

Preamble

The grand dilemma confronting weight-management practitioners is a tricky one. The obesity pandemic is ultimately a result of external obesogenic* forces bearing down on a susceptible population, and gaining weight year after year, or struggling to lose it, is a normal response, by normal people, to an abnormal environment. At the same time, the practitioner must enable their client to realise that, ultimately, it is they who are in control of their nutritional destiny. I hope that together we can strike that balance, and I apologise in advance for when I fall short through my assumptions and assertions.

While most people don't want their food to become a religion, I don't suppose they want it to be just a functional, tradable commodity either. Sadly, however, that is what much of it has now become: mass-produced, ultra-processed cargoes, barely resembling food and with little connection to the land from which it came. We have severed the ancient and spiritual connections between the earth, our food and our bodies, in favour of wrapping ourselves in multiple sterile layers of refined calories, each representing another barrier between us and the great giver of life.

Over thirty years ago, travelling India on the 3rd class rail network, holed up in a six-birth sleeper with an unknown family of meagre resources, I learned something important about food. Due to a logistics oversight, my companion and I found ourselves without food on a thirty-six-hour train journey. Early in the evening, our unacquainted family set about unfurling their food canteen. They didn't speak English, and our Hindi was decidedly ropey, but without hesitation, once the food was set, they gestured for us to join them to eat. Embarrassed but hungry, we made token signals to indicate that we were fine, but they dismissed our feeble ruse and insisted that we join them. They shared all their food with us evenly as if we were part of their family. This meant that they all had less. We had nothing to contribute, and they absolutely would not accept payment. Those beautiful people shared more than just calories that day, they shared a lesson about the gift of food. It is a precious gift, it is life, and we must always cherish it. Take care of our food, and it will take care of us. Look after the people that look after our food, and they will reciprocate.

* *Causing, or increasing the likelihood of, obesity in a person or animal – Dictionary.com*

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2016 there were around two billion overweight adults in the world, representing 40% of the global population. Of these, 650 million were classified as living with obesity. These figures have tripled over forty years, and now most of the world's population live in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than food shortages or malnutrition. A scientific study published in 2008 predicted that, by 2048, all Americans would be overweight or living with obesity².

In the US, in 2017 almost three-quarters of adults were overweight, with 43% of these living with obesity³. In the UK today, collectively around two-thirds of adults are overweight or living with obesity, with more men than women crossing the BMI threshold of $\geq 25\text{kg/m}^2$ (about 69% vs 54% respectively). Interestingly, younger men are far less likely to be overweight than younger women, but older men are far more likely to be overweight than women of a similar age. Of the fifty-three countries in the WHO Europe region, the UK ranks fourth, behind only Turkey, Malta and Israel as the most overweight⁴.

Over the years, I have witnessed the ever-changing villain of nutrition. First, it was fats that were considered bad for us, and specifically saturated fats. Then it was carbohydrates, and specifically sugars, and now it appears it is proteins, specifically animal proteins. While I am being a little flippant here, my point is far from mocking the collective wisdom of the day, but more to point out that the science of human nutrition is still evolving, and the pursuit of a blueprint for optimum human nutrition is far from concluded.

When we look back in 100 years, I think we will find that each of these iterations in the search for the ultimate diet for human health was correct in the context of what was known at the time. Personally, I still believe that eating processed fats and sugars is a risky habit, and I'm currently considering the prospect of animal proteins as being deleterious to human health, too, but I have yet to reach a position on this as I don't believe there is sufficient compelling evidence to support such a radical idea. But that isn't to say that this won't change in time.

At this point, I presume that you are reading this book because you are struggling with your weight. I hope you will take comfort in the fact that it is not your lack of willpower or asserted gluttony or sloth that has gotten you to where you are now. The vast numbers of people affected – encompassing all ethnicities, socio-economic groups, geographical parameters and cultural, religious, or political persuasions – rule out a delinquent lifestyle as the root cause of the obesity pandemic.

Millennia ago, governments realised that cheap and plentiful food was the bedrock for a stable political landscape, and this is as true today as it has ever been. To threaten the supply of inexpensive food is to threaten the establishment. Subsequently, obesity is a consequence of ubiquitous, affordable, calorie-dense and convenient food, woven into the geo-genetic and social lottery of life. It is these factors that will largely determine your risk of becoming overweight or obese.

