-consumption, instant gratification, and constant excess.

The “winners” in this 24/7 assault on our senses are the ones with the most toys - the most expensive cars, most extravagant behaviors, most self-

indulgences.

This constant theme is broken only for commercial breaks that promote fast foods with more calories, sodium, sugars, and unhealthy fats in a single meal than we need - or can process properly - in an entire day.

If we tire of a TV program, we reach for the ever-ready remote to flip to another channel while barely moving a muscle. There are hundreds of channels now, so 24/7 “entertainment” means more choices than a healthy human needs - and more time sitting passively in front of televisions.

And when we go to work, for too many it's no longer anything physical as it was for our ancestors. Instead, it's likely sitting in front of a computer – more “chair-time”.

It's hard to escape this cultural prison of extreme convenience. Some do, but they're too few to off-set self-destructive eating and lifestyle behaviors that have become the norm in our dangerously imbalanced world.

When 2 out of 3 Americans are overweight – as we currently are – and over 1 out of 3 is obese, there's comfort in numbers. When our friends are all overweight, it makes it seem OK for *us* to remain overweight.

This has been borne out by studies confirming the *social aspect of our obesity epidemic.* Obesity itself may not be contagious, but the cultural acceptance and mental complacency it engenders may well be.

Compounding this problem are the sinister effects of many packaged foods on human motivation. Studies show *packaged foods* that impair your brain's dopamine function also *drain you of motivation* to eat better and move more.

They also make it harder for you to learn and may accelerate the cognitive decline that too often accompanies aging. Is it purely a coincidence that record rates of Alzheimer's Disease are running in parallel with the increasing dominance of packaged foods in our SAD (Sickening American Diet) western diets?

While you'll never be able to prove cause-and-effect, common sense tells us there's a connection. We don't need randomly-controlled clinical trials when the evidence is staring us in the face.

Setting An Example

This self-destructive pattern extends to future generations as *overweight parents set an example* for their children that overindulgence and inactivity are acceptable. Kids do as they see – they eat too much because their parents eat too much.

It's sanctioned behavior. And the numbers prove it.

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Child and adolescent obesity is currently at record levels. Children are developing heart disease and what was once called "adult-onset (type 2) diabetes" long before adulthood.

We're literally dooming future generations with our collective failure to "get a grip" on our self-destructive eating and lifestyle behaviors – dooming them to earlier onsets of obesity and obesity-driven chronic diseases.

It's estimated that 80-90% of chronic diseases are caused by self-destructive lifestyle behaviors – and 75% of our medical spending is on chronic disease care. The link between our lifestyles and our healthcare couldn't be more direct, more damaging, or more financially devastating.

In addition to dooming our children and grandchildren to pay for *our* lifestyle-related medical expenses that are spiraling out-of-control, we're dooming them to pay for their own as well.

We can blame food companies for the addictive and fat-promoting ingredients in their products, the pharmaceutical companies for capitalizing on – and contributing to - our excess weight, the government for not doing more to prevent it.

They've certainly all been complicit in getting us to this life-shortening condition in which we find ourselves.

But, ultimately, it's our own responsibility to make smarter decisions when we eat out or go food shopping or watch yet another mindless TV show instead of go for a walk.

It's not our doctors' responsibility to make these choices for us; only we have the power to make good or bad - self-destructive or health-promoting - decisions.

We're literally dooming future generations with our collective failure to “get a grip” on our self-destructive lifestyle behaviors

So why don't we make better choices? Surely we can see our collective girth growing before our eyes.

Are we in denial? Are we in some sort of collective delayed adolescence – refusing to grow old – in which we test and push the limits to see what we can get away with?

Whatever the psychology behind it, we need to “get our act together” as a generation, as individuals, as families, and as communities before we reach the point of no return.

We may already be there as a society. It’s hard to think otherwise when you consider the trend lines for childhood obesity, diabetes, and cardiac disease - and their implications for our collective future.

