LOVE YOURSELF & LOSE WEIGHT

The success story of self love

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Preface

Hello! And welcome.

Welcome to my story about how I learned to love myself, and how my newly acquired self-love acted as a catalyst for massive weight loss. If you have some weight you'd like to lose I hope this resonates with you. I hope you may even find my story funny too!

I've written this book to share my story in the hope that it inspires others, and just as importantly, I have defined a set of self-love and weight loss principles for you to take, adapt and build into your life so that you can make the necessary

changes to help you move towards your individual weight loss goal. I have found something that is so incredibly powerful, and that worked so well for me that not sharing it would be a travesty. Divulging my very personal story has been challenging, and at times I might have overshared a little, but I really want to show you how easy it is to learn to love yourself – and to achieve the weight that you desire.

In the first part of Love Yourself and Lose Weight (LYALW), I will talk specifically about my story, and how I used self-love to lose 85 lb to reach a healthy weight – or 6st 1lb or 29 kg depending on the measurements you are most familiar with (for the purpose of this book, I will stick with pounds).

Traditional weight loss programmes want you to follow a set of rules, but this is not what I'm offering here. You'll need to keep an open mind, especially when I talk about loving yourself more. If this idea scares you witless right now, that's okay, but stay with me, and make sure you complete the activities later on in the book.

You can complete the activities as you go, or read the book, then do the activities afterwards. The Your Success Story section is your book, your story to write about yourself based on my guiding principles of self-love. Use this book as you see fit. Keep it to yourself or share it, and please keep me updated on your progress as I'd love to hear just

how LYALW is working for you, so get in touch over at www.loveyourselfandloseweight.com

Thank you for choosing to read my book, and I wish you all the love in the world - as you embark on your very own self-love journey.

Best wishes,

Katie, August 2021.

Success Stories

It's powerful stuff, this thing they call love, and in this section, I am going to tell you just how powerful it really is - and how anything is possible, I'm living proof of that. You too can harness self-love to achieve whatever you want.

You're Amazing!

You are amazing. You are a wonderful, beautiful, resourceful, tenacious, talented specimen of a human being who can achieve whatever you set your mind to. You are so amazing that you utterly deserve anything and everything that you set your heart on.

Sound good? I truly hope so, but while it may sound good, it may not be how you feel about yourself right now. In fact, this is something I am pretty sure about, because if you

were feeling great right now, you probably wouldn't be reading this book. You are here for a reason. You are here because you want to lose weight, and you may also be doubting yourself. Quite simply, you haven't yet learnt the secret of self-love.

For anyone who doesn't completely love themselves, the 'you're amazing' stuff can be horribly awkward, annoying even. If you're here at the start of this book I doubt you believe you're amazing, or that you are utterly wonderful, and I doubt you fully believe you can achieve anything you desire. My bet is that you ain't feeling it in the 'I can achieve anything' department, because you don't love yourself. Or rather, I should say you don't love yourself all that much, just yet.

But you can learn to love yourself. Yes, really, you can. And, if you stick with me, I will share my unorthodox, revolutionary weight loss method. As part of this method you will learn to love yourself. You will wake up every day so totally in love with you that you'll be able to achieve anything, even losing weight.

I'm Amazing!

Okay, Okay, it is still, and always will be very cringey stating

my amazingness, especially as we don't know each other very well just yet. But I'm gonna go with it, as compared to the me of several years ago, the me who was six stones heavier, the me of misery, the me of inaction and regret, and the me of self-doubt who really didn't like herself very much, I am bloody amazing.

I am amazing not because I lost weight - and this is very important, so I'm going to turn up the volume here: I am amazing simply because I love myself; and I show myself love. To lose 85 pounds (yes, I lost 85 pounds), I needed to love myself. I simply had to love myself, it was the only way. In order to write a book, I needed to love myself. And to write a book about losing 85 pounds, I really needed to love myself. A lot.

A while ago I was faced with a choice: lose weight and feel happy with myself or don't lose weight, probably gain more weight and continue to be miserable.   I had been faced with that choice every day for many years. And every day for many years I chose to remain miserable. I chose to continue to overeat, to gain weight, and to wallow in self-pity, all while pretending I was totally fine and okay with myself. I chose to do this because I didn't love myself enough to choose the other path, to make the seemingly tougher choice, to do anything about the situation I was in. I simply didn't care enough about me.

But now I do. And what started with a simple decision to love myself has enabled me to lose a massive amount of weight and to achieve other amazing transformations in my life.

Love is Amazing!