I frequently hear discussions about where the responsibility for the obesity pandemic lies; is it personal responsibility or does it sit with our governments? Do we need to be telling people to eat less and move more, or should we be tackling the obesogenic environment (OE)? The answer is that we should be doing both. It is important to support people to eat less (or, more precisely, eat more healthily) and to move more, and yet at the same time, all of society – including politicians, educators, policy makers, food producers and suppliers, and environmental designers – should be

tackling the OE. It is not one or the other, it is both. To make the travelling public safer, sensible governments legislate for and ensure the increasing safety standards of both highways and vehicles. Why should we not also expect them to do the same for the food we eat?

With respect to the individual or the establishment, it helps me to think about the obesity pandemic on two levels. Firstly, I consider matters at a population level – my high street, my town, my city, and so on, each with its environmental, political, economic and commercial landscapes that create and perpetuate weight gain. These are the embedded structural systems and processes that work gradually and pervasively to dominate their populations, despite the best efforts of those communities living amid the onslaught, such as food supply chains and multinational corporate power structures. The resulting obesogenic pressures exerted on these unsuspecting populations are entrenched and intractable; they will be very difficult to change in a hurry. Testimony to this is the litany of well-meaning attempts by governments of all persuasions over thirty years to try to curb and reverse the ever-expanding waistlines of their electorate. Not one of them has scratched the bloated surface, and we are collectively still getting heavier.

Then, of course, I consider the second and more apposite matter (for you and me), which is weight at an individual level. The person who is with me in practice, the foot soldier, battling against a tsunami of weight-promoting products and practices that shape our lives and bodies. Each overweight person has their own story to tell, their narratives are totally unique. Similarly, each person's path to a healthier weight is as inimitable as their journey into overweight was in the first place.

When in practice, before I start a consultation, I take a moment to remind myself that this person has probably tried to lose weight 100 or 1,000 times before. In most cases, they will be experts in every diet known to mankind and will have tried all sorts of weird and wonderful eating and exercise regimes to control their weight. They will have had temporary success making them feel amazing; their aspirations and life plans could not have looked brighter. Ultimately, however, the diet ended, the weight returned (with interest) and all their efforts came to nought.

They suffered the humiliation and pain of having put their heart and soul into something only for it to fail. Why would they put themselves through that again and again? But wait! They're still here; they are sat with me right now. Despite the hurt and disappointment of the past, they are still trying; they still believe that one day they will achieve their goal. I am full of admiration for them; they exude strength, determination and fortitude. I'm reminded that these people are not quitters, they have grit, and I know that, if together we can find their path, then they will surely walk it.

My hope and beliefs are that this book will help you to find your path, but the path you are seeking is hidden, for now. To find it, you must search in a different place, and you must look from a new vantage point. Central to change is being able to see things in a different way. Because, when you can see things differently, you can start to think

about them differently. Crucially, only when you can think differently can you start to behave differently. In a nutshell, we must see things differently to think differently so that we can act differently.

You may be new to weight management, but the chances are you're probably not. You may well be thinking how or why will it be different this time? I suggest that this time it will be different because, en route, you will change your outlook on key aspects of your life and the world around you. You will recognise both the internal and external disrupters of weight and the balance needed for health and happiness. You will learn how to overcome engrained unhelpful behaviours, habits and thoughts that have thwarted you in the past, and you will adopt these new ways of thinking to ensure a future that is free of weight turmoil. You will learn things about yourself that you never imagined. This is the journey of Weight Wisdom.

A typical weight-loss journey

As I'm sure you are aware, most people can lose weight. The problem is that weight lost normally returns, and this is very demoralising for the dieter. Most diets start with a wave of optimism and determination – this time it will be different! Primary and secondary goals drive the changes needed for weight loss and these commonly include a desire to improve appearance, self-confidence, be more active and improve overall health. Meal plans and exercise projects are scheduled, and a general air of excitement and positivity gets things off to a good start. With early weight loss comes optimism, enhanced confidence, and a brighter outlook; all is well with the world.

However, weight loss takes considerable time and effort, resolve, strength, abstinence, and several other virtues in generous helpings if it is to be guaranteed. Typically, diets run into one of two problems during or at the end of the diet. As events progress, life gets in the way of our best intentions and, sooner or later, weight loss diminishes, the target weight becomes a distant hope, and any faith of remaining in control evaporates. At this point, there is a realisation that neither the weight-loss goals nor the dreams of becoming a slimmer person will be realised. Lapses become more frequent and turn into relapse, which finally succumbs to total collapse†. Weight gain at this point is inevitable. The other primary drawback with diets is that, if the dieter successfully reaches their target weight, motivation to maintain the 'temporary' changes required by the diet wanes and it isn't long until a full-scale return to previous eating habits and sedentary living occurs, followed by a return of the weight.

