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Thinking about THOSE people

Saturday, May 24, 2014

I read a wonderful blog by Steph-Knee this morning about obligation vs. desire

www.sparkpeople.com/mypublic_journal_individual.asp?blog_id=5701198

Her story is inspirational and she writes really well.

However, my data driven mind kept thinking about one paragraph in particular.

She wrote:

"Why do I have to track my calories when MOST (emphasis mine) people don't? Why do I have to work harder than THOSE (emphasis mine) people that are naturally skinny and can eat whatever they want? Why can they eat out every night and I have to miss out?"

66% of our population is overweight, obese or worse and a certain percentage is battling eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia (5% estimate). That leaves 29% in the recommended weight range.

So MOST people may not be tracking calories or working harder but it sure hasn't resulted in being skinny.

That's because MOST people are not naturally skinny while eating whatever they want.

Sure, we all know someone for whom this is true, but they are not the norm, not by a long shot. It just seems that way when our motivation drops, but that's just part of the mind games we all play with ourselves.

MOST people are just like those of us who have to pay attention to nutrition and exercise

Of the 29% who are in their recommended weight range how many are being vigilant in their efforts toward nutrition and exercise? At my height I have a 40 pound range to still be considered of "healthy" weight and I have to pay attention if I want to stay there.

Certainly there are millions of us here on Spark and similar online communities. Add to those the followers of all those very profitable commercial diet programs and you're taking a big chunk out of that 29%. They are not in that group naturally or without effort.

Occasionally someone tells me how lucky I am that I can eat anything I want. Only then do I tell them about my 5 years on Spark.

We've all faced the frustration that Steph-Knee describes so well.

MOST people are right there with her.

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MARYJEANSL



I think you are very right. The majority of people in this country are overweight. But there is no question that there are some who are, seemingly effortlessly, slim. One thing I have noticed about the people I know who fall into this category - and we are talking quite a few people here, all women and friends of mine - is that they *choose* small portions of food. Just as an example, one friend regularly eats for breakfast one scrambled egg and a piece of fruit. And that fills her up. Her other meals are similarly tiny (compared to what I would eat if I were to eat until I was satisfied). I think that the people who are naturally slim just don't crave large portions. I would say that they are lucky, or blessed. But definitely most people are not like that.

2575 days ago



LINDAKAY228



I really liked this ! I'm right there working on it one step at a time !

2576 days ago



MOOSLADY



I don't think "those" people exist. Some people naturally eat at a level where they maintain a thin body, or are naturally active enough to eat lots. I was a normal weight and didn't count calories for over 30 yrs. I finally realized that this was because I was walking 5-7 miles in the course of a normal day, and in my early 40s, I was only walking 1-2 miles per day.

I laughed about her comment about eating out. Eating out isn't about calories, it is about dollars. It costs a ridiculous amount for a family to eat out. It is entirely possible to eat out every day and not gain weight- just don't eat more than you need! Being a healthy weight shouldn't involve missing out on life.

2577 days ago



WUMPASTAR



Very true, and I used to think like that too. I'm pretty sure I still get those thoughts from time to time, because I'm not a big sharer of my weightloss goals and health goals with people here (aka outside of the internet), so I often feel very alone in it and feel like nobody else is doing anything to look what they look like. Of course I know people who can eat whatever they want - and some who don't even have to make up for it... but what can I do about it? Nothing. So I'll keep working on my own case and I'll keep in mind that they're far from the norm, like you say.

2577 days ago



PHOENIX1949



Well
Said!
THANK
YOU!

2577 days ago



WATERMELLEN



Great blog!! You are so right.

I can remember many years ago being envious of a (then) young mother of three young boys who looked fabulous. "Easy for her", I thought. But then as I came to know her (at the Y) I realized how hard she worked to stay looking fabulous: exercise and nutrition.

Yeah.

Most of us can coast on our genes for awhile . . . but pretty much everyone who looks good at 30 + achieves that by deliberate discipline. Not an attractive reality, but a reality anyhow.