Love is transformative and fundamentally what this book is all about. I believe love is an amazing catalyst for dramatic and sustainable change. I will share my story as I hope you too can fall in love with yourself and, as a result, achieve what you desire and deserve.

While other weight loss books are all about abstinence, strict regimes and restricting certain foods, this book is just about love. It is so powerful. With love on your side, you'll be able to achieve amazing results that simply wouldn't be possible otherwise, regardless of how strict your diet is.

Love conquers all, so let's go get it!

MY STORY

So, who am I and why on earth would you listen to me about how to lose weight? These are of course the kind of questions you really should ask when you take weight loss advice from a complete stranger. After all, who wants to read another book about weight loss, written by someone who's never lost weight or who's never wanted or needed to? I know I don't!

Let me tell you here, a little about my struggle. I have wanted to lose weight. I have needed to lose weight. I have tried to lose weight. I have succeeded in losing weight and I have failed. I have tried eating less and I have tried exercising more. Finally, after many years of struggling with my weight, I learned how to lose weight in a different way. My method flies in the face of conventional wisdom which seems to stipulate that weight loss is all about focusing on diet and exercise. Well, for me, at least, conventional wisdom didn't work; it failed me as it has failed millions of other people all over the world.

The focus on diet and exercise entirely fails to even acknowledge that to lose weight you need to work first on changing your mindset. If you simply change your diet and start to exercise, you might well achieve some short-term success, but you haven't really got to the root of the problem. Your mind still thinks in the same way. This

approach does nothing to address the issues that caused you to gain weight in the first place. This might sound harsh, but if you don't change your mindset, after a while, you will just go back to the way you were before.

I have been through the cycle of yo-yo dieting throughout my thirties. I am now 45, and as I write this am a healthy, and more importantly, a happy weight for me. At 5'6" my weight is under 154 pounds, under 11 stones and under a BMI of 25. I'm a UK size 12 and I am able to buy the clothes I like rather than the ones that will fit. I'm happy at this weight and while I still have some weight I could lose, I know that if I spent the rest of my life at this weight I'd have no regrets.

But it wasn't always this way for me. I used to wake up every morning full of regret; I'd get dressed each day full of regret, I'd shop reluctantly and hide behind layers of scarves, coats, big hair and bravado.

I had never been skinny as a child although I had never been fat either. As a student I lost weight and felt good in small clothes, but in my mid twenties I started putting on a few pounds. And it really was just a few pounds, nothing dramatic, I was probably still wearing medium clothes and no one would have thought I was big. At this time my social life was hectic, stressful and full-on. There was a lot of drinking, and a lot of eating to make up for the drinking and so the pounds continued to pile on. By the age of 30 I

was struggling. I was wearing at least a size 16 and I was miserable in my own skin. I felt sad and upset with myself but outwardly I pretended I didn't care. I pretended I didn't want to look good in nice clothes, that it didn't matter and that I was fine.

I wasn't fine, I was the opposite of fine. I felt a sense of unfairness, I felt angry and all this negative feeling impacted me in other ways. I felt uncomfortable around my thin friends, I hated going anywhere where people dressed up or made an effort, I lost my interest in clothes and in looking good, and I struggled to achieve my professional ambitions as I let my low self esteem hold me back.

I worked hard to lose weight. I struggled. I lost weight. At one point I lost about 40 pounds only to put it back. I starved myself and went from a UK dress size 18 to 14-16 but the effort to required to keep going or maintain was too much and I put the weight back again and some. I was miserable when I was heavy, optimistic as I was shedding the pounds, and then miserable again when I put it all back on. I felt like an absolute failure, and I really didn't like myself very much.

Then everything changed. At my heaviest weight ever, of around 17 stones (238 lb), I suddenly discovered the art of long-term, successful weight loss. The secret was love. Instead of being so hard on myself, and mentally beating

myself up, I decided to like myself. And my new-found self-regard eventually turned itself into self-love.

Over a period of 16 months, I slowly, patiently, and enjoyably lost over 85 pounds. I did this by learning more and more about self-love and I practised this idea day after day. That was over 6 years ago and while I have fluctuated a little in the years since, today I am most definitely at least 85 pounds lighter than I was when I started.

I'll be honest with you; it wasn't just a case of telling myself I was awesome or repeating affirmations over and over in the mirror each morning. I hadn't tricked myself into thinking I was amazing when I still weighed and looked the same. No, self-love is a catalyst, but it's not the end game. Self-love enables us to care enough about ourselves to do what it takes to achieve our goals.

It's also important to note that this journey towards self-love, and eventual weight loss, wasn't something that happened smoothly either or something that I achieved all at once. I didn't drop the 85 pounds and keep it all off for years afterwards. Nope, like so many of us, I did fluctuate - to the tune of about 20 pounds, then lost it again, then put it on again.