This is a crushing time for anyone. For the dieter, there can be no other conclusion than that their frequent attempts to control their weight are not worth the considerable effort required (let alone the brutal effect it has on their mental health) and, as a result, they abandon any plans for future weight loss.

† A lapse (or 'slip') is a brief return to old habits after a person has made a commitment to change. A relapse is a longer but still temporary (medium term) return to old behaviours and a collapse is a full-scale return to previous lifestyle and the causal behaviours, with no apparent intention to change.

Many diets set out a weight-loss phase followed by a 'mythical' maintenance phase. To me, this is rather like asking someone to take a perilous walk across a treacherous, icy, high-altitude ravine. Once safely across to the other side, the instructor says, "Oh, you can't stand here on terra firma, you need to get back out there in the middle and stay there!" There is no maintenance phase, there is either the lifestyle you are living now, or the lifestyle that you intend to live. Both are on firm ground.

It appears, though, that most people blame other individuals or themselves for weight gain. In an article published in the international journal *Appetite* in 2013 entitled 'Who is to blame for the rise in obesity?'⁵, the authors asked 800 US citizens who they thought were most contributing to the rise in obesity (assuming it was a representative sample, 70% of them would have been overweight). Respondents were asked to pick from: food manufacturers, grocery stores, restaurants, government policies, farmers, individuals, and parents. Eighty percent said individuals themselves were primarily to blame, with parents the next-most culpable group, blamed by over half of respondents. A further problem is that many people reading this will have had their weight 'medicalised' by a lifetime of traversing the healthcare system, consulting doctors, nurses, dieticians, pharmacists and endocrinologists. Following these interactions, it may be difficult to consider your weight in the context of the social, environmental and behavioural factors that may well provide the answers. Keeping an open mind is essential for getting the best out of this book.

This book is structured in a way that enables you to take the lead in finding the path that is right for you (as would happen in normal face-to-face behaviour change practice). You may be nineteen years old, or seventy-nine years young, either way you must work through the Five Insights in a way that is relevant to you, as they are the foundations upon which your rehabilitation will be constructed. And may I brazenly suggest that this involves much more than a few brief notes in your book. How carefully you think about the questions raised by the Five Insights, and the integrity and depth of your answers, will greatly influence your future voyage.

Weight-loss myths

At this point, it's worth revisiting and examining any advice you may have previously been given, or perhaps any that you are still getting. Be sure it is evidenced, or, at the very least, that it makes good sense to you. By way of example, I recall lots of 'experts' telling people not to weigh themselves more than once each week (I think, over concerns that people might spiral into obsessive compulsive weight neurosis), but I always found this notion odd, and I avoid advocating any weighing regime, simply leaving it to the preference of the individual. Recently, research has shown that more frequent weight monitoring assists weight loss, leading to greater adoption of weight-control behaviours. Apparently, people don't drive themselves crackers doing it either!⁶

A further myth is that losing weight gradually is better than losing it rapidly. For years, weight-loss professionals (including myself) have followed the prevailing

recommendations and advised gradual over rapid reductions, because we wrongly, it appears, accepted the hypothesis that the longer the duration that people spend losing weight, the more likely it is that their new lifestyle will 'stick'. To test this, Australian researchers randomised 204 overweight people to either a twelve-week rapid weight loss programme on a very low-calorie diet (450-800 kcal/day) or a thirty-six-week gradual weight-loss programme, reducing intake by about 500 kcal/day (which was for years the standard advice). They found that, while the overall calorie deficit for both groups was the same (over twelve weeks or thirty-six), 80% of the quick losers achieved the target weight loss of 12.5% compared to only half of the slow losers. After three years, there was no noticeable difference between the group's weight regain⁷. Therefore, contrary to Aesop's fable, in a straight race, the quicker beast wins. Importantly, I must mention that I am not advocating very low-calorie diets and don't recommend them for weight loss.

Despite how many times you have heard it, "Don't skip breakfast, it's the most important meal of the day, particularly if you are watching your weight", Wicherski et al looked at all the available evidence to date and promptly poured water on that particular firework when they showed that skipping breakfast does not correlate with being heavier⁸. While this will not be the best breakfast bulletin Kellogg's have ever had, it will be music to the ears of people that practise time-restricted eating to support their weight loss (more on this later).