Get Creative

Yet the majority of us are still waiting for someone else to change things for us, or for the “inspiration” or motivation to suddenly strike us to take matters into our own hands. But it doesn’t work like that.

Motivation has to be CREATED and only you can create it. Once you assert your will by taking this initiative, you’re likely to find *more* motivation.

But you have to be the catalyst; once you get the ball rolling – as long as you don’t go overboard and keep your goals short-term and achievable – your motivation can feed on itself and become self-reinforcing over time, just as negative behaviors become self-reinforcing with repetition over time.

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Good habits can become as ingrained as bad habits, but it takes a strong and determined hand at the wheel to change course.

This requires willpower and willpower requires intent,
determined intent powered by your conscious decision –
your decision – to choose a healthier relationship with...

- The foods you eat,
- When and how you eat them, and
- What you do by way of physical and mental activities to put the energy produced by those foods to use.

Our willpower, however, is being sapped by the very lifestyles in need of changing - as seen in increasingly widespread consumer apathy driven by our toxic combination of...

- Impaired dopamine function caused by our packaged food diets...
- 24/7 distractions in an “always-on” personal environment...
- Convenience-first lifestyles that violate our need for physical activity...
- Over-stressed & sleep-deprived days and nights that further impair our bodies and minds.

It's tough to summon the willpower to off-set all these stressors in our daily lives. Our need to do so is greater than ever, but our capacity to do so diminishes more each day.

Our need
for willpower
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How on earth can we overcome all these factors stacked so ominously against us?

It's All In Your Head

Let's connect some dots:

- Necessity is the mother of invention,
- Invention is a creative process,
- Necessity can therefore *drive* invention or creativity.

Creativity isn't just something you have or you don't. Creative *talent* may be, but you can be creative without being talented.

If you can't carry a tune, does that mean you should never sing?

Creativity is about doing something – and it doesn't have to be a work of art. In this context of finding the motivation to overcome a deck as stacked against you as our toxic lifestyles, *just DOING SOMETHING is enough*.

Obviously, that something needs to be a net positive for your health and longevity or it's counter-productive.

**It all starts
with
NECESSITY...
Do you NEED
to change your
current
behaviors?**

But the mere process of ACTING – of taking the initiative to do something differently – is the creative catalyst that can feed on itself and thereby CREATE the motivation to do more of the same.

It all starts, however, with necessity. Do you NEED to change your current lifestyle and dietary behaviors?

If not, then you have no motivation to do so. Why bother?

The assumption here, though, is that you DO need to change at least *some* current behaviors that are compromising your medical – and, therefore, your financial - future.

But maybe you have only a vague appreciation of this need. Most of us can stand to lose a few pounds, but it's not always seen as anything urgent. Excess weight is still largely seen as an aesthetic concern rather than the medical and financial concern it's become.

If more of us understood the connection between belly fat and disease – and between belly roll and bankroll – more of us would be motivated to do something about it.

So this too starts in our heads. Lack of understanding about this direct connection is due to our lack of education - of knowledge - about this connection.

Medical literacy in America is sorely lacking, and so is belly fat literacy. This is why so much time is devoted to it in the beginning of the *MedSmart Diet*.

This knowledge is required for you to appreciate the necessity of changing whatever you can to offset the increased risks that excess belly fat and physical inactivity create.

This knowledge doesn't *create* this necessity, it simply exposes it for you to recognize and appreciate.

If you're unaware of these threats, how can you expect to be motivated to do anything about them?

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So it starts with learning the consequences of failing to change your current behaviors. If you've read this far, you're well on your way in this regard.

You know enough to realize you'll pay for any excess baggage you're carrying around – and if you get upset at the airlines for charging extra for additional baggage, wait until you see what the healthcare industry has in store for you.

Don't Just “Go With the Flow”

They say “knowledge doesn't dictate behavior”, and the evidence bears this out. Over 20% of Americans continue to smoke despite being aware of its devastating health consequences – and, globally, an even higher proportion still smoke.