When I put a little weight on for a second time I thought long and hard about what had happened. I realised I was gaining weight because I had forgotten the most important

thing I had learned when I initially lost all the weight. What led me to put a little weight back on was that I was in a toxic work situation at the time which jolted my confidence and made me miserable.

I was working really hard to save money and doing a difficult job that involved lots of commuting. Every day I would drag myself across London to get to work for a boss who insulted and upset everyone he encountered. The entire team suffered stress and fatigue, it was not even personal. The effects of being in a toxic situation with no time to decompress meant I forgot the key to staying healthy and happy. With someone telling me everyday that they didn't value the work I was doing, I stopped loving myself. I allowed other people's nonsense to dent my sense of self-love. So, I left that job, remembered to love myself, and hey presto, the weight was easy to lose.

I knew then that I had cracked it: I realised without an iota of doubt that for me weight loss starts with self-love. If I love myself, then I can lose weight easily and enjoyably because I want to treat myself right. I want to treat myself like the person I love most in the world.

It then started to dawn on me that what had worked so effectively for me could also help other people too. The questions kept buzzing in my head. Could I really help other people to lose weight? How would I do that? How would I share my story?? The first step was simply knowing that I

wanted to help people like me all over the world to lose weight and to be happy. I decided to help others just like I decided to lose weight; I was clear in my intent, I made my decision, then I made it happen. I wrote this book to help people. I hope it can help you and I truly believe it will.

Love Yourself and Lose Weight is the story of my personal struggle and success with weight loss. It is guided by a set of principles that you can use if you are someone who wants to learn to love yourself, to lose weight, and to maintain a healthy, happy lifestyle.

YOUR STORY

You are reading a book about self-love and weight loss, so the chances are you're interested in one or both topics. I hope you're interested in both, in the same way that I hope you're open to considering new things and ideas that go against conventional weight loss wisdom. My challenge is to convince you to take the leap of faith and to believe me when I say that success in the weight loss game starts with self-love. I hope my story will resonate with you; perhaps we have some things in common?

Maybe you're sick of being overweight in the same way that I was. Perhaps, like I was, you're miserable about your weight but you pretend to yourself and to everyone around you that you're okay, although deep down, this is seriously affecting your quality of life. Perhaps, like I was, you're ready now for change. Perhaps you don't love yourself enough right now, perhaps you don't love yourself at all.

You can change that. You can learn to love yourself. You can learn to love yourself so that you start treating yourself with respect and loving yourself in the same way that you would the person you care about most in the world. Because self-love really can transform how you think about yourself. It can enable you to do things you never would have thought was possible. It can motivate you to try new things, to persevere, to succeed, and to enjoy the positive change.

The very fact that you are reading this means that you are at a crucial stage in your weight loss story. This is where you get to swoop in as the hero or heroine to figure out what needs to happen for the mission to succeed before hitting the home run. You have the power to shape this important story, and to make it a dazzling read. You have the power to make a dramatic change in your life.

However long you have struggled with your weight, and no matter how much weight you want to lose, or how you feel about yourself today, I want you to know that it is possible to stop the struggle, to lose the weight and to feel amazing. The way to do this is with self-love.

Often, when we are struggling with our weight, we simply add to the problem by telling ourselves a bunch of unhelpful stories. Stories like 'we're not worth it' or 'we don't deserve to be slim' or 'it's too hard for us'. These stories can stop us from making changes. We need to break free from these negative narratives that are undoubtedly holding us back. We need to replace them with much more empowering stories.

Whatever your story has been so far, this is your chance to change it, to write the next chapter just how you like. Instead of being the overweight person who was miserable but couldn't make a change, you can become the happy, healthy person who has a great life.

Yes, you can.

You can do all these things because you're amazing. You are an amazing, worthwhile person who deserves to be happy and to be whatever weight you desire.

Let's write your story here: I deserve to be the weight I desire, and I deserve to love myself. I deserve to feel freaking amazing!

The Weight Gain Problem

There are many reasons why someone puts on weight. We're all different, so your reasons may not be my reasons and vice versa. In this section, I will explore the reasons why we gain weight. It's not always just about food, either. The biggest problem, I find, is that as a society we seem to think the solution is simply eating less. We seem to imagine that this is easy and that people who have put weight on are a bit dumb. Well, guess what, it just isn't as simple as that.

We ain't stupid

We (anyone who's ever been overweight) are not stupid, yet so many of us are overweight.