You've also got to keep an eye out for the flaky science. Having read thousands of scientific journal articles, I'm frequently surprised by published articles that have somehow escaped the scrutiny of peer review (sometimes, in journals that should know better). One example was a 2020 study published in the 'Bulletin of the Association of Medicine of Puerto Rico' looking into sociodemographic factors affecting weight loss in adolescents. The researchers determined that female adolescents were more likely to lose weight if they felt unhappy about their appearance whereas males were less likely to lose weight if they were unhappy with their appearance⁹. Could you take that to the bank? I don't think so. You can't always rely on what you read in a scientific journal. Make your own mind up, scrutinise all information from 'the experts', including anything you read in this book. If it makes sense and it seems to work, that's not a bad starting point. If not, be very wary.

In writing this book, I have tried to balance the things I have learned in practice against the more nebulous machinations of the evidence base. My aim in melding these two uneasy bedfellows is not only to seek the truth, but to make sense of it all. Each section represents an important contribution towards the objective of solving for the reader the great enigma that is unwanted weight. The book strives to bring enlightenment and empowerment, with the aim that you become a self-weight-management expert. I believe that this is the only sure way to discover your path to success.

I have always believed that what accompanies learning and development is great power, in this case the power to change your life. You will learn about the biology of weight gain from before the moment of conception, and the forces that act upon our

weight as we grow and develop. You will come to understand the intricate interplay of appetite control and energy management, and how hormones work to support or undermine our hopes. *Weight Wisdom* offers every relevant fact, scenario, situation and opportunity that I have encountered in twenty-five years of weight-management practice and study. Each contribution is integral in building the cache of tools and knowledge that will lay the foundations for your successful journey.

The early part of the book provides information to build your essential knowledge base and adopts a heuristic and enquiring approach. Therefore, don't look for solutions at the end of each section and do not expect me to give you the answers as we go along. Remain patient, take notes, and carefully consider the relevance of each issue in the context of your own situation. Take sufficient time to reflect on the aspects that have the most relevance and resonate with you and your life. Think about them over days or weeks, if necessary. Share your thoughts with family and friends, and discuss ideas or hurdles, listening to and considering the views of those that you trust the most. This is fundamental in transforming information into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom.

The latter stages of the book will focus on changing the way you think. But this will only be successful if you are in receipt of and have processed all the relevant information to enable your brain to make valid judgements. If your hard drive is not in command of all the facts, how can you expect the CPU to make accurate decisions and calculations.

A sense of balance

I often read that, when setting out on a weight-reduction journey, people should avoid unrealistic goals. My question is this: what is an unrealistic weight-loss goal? For example, for someone weighing fifty stone and electing for gastric bypass surgery, losing half of their body weight – while challenging for certain – would seem like a sensible target. Losing 10% would appear largely pointless considering the risks involved. On the other hand, someone with a BMI of 28 might consider that they would be happier if they were half a stone lighter, and some would say that this is a more realistic target. This target, however, could in fact be as unrealistic as the first example, because even if achieved, people rarely make their weight loss permanent, so it should be assumed that the weight will return. In this case, then, either all weight-loss goals are unrealistic, or none are. I prefer to think that none are.

Saying I want to lose a stone in weight is all well and good; it states what you would like to achieve, which isn't bad as a starting point. An accompanying question might well be: how do I lose a stone in weight? There are lots of different approaches and some are likely to work better for you than they do for me, and therefore perhaps some trial and error may be required. However, the most appropriate question would be: how do I become motivated to make the changes needed to lose a stone in weight? This is because, if we are sufficiently motivated, we will always find the right way to

achieve what we set out to do, and the key to long-term weight loss is finding the right approach for you.

Another important consideration is to stay realistic. If you think that losing weight will not involve restrictions on your life, you have been reading too many fad diet books. Life is balance, which involves placing restrictions on the excesses that are damaging us. It is important to accept that there will be disadvantages and sacrifices associated with losing weight, with the most obvious being that you will not be able to eat some of the foods you are used to eating. Ironically, if your journey goes to plan, in the future you will consider these to be advantages.