So knowledge alone often isn't enough. But it's an essential prerequisite for positive change in your life.

One reason for the disconnect between our knowledge and our behaviors is the human tendency toward inertia and apathy, maybe even laziness. Once something is ingrained in our daily behaviors as habit, the path of least resistance is to just let it continue, to “go with the flow”.

It becomes increasingly difficult to break free of ingrained behavior patterns unless and until we're shocked to our senses by some external trauma...

- The early death of a family member may awaken us to our own mortality and disease risks,
- A life-threatening diagnosis is a certain shocker, and
- Events like 9/11 may shake us from our lethargy, at least temporarily.

But waiting for external events for motivation to change behaviors you know are self-destructive is likely to result in a long and fruitless wait. They may never occur.

This flawed approach leaves you in a passive position awaiting action by others. And you'll never make a good CEO - the CEO of the Rest of Your Life that MedSmart Members aspire to - waiting for others to take action.

You'll never make a good CEO waiting for others to **take action**

*The paradox of motivation is that it doesn't precede action, as generally perceived; it follows action.*¹ Once you get going by taking action, your motivation follows and builds. If you wait for the motivation to find you, you'll forever be lost.

The alternative is to use what you learn about the perils of excess belly fat to make a decision – a conscious choice to pare those perils down to size by paring your waistline down to size.

Knowledge may not dictate behavior, but it certainly *informs* behavior. You're unlikely to make the right choices without knowing *why* making them *is* the right choice.

But then you must act on that choice – it's your choice, after all, no one's forcing you to do anything. But making a choice that you don't act on is no better than never making a choice in the first place.

So you need to act on your choices: learn, decide, act, and *then* you'll find motivation creeping into your life with every day you “stay the course” with your new and smarter eating and lifestyle decisions.

¹ Demystifying Motivation: How to Take Action – Even When You Don't Really Feel Like It. *Diabetes Self-Management*. March/April 2010.

Before long, your choices become learned behaviors and eventually your new and improved habits – automatic behaviors with a life of their own.

And the right choices can give you a new life of *your* own as well.

A Reason to Believe

In their book *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*, the authors conclude that willpower isn't something you either have or lack, but part of your brain's normal functioning that can be strengthened like a muscle – or atrophy from lack of use.

They also contend that diet affects your willpower in that your brain needs a constant supply of glucose to function properly.

This doesn't mean the sugar highs and lows caused by the processed sugars and flours in our SAD packaged diets. These are counterproductive.

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Your brain functions best with a steady sugar balance achieved with natural sugars found in fruit and with frequent small meals rather than the “three square meals a day” we've become accustomed to in our western diets.

Other researchers contend that willpower is about believing you have it – that you have more willpower when you **THINK** you have more willpower.

While it's true that some people have more innate willpower than others, *everyone* can increase their willpower by using it more.

Like other forms of exercise, repeated use strengthens your willpower and makes it easier to put it to further use.

So it *IS* “all in your head”, but what's in your head is very much influenced by...

- What and how often you eat,
- How well you sleep and manage your stresses,
- How much you understand about your need to change behaviors, and
- Whether or not you *think* you have the willpower to change.

You *can* do what you *need* to do to upgrade your diet and lifestyle - and reduce your risk of, or speed recovery from, disease - if you *believe* you can. And when you *act* on that belief in yourself, you make it easier to continue your new lifestyle behaviors because your willpower “muscle” gets stronger with each day of repeated use.

But you will need to work at it, because ours is a culture that's been...

Co-Opted by Convenience

America's aging baby boomer generation was weaned on questioning authority, standing up to “the man”, and overcoming resistance to needed change. Not everyone, of course, but these certainly became defining characteristics of that generation.

Things change with time, however – and people with age. A cult of convenience has smothered these youthful ideals – increasingly below layers of dangerous fat.

The irony, of course, is that a generation that created the concept of being “co-opted” by the *status quo* has itself been co-opted.