2577 days ago



PHEBESS



I had the experience of sharing a hotel room with a good friend, for about 5 days while at a conference. It was an eye-opener for me. I always thought of her as thin, and I know she's a runner. Turns out that no, she isn't naturally thin - she works at it. Pays attention to what she eats. Has a cut-off weight that, when she hits it, she starts eating mostly salads until she's back down to her comfort zone.

So yes, many of us are totally unaware of how people we think are naturally thin actually are people who work to maintain.

2577 days ago



DR1939



My husband was one of those people for many years. Then, in his 40s, he began to gain weight. This is what happens to most people.

2577 days ago

**PLMITCH**

Yep, it is hard work to be in maintenance. The only time recently when I did not track calories was in December when my wife and I were on vacation in Jamaica. The result: a 5 pound gain! So it does make a difference.

2577 days ago

**TINAJANE76**

EXACTLY! And even people who we think are "naturally thin" are often putting in some effort to stay that way. I've noticed that a lot when eating together with some of my slim friends. They self regulate and when they overdo it, they compensate by eating lighter meals for the next few days-- just like I do now! It may not be something that comes naturally to all of us, but thankfully it's a skill that can be learned and does get easier with more practice!

2577 days ago

**MISCHAKEO**

I used to tell myself that line when I was obese. Now I know that staying thin requires work and commitment. Healthy people work hard to stay healthy. People who appear to be able to eat anything they want, actually do watch what they eat and make up for indulgences.

That was a good point.

2577 days ago

**SPINNINGJW**

My mother-in-law "appears" to be a naturally skinny person. To some extent, this is true. She got good genes. However, she is aware of her eating habits, and although she enjoys "treats" they are an occasional thing. At family gatherings, it "appears" as if she can eat anything she wants. I do know that she gets on her exercise bike regularly, and before she retired, rode the bus to and from work, requiring a walk to and from the building where she worked.

So, we need to remember that "appearances" are not everything, and what we see in public is only a small part of a person's life. What they do at home may be just as diligent as what we are doing.

Thank you for this excellent blog, reminding us that we are our own unique person, and not to judge ourselves against those we perceive to have it "easy."

2577 days ago

**NELLJONES**

The effort is invisible. When I walk through the grocery store intent on my list, people see a thin woman shopping. They may think how lucky I am that I don't have snacks and junk in my cart, that I naturally just want what I have. In reality, the internal monologue is "just walk on by, don't think about it", but that monologue is invisible to others. When I check out and leave, THEN I'm happy with what I have. You can't attribute motives to others. That's why places like Spark are so valuable: here it's visible. Here we can talk about the effort it takes to maintain thin. I don't care what other people weigh; I have never judged others by their weight. I compare myself today to myself yesterday. I am the only person I know well enough to make that comparison.

2577 days ago

**CATANTIGO**

Very good blog. It helps to put things in a correct perspective.

2577 days ago

**STEPH-KNEE**

Thanks so much for bringing this blog to my attention, I love it!! I loved the percentages too. I think when we are in the "woe is me" thinking we can feel like everyone else is eating whatever they want. Most of my family members are, but many of them are overweight as a result. As are some of my coworkers. I know 2 are naturally skinny but I think you are right... The others that are skinny and eat poorly at work may be exercising and eating well at home. People see me eat one donut and think I eat what I want too. I think I have a case of the grass is greener on the other side it's going on right now and you have opened my eyes to see that it isn't! Thank you!!!! :)

2577 days ago

**ONEKIDSMOM**

Well Said!

And so true! I am lucky that many of my co-workers have seen me both heavy AND fit. It's led to many wonderful conversations about the effort involved, and so I've heard many tales of others who LOOK like they put no effort into it, but they really, really do pay attention to their choices. I feel blessed to be on this journey and to find others who may not have the SAME journey, but bring their best to their own. If you want a particular result... look at those who have achieved it, and watch what they do habitually.



Spark on!

2577 days ago

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