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Appointment with my “parole officer”

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

For reasons not related to this blog I have been researching crime and prisons. First let me assure you that neither I nor any member of my family has ever been in prison.

However, dieters have some things in common with those people attempting to leave behind the behavior that landed them in prison.

Recidivism – “the tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior” (Webster)

Approximately 68% of prisoners released were rearrested within 3 years (varies by state and type of crime)

Once at goal weight, 70 to 95% of dieters will be back to their old selves within 3 years. (research data varies here also)

So what characteristics do “career criminals” share with career (yo-yo) dieters other than recidivism - the act of a person repeating an undesirable behavior after they have either experienced negative consequences of that behavior, or have been treated or trained to extinguish that behavior (Wikipedia)

The process of losing the weight at times may seem equivalent to time in prison, bound by shackles of our own making. As a person in maintenance, I’m currently more interested in what happens once goal weight is reached (sentence served or released on parole).

I was reading about programs to help career criminals change their lives. Many of the successful tactics mirror the lifestyle changes needed to make healthy weight permanent.

These include:

Meaningful work, education and training

We know that higher income levels correlate with lower obesity rates.

Nutrition information and education helps people make better food choices also.

Mental health treatment

Recognition and counseling for any unhealthy relationship with food helps to maintain a healthy weight.

Attitude and Associates

Believe positive change is possible.

Avoid people and places likely to lead you back to old destructive habits.

Associate with people who support your goals (like Sparkpeople)

Report in-person with a parole officer regularly.

I realize that I do this every morning when I step on the scale. Sometimes my parole officer (scale) approves of me and sometimes not, but this is how I get an honest, no-nonsense assessment of the direction I’m headed before I’ve gone too far down the wrong path and end up back in prison.

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I want to avoid being a negative statistic and intend to do all I can to avoid it.

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MARYJEANSL

Excellent analogy - it is helpful.
2900 days ago



ROCKINMOM776

I think this is a wonderful analogy. I'd never considered it before, but the stats are correct and the behaviors are so similar! My family has never had any issues with the law but we've all had issues with weight. My ex-husband's family has had run-ins with the law, and one was an addict and in prison twice. After the second release he decided to make a change, which included leaving his family and friends and hometown and start all over in another city where he knew no one. This radical change has kept him clean and sober and out of trouble for over 5 years. Perhaps I need to be as radical, in leaving behind all my comfort foods, the aisles in the store where they are located, and even friends who are sabotaging my efforts.

Great blog!
3056 days ago



SADWHITEWOLF

"Once at goal weight, 70 to 95% of dieters will be back to their old selves within 3 years. (research data varies here also)"

It is that statistic and my own experience that terrifies me.
I want to be an exception.
3057 days ago



CLUMBOY

very well put!
3057 days ago



SWEDE_SU

great analogy - checking in right now!
3057 days ago



STRIVER57

interesting concept -- valid i think, and useful as well. need to buy batteries for my scale today!
3057 days ago



MNNICE

I like the way you think :)
3057 days ago



CD13252816

The scale as the parole officer is pretty funny. What a great way of comparing crime with dieting and I'm reading this about 10 times over to get the full effect. You're a great blogger. I keep following you to see what you'll find next.



3057 days ago



CELIAMINER

Insightful as always...great blog! I am very much looking forward to joining the 5%, and SP is helping me toward that end. I see that Ree mentioned Weight Watchers, and I've noticed the new WW commercials for a program "that lets me be me," i.e., not a rigid diet but a plan that allows for times when you slip or choose to step away for a day. The new program sounds a lot like SP.
3058 days ago



MPLSKEN

Very interesting analogy. I'm taken back by the recidivism rates (both in regards to prisoners and dieters). But, this post reminds me that this is a life long process.





3058 days ago



CD8467616

Fascinating.
3058 days ago



CD13136117

Yes, great analogy! Awesome blog and a good way to look at our behavior when we are released "on parole".



3058 days ago



CAKEMAKERMOM

Love the comparison. Perhaps I need to get a job that fulfills my healthy new way of life. I've been wanting to go back to school for nutrition and counseling so I can help people lose weight the right way.
3058 days ago



DR1939

Interesting analogy.
3058 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

Interesting! Maintenance is hard, and we really should have a "sponsor" at SparkPeople, like in AA--a wise PERSON to check in with regularly, a parole officer if you will. Our team leaders are kind of like that, but not quite. Stepping on the scale is good, but it still involves a dialogue with yourself, which can head down the wrong path easily.
3058 days ago



WATERMELLEN

Great analogy: being overweight DOES feel like a prison, and yet there is the constant danger of recidivism!! I "liked" it . . . and thanks also for the virtual feast goodie!
3058 days ago



YMWONG22

Great comparison. It makes perfect sense.
Thank you for sharing them.



3058 days ago



MISCHAKEO

That comparison works well. The scale is a great parole officer. I know you will be in the successful percentage of maintainers..and I plan on being there with you!

Great blog.
3058 days ago



ENGLISHNAN

I saw a good tv documentary on Weight Watchers as a company. It's money making of course , but to go along with your comparisons figures do indicate most dieters hadn't learnt much while attending the clubs. They leave and put all the pounds back on. Rather like the prisoners , straight back to bad habits wrong influences. Food for thought there and that kind of food has no calories
Ree
3058 days ago



GINIEMIE

I love your analogy. I'm experiencing ricidivism, before making my goal. I have been off track since my sisters death, and while I was temporarily on track, lost the rails again with my illness last week. Now I have to re apply myself.



3058 days ago

KELLIEBEAN

Excellent comparisons!





3058 days ago



WILSONWR

That was a great analogy. You've done great!

3058 days ago



CD10259955

Interesting perspective! I wonder if the higher income level comparison is becoming less and less true - fast food, home delivery options, and gadgets galore...leading to more and more inactivity....leading to more and more overweight children and adults.

We need to add developing a healthy relationship with our best friend GET MOVING to the list!

Thanks for the great thoughts this morning!

3058 days ago



COCK-ROBIN

very good

3058 days ago



COCK-ROBIN

very good

3058 days ago



PHOENIX1949

Great analogy.

3058 days ago



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