By submitting to commerce-driven “conveniences” like fast food and packaged foods - by allowing french fries and ketchup to be redefined as “vegetables” because they’re just so...profitable – we concede to vested interests that are damaging our waistlines and our prospects for a healthy future.

And most of us choose to ignore it, to continue to indulge ourselves in our excesses of convenience because they’re so...convenient – like so many programmed “*Stepford Wives*” we once disparaged.

And we *are* programmed; or perhaps *re-programmed* is a better choice of words. One of the things that’s fundamental to a *MedSmart Diet* is recognizing that the anti-nutrients we routinely consume in our “Sickening American Diets” do, in fact, reprogram essential bodily processes and promote disease in doing so.

Likewise, even when we consume healthful nutrients, they fall short of their full benefit if we’re not also moving enough to optimize their circulation and absorption throughout the body.

In short, we’ve let our conveniences redefine who we are, what we look like, and *how much of our remaining time and money will be diverted to expensive medical care.*

It's this last part that makes this a crisis – and not something to pussyfoot around about.

If you see this as the crisis it is – if you truly “get it” – then the best place to start with your action plan to overcome it, your “turnaround plan”, is by reassessing your daily conveniences.

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No one is expected to reject all convenience, obviously, but there are likely to be a few you could safely skip and barely miss.

Not only will it generally cost you nothing, you may even save money in the process.

After all, conveniences generally *cost* us money – that's why commercial interests are behind them.

But your *own* commercial self-interest requires you to rethink your conveniences, just as financial necessity requires you to rethink your health insurance and your healthcare.

As we age and our physical abilities decline, it's natural to welcome things that make our lives easier.

The risk, however, is that we'll overdo it and produce harm for ourselves rather than the benefit we expect. Take stairs, for example (and take them whenever possible).

By the time someone is in their advanced senior years, it's probably a good idea to live somewhere without stairs to climb.

The risk of a fall and fractured bones that may never heal properly outweighs any potential benefit from the physical activity required to climb those stairs.

But for those who aren't yet at that advanced stage, the opposite is true. The physical and mental benefits of climbing stairs generally outweigh any negative considerations, like the "inconvenience" factor.

This dominant view of stairs as an inconvenient nuisance represents skewed thinking. If you actually *NEED* more physical activity – and few of us don't these days – then shouldn't you welcome, even seek out, those physical activities with the most "bang for your buck" in terms of both cost and time required?

Well, guess what? Stair-climbing tops the list on both counts.

So is it *really* an inconvenience to have to climb the stairs again to retrieve something you forgot upstairs – or is it a blessing in disguise?

And if it is, shouldn't you actually go out of your way to do it even when there's nothing to retrieve upstairs or down – to make two trips instead of one?

Now our conventional way of thinking would consider this idea...*unkindly*. Go climb some stairs because...*it's good for you?*

Well, maybe yes, maybe no. That's up to you to decide.

But it does help clarify how the way in which we view our so-called conveniences can do much to shape – or re-shape – our future lives.

Of course, it will require you to take a slightly longer-term view of things. Our beloved conveniences satisfy us in the here-and-now, while all this stair-climbing stuff only provides *future* benefit.

Like Wimpy – the frumpy cartoonist *Popeye* character – most of us would “Gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today”. Of course, Wimpy didn’t actually plan on paying, and neither do we.

The way we view our so-called “conveniences” can shape – or reshape – our future lives

But we will, whether we plan on it or not. Which is why it’s so important – *and motivating* – to rethink the conveniences you now take for granted.

Because when you realize that just taking the stairs an extra time or two a day – or another meal or two a week at home instead of eating out – can make a huge difference in your weight, your body composition, your attitude and even your quality of sleep, you become motivated to find more of these lifestyle “bargains”.

They’re easy, after all – much easier than you probably feared. Some of them – like injecting more singing and dancing into your life – might actually be fun.

What a concept!

Lower Your Expectations

It’s important, of course, not to overdo it – even the fun stuff. Expecting too much too soon can quickly prove counter-productive.

