



Cleaning Out Your Emotional Closet

Hopefully, you've never experienced this, but if a person's arteries become blocked, their blood doesn't flow through their bodies like it's intended. When this happens, they are at risk for events that can seriously threaten their health or life in some certain situations.

Emotions, if not expressed, can symbolically block one from having the healthiest life possible. Although emotions do not literally clog arteries, when emotions build up over time, there can be some serious damage to someone's life.

Let's explain this and show how it fits with losing weight and keeping it off. Let's say you have an argument with your significant other. Rather than share with them that you are hurt and angry, you keep your thoughts and feelings to yourself.

You may even decide that some ice cream, a candy bar, or a big bag of popcorn would help you feel better. At least for a little while. So now you are left with unexpressed and unresolved feelings. The situation hasn't been cleared up between you and your partner, and now you're even more upset because you ate a bunch of junk food.

The longer this pattern of not talking about your feelings goes on, the more pain, sadness, anger and/or resentment you carry around. This is not true for everyone who struggles with weight, but many of those who struggle to lose weight and keep it off are carrying around years of unexpressed thoughts and feelings.

Sometimes, this results in depression, anxiety, living in unhealthy relationships, having low self-confidence, and/or living with an overall sense of not 'being good enough.'

Food can be a way to soothe those unpleasant thoughts and feelings, but this kind of emotional eating can obviously lead to weight problems.

What is less obvious is the power these unresolved emotions, and the belief that "I'm not ok" or "I'm not good enough" have in the weight loss process.

The pileup of unexpressed emotions is even more powerful when it comes time to maintain the weight loss.

How is that? Well, if a person doesn't feel very good about themselves or they don't believe they are good enough, their behavior towards themselves sometimes reflects that. In other words, when people don't like themselves, they don't take the best care of themselves. This may show up in how they eat and whether or not they exercise. The not liking of oneself is often the result of messages a person received in childhood, messages that either directly or



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indirectly made the child think they weren't good enough. This is often the case for anyone who grew up and experienced any sort of neglect or abuse, physical, emotional, or sexual.

Many people experienced unintentional neglect or abuse and aren't even aware that's what it was. For example, a person who grows up in a single parent home, whose one parent works two or three jobs to keep a roof over their head and food in their mouth, has probably experienced some emotional neglect. This isn't because the child wasn't important, or the parent didn't love the child, but due to necessity, the parent wasn't around much. The child experiences some emotional neglect from that well-intentioned parent. Kids aren't capable of fully understanding the reason(s) that parent wasn't around a lot. Children feel some loss or emotional abandonment/neglect when a parent is absent.

Many parents unintentionally emotionally abused their children with ongoing comments about the child's weight. Or the parent restricts food from one child while the others are allowed desserts and snacks. Chances are, the parents thought they were doing the best thing for the child. However, the child felt inferior to the siblings. The difficulty with this comes from the lingering effects of the child's interpretation that they are somehow flawed, not good enough, or not capable.

This subconscious message can interfere with a person's long-term ability to follow through with healthy eating and exercise behaviors. The emotional baggage has been figuratively shoved into a closet, and the door has been slammed shut.

If you have lost weight in the past but struggle to follow through with the behaviors necessary to keep that weight off, you would be very wise to talk to someone and clean out that emotional closet. Getting rid of unhealthy messages about yourself that you hold onto can be a stepping stone to long-term weight maintenance.

Talk through any notions that you're not okay or not good enough. Learn to talk and think kindly and compassionately toward yourself, and continue to hold yourself accountable for doing the things necessary to lose weight and keep it off. These are essential keys that allow you to be, and remain, successful in your weight journey.

Do yourself a huge favor that could change your life for the better. Look inside your emotional closet, sort through it and get rid of what you no longer need. It can be a game-changer.



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