

Nothing to lose but the bathroom scale

There's an obsession in our country today that seems to have snowballed over the last decade, and its power appears to be growing stronger with no end in sight. It's an obsession that leaves no one immune to its cataclysmic grip on our society and, frankly, it seems to be eroding the very core of almost every American's inner happiness and well-being. What is this horrible grasp on our nation? It's our obsession with weight.

Granted, it's important for all of us to be healthy, especially since we're an aging society with the Baby Boomers living longer today than ever before. But when did we jump head first into the fire and begin to measure a person's worth solely by the amount of pounds he or she has on his or her frame?

I'm not immune to watching my weight by a long shot and have tried every diet in creation except for the South Beach diet simply because I haven't had time to download a copy from the Internet.



*As I see
it*

Peg
DeMarco

My quest for thinness over the years has included diet pills when they were popular and freely dispensed by physicians, Weight Watchers, Dexatrim, Slim-Fast, Atkins (before he became well known and was chastised for his way of thinking), Jennie Craig, Healthy Choice, the grapefruit diet, the drinking man's diet and just about every other diet known to man or woman. And looking at myself now, I've never been heavier and never been so confused about what to eat and what not to eat than I am today as I endlessly walk the aisles at the local grocery store.

The diet industry is a booming, billion-dollar business, and I sure don't want to put any CEO on the unemployment line, but I'm just plain fed up with sitting in front of the television watching some doctor try and sell me some expensive "magic" diet pill or standing in line at the grocery store trying to find a magazine that doesn't contain a story on how I can slim my thighs in seven days.

What is particularly heartbreaking about this obsession is recently, someone told me that she cries herself to sleep at night because she can't fit into any of her clothes and she's afraid that her husband won't find her attractive anymore because she's put on a little weight. She's not alone either.

Turn on the television and one of the daytime talk shows will no doubt have a program about a woman who believes she has lost her husband or boyfriend be-

cause she's gained some weight after giving birth to a baby. I can't tell you how many times I've been tempted to throw the remote at the television screen in frustration because that woman didn't dump the jerk

who promised to love and cherish her for the rest of her life. How dare he desert the ship because it took on a little extra cargo!

I consider myself quite lucky that I'm not well known and famous. Why? It's just too much of a burden to stay pencil thin, give in to an occasional slice of pizza and pay for it later when the paparazzi snaps a picture of you in sweats with screaming headlines that compare you to a barnyard animal.

Take Oprah, for instance. I could wallpaper half my office with all the tabloid pictures of a skinny Oprah and then wallpaper the other half with pictures of when she carried a little extra weight. Do I like her better thin or heavy? Who cares? She's still a top performer and a very generous one at that.

I remember when Luther Van Dross lost weight and there was a poll on a radio station asking for people to call in and vote on whether they liked the heavy Luther or the new slim and trim Luther.

I couldn't understand that silly poll because his voice was magnificent no matter how much he weighed, and I was devastated when he had a stroke. He's on the road to recovery and thank goodness no one seems to be asking about his weight anymore. It would be a sad state of affairs indeed if the threat of death was the only recourse available to stop people from talking about weight.

I truly believe that being and staying thin is a state of mind that one must get into, and it all starts with loving who you are no matter what the ridiculous scale says. After all, what exactly is that thing that sits on your bathroom floor and stares up at you with an invisible grin and taunting eyes? Isn't it just a little bit of metal, a bunch of lines that you need your glasses to read and a dreadful red arrow that never seems to budge? I think of it as a gadget that some painfully thin fanatic invented to punish us all.

I'm the happiest when I

throw the scale in the dumpster — once it's out of the house, only then can I calmly settle down and sensibly count my carbs or calories. I read an article recently about women who weigh themselves three or four times a day. These days, the only time I weigh myself is when I have to go for my annual physical and buy a brand new scale so I know how much my doctor will lecture me.

Once the visit is over, the scale is out the door.

And once the scale is on its way to the local landfill, I usually clean out my closet and get rid of the clothes that I know will depress me because they're a few sizes smaller than what I'm wearing now. I figure that when I lose a few pounds, I won't want them anyway — I'll reward myself with new togs because I've earned it.

Next, I line up my vitamins and make sure I have enough multi-vitamins (for the over-50 crowd, of course), extra vitamins E and C and fish oil capsules (Omega-3), which they say helps promote a healthy heart, circulatory function, healthy blood lipid levels, vascular tone and helps with the fatty acids in the brain, retina and nervous system. Quite a job for a little capsule, no?

Finally, I figure out if it's a low-carbohydrate week or a low-calorie week, which is the dilemma I seem to be in at the moment.

But there's one thing I absolutely no longer do and it's taken me more than 40 years to get into the habit of pushing it into the recesses of my brain: I no longer beat myself up because of how I look on the outside or the few extra pounds I seem to have put on from season to season.

I finally figured out what's really important in life and it sure isn't how much I tip the scales at. I believe the true key to happiness and fulfillment is trying to figure out what you can do as a person each and every day to bring a little bit more love and kindness into the lives of the people you come into contact with.

I'm positive that if you replace this task with any negative thought, such as beating yourself up for going off your diet with an extra Oreo last night, you'll have truly won the battle of the bulge.

So, if you're just as disgusted as I am with this current obsession with weight and would like to try my theory, throw out your scale and begin to think positive thoughts about who you are and what you have to offer to the world around you. What have you got to lose?