Trying to change too many negative behaviors at the same time can sap your motivation, as can trying too intensely or strictly. Forbidding all self-indulgences is likely to cause you to weaken your resolve, especially if you're already weakened by poor glucose control or exhausted from overdoing it.

The higher your expectations – for weight loss or anything else – the more likely you'll be disappointed and the less likely you'll achieve self-acceptance. One study found weight loss participants with the highest expectations had the highest drop-out rates after 12 months.²

You'll improve your chances for success by having realistic expectations.

The introduction to the *MedSmart Diet* notes a survey of obese patients that found they thought they needed 25% weight loss to realize any health benefit. This is a set-up for failure that is based on totally erroneous assumptions.

Not only has a mere 5% weight loss been shown to produce significant health benefit, even a 2.2 pound weight loss has been found to reduce the 10-year risk for type 2 diabetes risk by 33%.³ This could be a 1% or less loss of weight, yet it produced a 33% reduction in diabetes risk.

Talk about leverage!

Basing your expectations on these more realistic and achievable goals will help you to achieve them, at which time you can move on to your next incremental goal – maybe another 2.2 pound weight loss.

² Weight loss expectations in obese patients and treatment attrition: an observational multicenter study. *Obes Res.* 2005 Nov;13(11):1961-9.

³Relation of weight gain and weight loss on subsequent diabetes risk in overweight adults. *J Epidemiol Community Health.* 2000 August;54(8):596-602.

Setting small, incremental goals not only prevents early disappointment, it improves your odds for early success. Nothing encourages you to stick with something like a few early victories.

These increase your confidence that you can, in fact, produce the results you want to produce.

Studies show that this pattern of what researchers call “self-efficacy” determines how hard people try and how long they stick with it when it gets difficult.

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A report on one such study quoted the lead researcher as follows:

“People with high self-efficacy are motivated and optimistic – when the going gets tough, they keep going...

People with low self-efficacy avoid difficult tasks and when things get tough...are more likely to give up...

“Women who carried a lot of excess weight were more likely to have low self-efficacy and to not believe they could stick to an effective exercise or diet program....

“We can improve our self-efficacy by developing skills, having role models, and getting encouragement from others (emphases added).”⁴

You can also build your self-belief by actually proving to yourself you can do what you set out to do. This will happen sooner and more often by setting modest goals for yourself that you can achieve in less time than bigger and longer-term goals.

⁴ Queensland University of Technology (5/2/08). Weight Loss Possible When Self-belief High. *Science Daily*.

The *MedSmart Diet*, by its very nature, encourages this mindset by emphasizing that slow and steady weight loss is *better than rapid weight loss*.

Shooting for a pound or so of weight loss a week is certainly achievable with even modest adherence to the measures suggested with a *MedSmart Diet*. And you're far less likely to be disappointed with such modest expectations than you will with the "lose 10 pounds in 10 minutes" nonsense you find in your junk mail (where it belongs).

Conquering Molehills, Not Mountains

Most of Part I of *MedSmart Diet* is concerned with the reasons why healthy weight loss should be a priority for anyone who is overweight or obese, as well as for those who aren't but who have excess abdominal fat.

Start with small things you know you can accomplish & build from there

Part II is filled with tangible suggestions for doing so, but it would be virtually impossible to pursue them all at once. Trying to do so would prove counter-productive and likely lead you to an early abandonment of your efforts and a search for another weight loss solution in a seemingly endless quest.

In order for this to be your lasting attempt at weight loss, you need to *start small and build momentum*.

As you learn which steps are most likely to help you achieve your goals, make note of things you think you could *easily* incorporate into your daily life. They're not all going to be easy, so don't pick the hardest ones first or you'll increase your likelihood of failure.

