

## Lucille's Relapse

My closet should have a "beware" sign on the door. On any day, it's a painful process opening it up; on the day I relapsed, there was a monster in there. I'd already lost 40 pounds, but I'm greedy so naturally I was looking for something that would make it look like I'd lost even more. I faced clothing from an earlier weight, too tight for comfort but possible to get into.

The day got worse as it wore on, and work was awful. I came home feeling stressed out and overwhelmed, eager to self-medicate with my drug of choice: food.

It was the wrong day to have muffins in the house that I'd baked with my nephew. Big mistake. I actually thought I was capable of having just one (I must have temporarily forgotten who I am.) For me, "one" means a box, a sleeve, or in the case of peanut butter, a jar. If I let myself have one taste of a trigger food, it's all over. I enter the clouds of my own thinking. Certain foods act like such poison in my body that my will power shuts down as soon as I take a bite. And that's what happened the day I relapsed.

The flood gates opened and in came the depression that had been mostly checked by the clean diet I'd set up for myself at Suppers. The energy drained out of me. I lost my self-esteem. Before doing experiments at Suppers, I'd always thought I was depressed and miserable in *reaction* to being fat. But since I've experienced what it feels like to eat clean, I've realized that the food that makes me gain weight also compromises my brain and robs me of normal thoughts and emotions.

"Loser, loser, loser, loser, loser" played over and over on the tape in my brain when I downed a box of doughnuts. I missed meetings, felt the shame, and threw myself my own pity party.

One thing pulled me out: my memory.

I had memories of feeling energized and happy; it was while I was eating a diet free of my trigger foods.

I had a memory of a period of several months in my life when I didn't feel poisoned.

I could recall all the steps I'd taken to heal on whole food.

And I had a clear recollection of supportive relationships with people who were doing something about their health.

Having these memories gave me something to return to. So even through my haze I started to act according to those memories, at first like a robot.

My ears whispered: remember nutritional harm reduction. You don't have to get this perfect, you just have to avoid your triggers: sugar and wheat.

My body got me to the grocery store, and suddenly my mind realized I felt better just stocking up on clean food.

My body drove me back to a Suppers meeting and my mind realized that sharing my dark dirty secrets helped clear my head.

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My mouth told my relapse story and suddenly other people felt better for my honesty so I started feeling better too.

And with every day that I was off my poison and on my avocados and breakfast chili, my head was clearing.

For over 30 years my life's been all about food and weight. Today it's still about food and weight but also mood and mental clarity. I'm not sorry I relapsed. I'm stronger now. And I have a memory in my toolbox that I can pull out if depression overwhelms me again. In fact, I wrote it down on a 3 x 5 card, in case the brain fog gets really bad. It says:

"Lucille! You're not depressed because you're overweight. You're depressed because your trigger foods poison your brain."