Overweight people know all about populist weight-loss strategies and, with respect to dieting and slimming, many could probably write a book. But, of course, diets don't work, and I'm guessing readers of *Weight Wisdom* have long figured that out. I know that people I have worked with are aware of the daily behaviours and choices they make that foil their weight-management efforts. Each could describe an effective lifestyle plan that would permanently resolve their weight, if only they had the power to adopt it and maintain it. And this is why knowing what to do only loosely correlates with behaviour change. *Weight Wisdom* has two primary purposes: the first is to convince you that change is the only path to long-term weight management, and the second is to show you how to convert your (currently concealed) lifestyle plan into reality and realise the weight loss that you desire and deserve.

While it is entirely a matter for individual preference, I don't necessarily think that setting out with a weight-loss target in mind is the most effective way to go about things. I would suggest that the best targets to set yourself would be behavioural, nutritional and psychological. When you can make these targets stick, then your weight-loss 'target' will sort itself out, and you'll find the balance point that is right for you in terms of weight and lifestyle. The first important rule is to focus on change goals, not weight-loss goals.

I believe that the great thinkers and philosophers of the world mostly reached the same conclusions when it came to the big question: what is the meaning of life? They broadly settled on happiness and contentment being at its core. I would suggest that balance is at the heart of this. Balance is paramount: without it, we are lost, all of us, and the Earth, and the universe. If you are overweight or in debt, or unhappy, or discontent or unwell, or don't feel loved or valued, or whatever, I would suggest that, somewhere along the line, the balance in your life has been disrupted. The only possible remedy is the restoration of equilibrium.

Throughout this book, I hope to convince you that it is not weight loss or thinness or 'the body beautiful' that will bring about health and happiness, but balance (which may include one or all of the above). I believe that the purpose of this book is to help you find balance, which in turn will move you closer to lasting happiness and contentment, and a beautiful and respectful relationship with your faithful avatar.

The lifestyle continuum

I'd like you to consider your lifestyle on a one to ten Likert scale, where one is the dregs, characterised by Wayne and Waynetta, the fictional slobs from the hysterical 'Harry Enfield and Chums' show. With respect to health and balance, Wayne and Waynetta's lives are an absolute train wreck. Ten on the scale represents the 'Health Saints', the most health-conscious souls of both mind and body that you could conjure up. These saints maintain a strict palaeolithic diet of organic fruit and vegetables, a few nuts and seeds, and drink only pure, fresh mountain water. They've eradicated stress from their lives and walk daily in the tranquillity of ancient woodlands culminating in the calmness and silence of an hour of solitary Zen Yoga.

Then there's the rest of us, somewhere in between the slobs and the saints. As the months and years go by, we vacillate between these normal operating parameters on our own lifestyle continuum. Where we are at any one time depends upon how we have reacted to all the external forces that are pressing down upon our lives at that time. This is normal. Most of the time we are striving to escape Wayne and Waynetta, but, perhaps at the same time, not wanting to get too close to the saints either. When our lives are in control and events around us are stable, we naturally gravitate in an upwards direction on the continuum. All is well, we are happy, we are healthy, we are eating well, and we are moving freely.

Then a significant something comes along to disrupt our plans (life has a habit of interfering with our best-laid plans – Covid-19, for instance). Illness in yourself or your family, the rigours and demands of work, economic hardship or just the plain old stresses and strains of life. Disruption occurs, commotion ensues, and our positive behaviours and choices falter, convenience and comfort become the order of the day and we slide back down the continuum, closer to Wayne and Waynetta.

Fortunately, it is innate in humans to try to do the best that we can. Following adversity, when things settle down and normality returns, we pick ourselves up, dust ourselves down and start again. Typically, we re-engage with our healthful activities and gradually we escape the sphere of influence exerted by the slobs. As our lifestyles improve, we feel happier and more in control, our mind and body are contented; we sense the balance returning to our lives. That is, until the next inevitable disruption. This is the reality of the lifestyle continuum, upon which we are all long-haul passengers.

Once you recognise the lifestyle continuum as reality, it relieves the stress and guilt associated with 'falling off the wagon' and diminishes the imperative of always doing the right thing. This understanding enables you to think one day at a time, and you can relax in the knowledge that you can simply try to do better today than you did yesterday. If that doesn't work, you can try again the next day. What's more, if you buy into the concept of the continuum, then you have a plan that anticipates and expects lapses and provides a realistic framework to turn things around when things go awry. In time, if you embrace the continuum, I believe that you will observe an ascending

ratcheting effect, where the backward slides aren't so precipitous, and the recoveries are swifter and more sustained. The key is not necessarily to question where you currently are on the continuum, but what is your direction of travel, and what are your intentions?