In Phase 1 of a *MedSmart Diet*, for example – your first month when your focus is on increasing your physical activity and not on reducing calories – maybe it’s just a walk around the block to start or a set number of trips up and down the stairs. These cost nothing and require no special skills. In Phase 2 - when your focus shifts to calorie consumption - maybe it’s cutting back on sodas or starting a high-fiber breakfast most days of the week.

Whatever you choose, look for things you know you can do without a big stretch or extraordinary effort.

The key to long-term success in sticking with a smarter diet and upgraded lifestyle is finding foods and activities you not only can tolerate, but actually *enjoy*.

Moving more doesn’t require “exercise”. Walking more is fine; dancing is even better. Who *doesn’t* enjoy moving to their favorite music?

The idea is to stop saving it for special occasions and *do it every day*. If you enjoy them, you’re far more likely to stick with whatever lifestyle upgrades you undertake to lose weight and lower your disease risk.

Trying to do too much at once is a recipe for failure. Set weekly goals with room for forgiveness if you slip a little

Optimizing weight, waist, and fitness on a sustainable basis requires a comprehensive approach that gradually incorporates the primary controllable factors for disease risk reduction.

These measures reinforce one another for increased effectiveness in combination, meaning they’re synergistic - the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts” – as seen in Harvard’s Cardiovascular Health Study cited in *MedSmart Diet*.

But you can't expect to do too much at once – this is a recipe for disappointment and failure.

Instead, take small steps each day – or set a weekly goal with a little forgiveness in it if you slip a day or two.

One way to get started is to make a couple of quick lists. Start with 3 reasons you believe you can succeed at this and a second listing *10* reasons you think you might fail, as follows (go ahead, print or copy it and fill it out...nobody's looking):

**LIST 3 REASONS
YOU'LL SUCCEED**

**LIST 10 REASONS
YOU'LL FAIL**

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ |
| | 4. _____ |
| | 5. _____ |
| | 6. _____ |
| | 7. _____ |
| | 8. _____ |
| | 9. _____ |
| | 10. _____ |

If you had trouble completing the second list of reasons for failing, it probably means there aren't as many obstacles to your success as you may have feared. Focus instead on the short list of reasons to succeed – and keep your weekly goals modest and achievable (no more than 1-2 a week). Save the rest for the following week(s).

It also helps to recognize that *self-control is a muscle that can be strengthened* with practice.

The more you avoid sweets, cigarettes, sodas, and alcohol, the easier it becomes to *continue* avoiding them.

Just as the more you give in to these unhealthy indulgences the easier it becomes to indulge yourself, the more you *avoid* them the easier they are to avoid.⁵

Practice makes perfect; repetition breeds familiarity and comfort in *both* directions.

And be sure to carve enough time out of your day to practice making the choices that head you and your family in the *right* direction.

Get Some Support

One factor common to most successful weight loss programs is explicit attention to the mental and emotional aspects of overeating.

Whether in the form of dietary counseling, group support, individual or online counseling, these all help to keep you mentally aware of the non-food factors that contribute to excess eating and poor nutrition.

Studies show, however, that weight regain increases when these reinforcing measures are stopped or substantially reduced, highlighting how integral they are to long-term success.

Since the *MedSmart Diet* is all about your long-term success, you must find a way to get whatever support you need to meet and maintain your weight loss goals.

⁵ Building Self-Control Strength: Practicing Self-Control Leads To Improved Self-Control Performance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (forthcoming). *The Boston Globe*. 1/31/2010.

If you're able to "go it alone" – and some are – congratulations. But most people need the structure and support of a third party to turn to in order to stay on track.

The nature of that third party is very personal to your own preferences and resources. A friend or family member who needs to lose weight may be sufficient – someone you can "buddy up" with for mutual support and reinforcement.

A review of 19 clinical trials of weight loss in obese participants found that "behavioral therapy with spousal participation" in weight loss activities was the most effective, with over half of participants losing more than 15 pounds after a year.⁶

Get the support & participation of your "significant other"

And while your precise needs may differ, everyone benefits with more physical activity and sounder nutrition – including your spouse or "significant other".