In England, 28.7% of adults are obese[1]. A further 35.6% are overweight but not obese. That means 64.3% of us or almost two-thirds of British adults are either overweight or obese. In the USA 30.9% of adults are obese[2], with a further 35.0% overweight but not obese. That's a total of 65.9% the population who are either overweight or obese. Just in case you are not aware what is technically meant by obesity, it is a term that refers to anyone who has a body mass (weight) index (BMI) of over 30, and overweight is a BMI of between 25 and 29.9. According to British health experts, a healthy BMI is anything between 18.5 and 24.9. So, the statistics show that more than 60% of us are carrying more weight than is healthy – and I would vouch that most overweight people are miserable about that.

Obesity is an awful problem, and one that has so many terrible solutions attached to it. Most of these so-called 'solutions' focus on the mechanics of losing weight and totally neglect to examine why people become overweight in the first place. The mechanics of losing weight are known

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1 https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn03336/

2 https://nccd.cdc.gov

to us all, I hope. I mean, unless you've lived your life as a hermit, you're likely to understand that:

More calories in than you burn = weight gain
Fewer calories in than you burn = weight loss

Overweight people really aren't stupid, no matter what the media likes to suggest! No. We know we need to eat less and exercise more if we want to be lighter. Likewise, we understand that if we continue to eat more than we need, we will continue to get bigger. We also understand that if we were to eat fewer calories than we needed, we'd lose weight. Now, for anyone at this point who wants an 'all calories are not created equal' discussion, I will oblige you on this, but later in the book when I discuss the foods I eat to lose weight. You'll just have to keep reading to get to that bit.

Fundamentally, those of us who have gained weight know what being healthy looks like, what it means, and what it requires, but, for whatever reason, and maybe not even consciously, we have 'chosen' not to go down that path. No thank you! Not for us. Instead, us heavier people silently, begrudgingly, knowingly, resignedly, and sadly remain overweight.

For anyone who is screaming at this point, 'How dare you? I suffer from a serious medical condition that makes me put

on weight even if I just eat lettuce', well yes, there are plenty of people like you out there. All sorts of people suffer from all sorts of diseases and conditions that mean they are more likely to put on weight and find it harder to lose weight.

Often, people don't even know that they have such conditions and simply struggle on through. Yet whether you have a condition like hypothyroidism or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), if you're overeating and not loving yourself, I hope I can help you fix those issues and be happier as a result. If you do suffer from a condition that makes it very difficult for you to lose weight, I believe self-love can help you learn to accept and work around your condition and make the changes necessary to achieve your goals. Most of us who put on weight though, do not suffer from a medical condition, other than, perhaps, a lack of self-love.

Telling someone who *knows* how to be healthy, how to be healthy is entirely pointless. We already know that if we lay off the carbs, and the pizza and ice cream, did some exercise, and limited our calorie intake, we would lose weight. But knowing is different from doing, isn't it?

Before I lost weight, my diet consisted of double portions of curry and rice, sneaking in chocolate bars when no one was looking and occasionally actually eating a salad just so I didn't look greedy. But it wasn't that I didn't *know* that this

was what was causing me not to be a slender size 10. I really wasn't sitting there wondering why I couldn't buy any clothes in a regular store. It wasn't as if I was confused as to why I felt so bad about myself.

The doctors I saw over the years would go on about calories and exercise, but nothing they said ever made any difference to *why* I was overweight. It always seemed as if they just magically wanted me to weigh less so I'd be less of a burden on the health system. None of these conversations helped. In fact, any doctor who instigated 'the chat' only added to the problem - especially the thin ones who had clearly never gained weight or had any idea therefore why anyone else would. By reprimanding me about my size without remotely understanding why I might be overweight, they just made me feel misunderstood, isolated, and alone.

I certainly knew I was overweight, and I certainly understood the mechanics of weight loss (eating better food and moving more) but I certainly was not doing these things. So why not? Why was I, like so many millions of people, continuing to stay overweight??

THE REAL PROBLEM

For many people who struggle with their weight – what they are lacking is self-love rather than intelligence.

What I've learned is that when we become and then stay overweight it's because we're lacking love in our lives. I don't mean that nobody loves us, so we become fat. No. I mean that we aren't giving ourselves enough love. We just don't care for ourselves enough. We don't care enough to stay healthy, fit, and slim and we don't care enough to stop ourselves as we pile on the pounds. And we certainly don't love ourselves enough to turn that ship around, to reverse the damage and to lose weight. It takes a lot of positive energy to do any of those things.