Don't lose the path. As on any journey, you will from time to time stray, but don't dwell upon these transgressions, the key is that you search until you find the path once again. It may be that you join the path further back than where you were previously, but that is OK – the point is that you are back on the path once again. This is the imperative.

In a moment, you are going to close your eyes and think of a period in your life when you were in a good place and feeling great about yourself and all that was around you. Don't make the mistake of confusing the intoxicating vibrancy and resilience of youth with the harmony and contentedness of a balanced, mature life that is available to us at any age. Don't open your eyes until this vision is clear and you can recollect when and where it was.

During this time, you are most likely happy with your behaviours and choices, you appreciate moving freely and are energetic and active. Time pressures seem manageable and stress, for now, is kept at arm's length. You recognise your good fortune and enjoy your rewarding life. It might be that you are eating foods that you enjoy, and you don't feel like you are denying yourself the things that are important to you. You feel fulfilled and might think of these times as carefree. You are probably at your happiest and most likely your healthiest as the two are inextricably linked. The result is high self-esteem, mental wellbeing, and a positive body image. Consider where this point would be on the lifestyle continuum, what number would you place on it? I suggest that this is most likely to be a good indicator of your preferred balance point. In fact, it is your actual balance point! Write down in your notebook: MY BALANCE POINT IN LIFE IS ...

Now it's time to determine where you currently are on the lifestyle continuum; what is the reality of your situation right now? To do this, you will need some reference points regarding all the measures of 'lifestyle', such as diet, sleep, stress, physical activity, social interactions and other interests, use of stimulants (caffeine, nicotine, alcohol or drugs) and anything else that is relevant that you can think of. Determining a perceived lifestyle value will probably also involve considering behaviours and choices that you think you ought to be making, but aren't. In your notebook, write down a number from one to ten and then make some notes on why you have reached this figure. Write down in your notebook: MY CURRENT LIFESTYLE POINT IS

It's not fair!

I've heard it many times from my clients: "It feels so unfair that some people can eat what they want, but I can't have a biscuit when everyone else can". Well, here's news

for you: life's not fair! I have a friend whose fourteen-year-old son has a very severe nut allergy, and he can never have biscuits or chocolates, or sweets or ice cream, or pastries or cakes or puddings or breakfast cereals or grain breads or takeaways or eat at regular restaurants, and he must always check every food label as if his life depended upon it – because it does. Sometimes, life isn't fair, so you need to decide how fair your situation is. Thinking that it is unfair that you can't have 'junk food' because instead you choose health and happiness over diabetes and emotional turmoil is dysfunctional thinking.

You may also be surprised to learn that most healthy-weight people don't just eat what they want when they want, despite what they may tell you or what you might think. Healthy-weight people realise that they must adhere to certain eating parameters if they are to stay lean and healthy, and while they don't necessarily have the same struggles as someone that is overweight, they still need to be vigilant because life makes you fat. Furthermore, you might not have considered that, for people that don't have weight problems, exercise is also hard and tiring and time-consuming, and often needs a good dollop of motivation to get it done.

I often wonder if the difference between people with or without weight problems is simply that healthy-weight people have learned (most probably from their parents) to train their brains to be more harmonious in terms of their cognitions and their wants. If your thoughts and beliefs (which control your behaviour) are at odds with your wants, you will never have what you desire. Achieving our goals is simply a matter of learning how to think in a way that connects our wants with our actions. Weight Wisdom will teach you how to do this, but, for now, just try to think about how your thoughts and beliefs influence your actions.

Another thing to think about for now, is whether you have allowed yourself to fall into the trap of developmental procrastination. When it comes to the things that we want to do, people say: "I'm looking forward to doing all these things when I have lost some weight. I can't join the dance group now, I'm too heavy, I'll do it when I've lost a bit of weight. I'll get my bicycle out of the shed when I'm two stones lighter. I'll join the chess club when I feel a bit better about myself." But it doesn't work like that. Doing these things now will help with your weight because they make us feel stronger and more positive about ourselves. These things give us tangible reasons to keep working at the changes in our lives that make things more meaningful and rewarding. They bring friendship and camaraderie and the social support that is required if we are to make positive changes in our lives. Taking the steps that enable you to do the things that you want to do in life brings self-credibility.