If this is applicable to you, ask him or her to read some or all of the *MedSmart Diet* and see if their own interest can be piqued.

If not, see if they'll do it for your sake, at least until you get a regular rhythm underway. It will be more difficult to sustain your progress if your "significant other" isn't also on board and supportive.

Others do better with professional support in group therapy or individual cognitive therapy, while still others prefer the peer support found in structured weight loss groups or online forums.

⁶ Obesity: weight loss without drugs: a balanced diet avoiding high-calorie foods, plus exercise. *Prescribe Int.* 2007 Aug;16(90):162-7.

There's no "right" answer; whatever works for *you* is the right answer and you may need to try some "trial and error" to find out what that is.

What's important is that you recognize the central importance of this component of your weight loss and other lifestyle upgrade efforts and make the conscious effort to provide for it.

The more you find emotional factors contributing to your eating behaviors – something your Food and Activity Diary should reveal if you're using it – the more important this component will be to your long-term success.

If nothing else works, *consider a personal trainer or health coach* to help you get a healthy regimen going and to provide the regular feedback and corrective fine-tuning you're likely to need.

This will obviously cost more than some other approaches, and less than others (individual cognitive therapy is likely to be the most expensive option, although some insurers may help with its cost). Only you can decide if it's a wise investment considering the financial and health-related costs of continuing as you are.

Here's where your CEO mindset can help. If you're running your own business, you quickly learn that there are some expenses you simply can't avoid, at least not without hurting your business. These become "costs of doing business" and something you *manage* to get the most for your money, but they're not something you avoid.

Try looking at your need to pay for the support you'll need to double your chances of success - if you do need to pay for it - as a "cost of doing business".

The important thing is to determine whether you need such support and accountability – and you’re the rare one if you don’t – and how best to get it: which approach listed earlier will best meet your needs and your budget?

The most practical approach to assessing this is to use your first month on a *MedSmart Diet* – before you really get into the calorie-cutting phase – to determine, based on your Food and Activity Diary entries, how much of your weight problem is due to emotions and mental state matters.

This can help you determine how urgent this need for external support will be for you. If it’s urgent enough, consider ways you can re-prioritize your spending to accommodate whatever costs you may need to incur to get the ongoing support you’ll need to make this the last weight loss program of your life.

Don’t take this lightly. The evidence from dietary studies consistently shows early weight loss is regained after outside support and accountability is removed.

The only exception to this might be for those who are diligent in using their Food and Activity Diary (FAD) as a means of establishing self-accountability – another reason to give your FAD a really good effort in the early going (it could save you money).

The key is
accountability

The key is accountability,
whether to a third-party or to yourself.

A good CEO is accountable to her or his Board of Directors; you also *need to be accountable* to remain on track, and it needs to be a long-term accountability if you want long-term success.

“And Lead Us Not Into Temptation”

Negative habits that have proven harmful to your weight control efforts need to be broken and replaced with health-promoting habits. In nutritional terms, this starts with avoiding temptation by refusing to purchase any more of the snacks and sodas and other dietary “no-nos” that make your task harder.

Too many of us, however, overestimate our ability to resist temptation and continue putting these anti-nutrients within arms’ reach in the mistaken belief that we can use sheer willpower to overcome temptation. A study by researchers at the Kellogg School of Management, however, found otherwise.

According to the lead researcher:

“People are not good at anticipating the power of their urges, and those who are the most confident about their self-control are the most likely to give in to temptation...”

“The key is simply to avoid any situations where vices and other weaknesses thrive and, most importantly, for individuals to keep a humble view of their willpower.”⁷

Practicing such humility with your diet translates into:

- Shopping the perimeter of supermarkets and avoiding the aisles where processed foods are shelved,

⁷ Association for Psychological Science (2009, August 4). Temptation More Powerful Than Individuals Realize. *ScienceDaily*.

- **Eating out less often** to save both calories and money, and taking a “doggy bag” home with you; and
- Taking a healthful snack with you to the movies to avoid a concession counter laden with calories and chemicals.

