

## *I*ntroduction

**A**t 10, while other kids memorized the names of the state capitols, I learned the Weight Watchers diet plan. Two servings of fish each week and one of liver\* – yuck – and a bunch of other stuff, measured by the ounce. Two scales dominated my mom’s life and mine back then: one on the kitchen counter (for food); the other in the bathroom.

The latter she used each morning, door shut, after a trip to the toilet and before even a sip of water.

Or was that me?

*\*WW no longer requires liver. Phew! Nutritionists discovered it crawls with cholesterol.*

So began my deep need to love myself to life, real life.

Thankfully, I've discovered the right way to weigh right. It has nothing to do with diets and deprivation. And everything to do with love and abundance. Yep, abundance.

Most important, I've discovered how to love myself well, no matter my size, and how to love others, no matter their size. Sounds simple, but it isn't. At least not for me.

Many years ago, I learned that my mom didn't like her body. She was always the photographer. Never photographed. Well, almost never.

I treasure a photo from my childhood, among the very few with my mom. Slender, my brother and I stand at attention on a boat dock, saluting. My mom sits in the foreground, looking over her left shoulder at my dad, who snaps the shot. She looks happy.

Although she looked self-assured to my eight-year-old eyes, she wasn't. She didn't like her appearance but never said as much. All I knew was she ate very little food in front of others, including us, her family, and wore lots of browns and navy blue. She said dark colors slimmed her.

Like a typical kid in the early 70s, I was lean and active. No video games for me. Think tag, ghost in the graveyard, tree-climbing and mud pie-making. Now in my 40s, I'm still lean and active.

But the in-between years reeked of self-rejection and fat thinking, tummy checks (i.e., stand sideways peek at reflection and ask the question: How big is my pooch?) and weigh-ins. Even one pound too high? Ugh.

In a tailspin I might spoon a pint of Chunky Monkey in 15 minutes flat OR not eat a thing the next day. Only water. Self-inflicted punishment in either scenario.

Why? Why did I weird out?

The four-letter word! L - O - V - E. Or, in my case, my belief I was *unlovable*.

I repeated some of the mistakes my mom had made and invented others that were peculiarly mine. I felt miserable.

And so did my mom.

She had developed a fear that ushered her to her first Weight Watchers meeting. Her fear: She *might* hurdle the 300 mark, and the nurse at the doctor's office could no longer weigh her on the "people scale" and she'd have to step on a "cargo" scale. I don't think the doctor's office had one. The airport did. It became her consuming fear. *Bad*. But this fear moved her to action. *Good*.

Nearing 280 pounds, she marched into a Weight Watchers meeting. A year later, she weighed 105 pounds less, the size of a whole person.

Whoops. I missed a detail, a crucial detail

She had felt too embarrassed to go to a diet center unless she first lost weight. In the month or two *before* WW, she dropped 30 pounds, depending on her trusty standby: the egg-and-grapefruit diet. Her thinking reminds me of people who clean the house before Merry Maids show up.

Go figure.

Her enemy – not her body or her fat cells or her husband but the father of lies (*John 8:44*) – had tricked her:

To have value and meaning and beauty, a woman must be a perfect size 8 or 6 or 4 or 2.

Not so, sweet sister in Christ.

Jesus defines your value. It doesn't increase or decrease according to your weight. In Him you possess inner beauty, the kind that brightens your eyes and your smile and puts a bounce in your step. The kind that really matters. It is everlasting and true. You are precious because God says so.

I didn't get it back then. Now I do.

Back then I had a huge body image problem. Like a kid at a carnival, I peered into the fun house mirror and saw someone ugly.

Me.

Thunder thighs topped by a head the size of a golf ball.

Like my mom, I had "fat" thinking and cannot count the number of diets I tried. . .in search of the perfect body.

The truth: The perfect body forever eludes me, you, everyone. Thirty pounds overweight or ten or three or 105 (plus 25) – it makes little difference . Even super models are air-brushed.

So *what's a woman to do?* Here are the [seven secrets](#) to befriending food, God's way.

1. Think well.
2. Speak well.
3. Rest well.
4. Drink well.
5. Dress well.
6. Move well.
7. Eat well.

Did you notice that I placed "eat well" last? This makes little sense to a dieter but is completely in line with God's Word. God's purposes never fail, so you won't fail as long as. . .

. . .you think-speak-rest-drink-dress-and-move well you WILL eat well and experience victory. You will win the diet war. You will discover your inner and outer beauty. God's way.

And it begins in the mind.