

My Eating Disorder – Addicted to Food

When I was 17 I weighed 368 pounds. That was my peak. I had a 56-inch waist. I was six feet tall. I was pretty sure at that point that I was going to die extremely obese.

I was active, but at my weight I was extremely prone to injury. I wanted so badly to be liked, to be popular, to have a girlfriend, to have sex, to be able to ride my bike or skateboard without being laughed at, to be able to walk around town without being attacked.

I grew up in a pretty rough town; at least it was rough for me. Judging by the crime statistics , I'd say it was pretty rough for a lot of people.

I was picked on a lot. With Asperger's syndrome, a serious lack of social skills, an intense need for attention, and 180 pounds of fat on me, I was a prime target. And I was depressed for obvious reasons. I blamed all of my problems on being fat. I was miserable because I was fat. I ate because I was miserable.

When I binged, I didn't feel anything but good. It felt so good to have a mouth full of food. And I wanted to swallow it as fast as possible so I could get more of that feeling, that taste when it's best, which is when it's fresh, when it first goes into my mouth. I could eat more and I could eat faster than anyone I knew, including those guys on TV in then hot dog eating contests.

When my stomach is full I don't feel anything but my full stomach. This makes for easy self-medication when depressed.

And I puked. I didn't do this to stay thin, that wasn't possible. I ate and ate and ate and I puked so I could eat

more. My parents couldn't afford my binge eating with bulimia so I at least managed to curb that for their sake. But I could not stay out of food. If there were hotdogs, chips, cereal, pasta, casserole, sweets, soda, cheese, milk, I ate it. I did my very best to save some for other people, less I get in trouble, but I got in trouble a lot. I could eat two packages of hot dogs, a bag of chips, and a half-gallon of milk in mere moments, and then sometimes I would steal money to go buy more so I wasn't caught.

I loved Chinese Buffets. I could eat all I wanted for one low price without stealing. I, and most fat people I know, will tell you that it's not the amount of food that we love about buffets, but the choices. Today just thinking about all those choices makes me a bit nauseas. But I could easily put away 7 or 8 huge plates. More if I went to the bathroom and regurgitated.

At age 17, I laid eyes on Julie. I was a desperate virgin who wanted so badly to be accepted, to be liked, to have a girlfriend, and yes, to have sex. And Julie was this amazing beautiful woman (and she still is today) who absolutely changed my life by just being there. I spent the next 12 months doing everything I could to become her boyfriend, which included loosing weight. I lost 148 pounds in 12 months. And I could have done it faster, but I was still eating like there was no tomorrow. But I was making better choices, throwing up when I didn't, and exercising like crazy. My fitness regimen included weightlifting for an hour and playing basketball for two hours every day, and running once a week.

Julie became my first girlfriend almost exactly 12 months after I first saw her.

I became pretty popular. And I beat up bullies. I had a very good time, and I had the hottest girlfriend of any of my friends. I felt great. And I still ate way too much.

I still eat too much. I work out so hard in order to be able to eat as much as I do without getting fat. Fortunately, during my journey and discovery of natural health, I developed a taste for healthy food and very rarely binge on crap like I did as a kid. It's harder to get fat on salads, fruit, brown rice, beans and quinoa. It's possible, I assure you, but it's not easy.

I still want to eat when I am stressed. I still want to eat anytime emotions are overwhelming, bad or good. It's like a break from reality. Feel nothing but good while chewing. Feel nothing but full when finished. And when I am full, nothing feels like it's missing from my life. When I am full, I don't feel bad about anything except the fact that I ate too much. When I am full, I have no real problems. And when I am eating, it's bliss. When life feels like it's too much to handle, I can handle the food I put in my mouth. That's how it feels, like I am taking control. But the irony is that is how I am out of control.

Being an amazing cook compounds the problem. But I do cope. It's always there, this desire to stuff myself sick. I have an extremely addictive personality and eating is my first addiction, my first love. I cope by staying in the moment, by feeling, by experiencing everything I can. Like the writer I am, when things feel out of control, I stop. I listen. I look. I feel. I absorb it all in. Pain, pleasure, anger, whatever. If I am going to eat, first I am going to feel. I stay in the moment, even if I do decide to eat too much. I stay aware. And I appreciate it. No matter how good or bad it feels, I appreciate the moment.

Other than that, exercise, and my position as a health advocate keeps my weight in check. As an adult the highest I've been is 280 pounds but I usually stay around 220. I look best at 205, maybe more depending on how much I am weightlifting. I also gave up the car and bicycle everywhere. And since I've had Gabriel, my son who is 6 months old at the

time of this writing, I've felt a void fill that I tended to fill with food. I don't binge as much anymore. It is very rare, and almost always on watermelon. Ok, it's not rare, but it's almost always watermelon.