Whatever your personal weaknesses, only you can **remove the temptations from your daily life** to make adapting to your new, more healthful diet and lifestyle easier and enduring.

The *MedSmart Diet* isn't just another diet to experiment with and abandon. It's a new lifestyle with a new worldview.

It starts with recognizing your weight loss enemies and the obstacles to “reform” in your current mode of day-to-day living.

Next is to gradually remove these obstacles and replace them with actual nutrients that help keep you healthy or restore your health. It's the best way to reduce your future dependence on an unreformed medical system you may no longer be able to afford.

Replace distracted or “mindless eating” with conscious and enjoyable eating-in-the-moment

Removing obstacles includes **avoiding eating in front of the TV** or computer or anywhere else where you're distracted from what and how much you're eating. Much of our current obesity epidemic is attributable to **mindless eating** in front of the TV, whether full meals or endless snacking and drinking our excess calories.

These are temptations that must be resisted and overcome by breaking negative eating patterns – *how* you eat, not just what you eat. Replace them with healthier, more relaxed eating in which you remain conscious of what and how much you eat and try to *enjoy what you eat more*.

A true Mediterranean-style diet is about more than healthful ingredients. It's also about taking the time to savor your food and truly *enjoy the process* and companionship of dining with family and friends.

Mediterranean cultures eat “in the moment” - consuming their meals over a period of *hours*, with no TVs in sight, and taking the time to savor their food by chewing it properly, which maximizes its nutritional benefit as well.

It also allows enough time for your food to be digested and your brain to get the signal your stomach is full...*eating quickly doesn't give your brain enough time* to realize your stomach is full, which prevents the release of hormones that suppress appetite.

This was confirmed in a study that found that, “Eating at a physiologically moderate pace leads to a more pronounced gut (hormone) response than eating very fast”.⁸

This makes it virtually impossible to abide by the “eat until you feel 80% full” *MedSmart Diet* rule because you're not giving your stomach enough time to alert your brain it's at that point of fullness.

By the time your brain gets the signal to stop eating, you're already at the 100% full mark (or greater).

⁸ Eating Slowly Increases the Postprandial Response of the Anorexigenic Gut Hormones, Peptide YY and Glucagon-Like Peptide-1. *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*. 95(1):333-7. Nov. 2009.

“Fast *eating*”, in other words, may be as bad for weight control as “fast foods”, so slow down and enjoy your meals the way they were meant to be enjoyed.

Just be careful to remain conscious of your eating behaviors, as we often overindulge in social eating contexts (buffets, barbecues, etc.).

It may take practice to learn how to *eat socially without over-eating*. Slowing down your pace of eating is essential to attaining that happy balance.

Believe in Yourself!

Take these and the other MedSmart steps you choose one step at a time and keep reminding yourself this isn't rocket science – it's common sense supported by compelling scientific evidence.

And it's all perfectly doable if you *believe* you can do it.

Find whatever support you can from family and friends, or join a group with common goals if it helps you get going and maintain your newfound level of engagement and active living.

No one else can do it for you, and no one else cares more about your need to get it done.

Your need for motivation to change negative lifestyle behaviors will diminish as you achieve your upgrade objectives – because you'll have less *need* to change.

But you'll still need motivation to *maintain* your gains, because most people sacrifice some or all of their gains after the “newness” wears off. This is seen most commonly when lost weight is regained after the first six months of successful weight loss,

The best way to avoid this is by ramping up your physical activities – as recommended in Phase 3 of your *MedSmart Diet* – and this requires continuing motivation and external support.

Which is what MedSmart Members is all about...a community of like-minded and motivated people looking to take control of their health care – and their health – while they still can.

JOIN our waiting list today to start learning what you need to know to stimulate your own creative processes, find your personal motivation, and take the necessary action steps to Become CEO of the Rest of Your Life.™

CLICK BELOW TO JOIN

Our Waiting List

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