We simply focus on the mechanics of losing weight because that's what we've been told we need to do. We were taught as kids that if we consume too many calories and don't burn them off, we will put on weight. I really do know that eating a calorie surplus makes me put on weight and that only a calorie deficit will make me lose it. Of course, it also helps if you get your calories from the right kinds of food - the type that makes you feel fuller for longer rather than the snacks that keep your blood sugar yo-yoing and convince you that you are hungry again 10 minutes later. Fundamentally, the art of weight loss is not rocket science:

eat less food, do more and you will shift the weight. We know this!

The medical profession provides solutions that it knows technically will work, but it fails to understand why so many of us got here in the first place. In my experience, doctors don't understand, or more likely, they don't have the time to understand that there are reasons why we have put on weight, reasons why we have continued to put on weight and reasons why it's simply impossible to reverse that gain, and to start - never mind succeed in losing weight. These reasons are emotional, not physical. No amount of telling us about BMI, or calories, or that exercise might be fun, or that we're unhealthy is going to help until we fix the emotional issues that caused the weight gain in the first place.

When we put on weight, many of us enter the dangerous 'I don't care' territory. The 'I don't care enough about me mode'. It might start small, it might start by being triggered by an awful event, or a handful of minor disappointments, but it starts somewhere and then it spirals.

As we lose love for ourselves, we treat ourselves badly, we put on weight and the sense of 'don't care' is compounded - it just gets bigger. We care less and less. As we get bigger, we dislike ourselves even more until the very idea of self-

love becomes alien, awkward, and something to shy away from.

When did I stop loving myself? When did I put on weight?

Self love and weight have been two battlegrounds in my life. And they are connected. In reality though, there's only one battleground and that's the self love battleground. A battleground? Yes, sadly it really has been, for me. While I have self love now, for large chunks of my life I really didn't have self love, self respect or high self esteem.

"Why not?" you may well ask, and many people do ask: "Why did you put on weight?", "What was the trigger?", "Did a bad thing happen?". It's not always easy to answer this. It's not ever easy to answer this, in all honesty.

I have written about this time and again to try to help myself understand what went 'wrong', what was missing or lacking, or what 'caused' weight gain. I've written about the fact that it was just a lack of self love that led me to gain weight gradually, that nothing majorly bad happened to me, that a few quite bad things happened near me and amounted to a dent in how I felt about myself, but none of the ways I was thinking about what happened, really explained what happened. Not to me, and not to you.

I think that if you're embarking on this journey with me I owe you more than that. I owe you more than a cursory

glossing over of the issue, I owe you more, I owe myself more. So what did lead me to gain weight? What was my trigger, or terrible event that caused me to pile on the pounds? Having thought long and hard about this, through recent weeks, months and years I am now at the point where I can be honest with myself, and honest with you.

It started at the very early point at which I became self conscious. For me it was around age six. Like most of us at this age we start to notice difference - we start to notice how different we are from our friends. Some of them might be taller, skinnier, prettier, funnier, better at spelling, stronger, can run faster than us. Some of them might also be whinier, less approachable, less reliable, worse at Maths, and so on, but I noticed less where I was better than my friends, and was more concerned with where I was lacking. I developed a sense of being different at a young age.

When I was six, I was not any larger than the other kids: I had a different problem. I had eczema. This pretty common and less than exciting skin condition meant I had flaky knees, hands and eyes. I was an itchy scratchy child who was quite shy. I grew up knowing I wasn't massively pretty, I didn't have luscious flowing locks to plait and play with. I grew up wishing I didn't have the embarrassing eczema problem, wishing I didn't have to endlessly explain that it wasn't catching. At the tender age of six I couldn't understand that the situation would ever change, let alone

having the emotional maturity to work on my own sense of self worth.

I was born in the seventies but did most of my growing up in the eighties. It was the era of the video recorder (we bet on Betamax) and of the microwave, of Pizza Hut versus Pizzaland, of an explosion of fast food, and of Lean Cuisine ready meals. We listened to Madonna, Jacko and Wham! and did aerobics, wearing shiny purple leotards. We drank diet drinks and used SunIn (a spray-in hair lightener) and crimpers without a care in the world.

At home, we were as healthy as the next family - well, not the ones who endlessly played tennis or whose parents played squash - no, they were definitely more into their fitness, but we knew not to eat too many of Grandma's Yorkshire puddings or helpings of apple pie. My sister and I grew up surrounded by family who took pride in their appearance, who strived to be slim. Like so many kids, then just as ever, we learned fat was bad. We ate the Lean Cuisine ready meals. We believed it was important to be attractive and that attractive meant being thin.

In my teenage years, the eczema got better of course, and I grew up into a relatively attractive young woman, but I kept a sense of lack, a sense of being different from others, of not quite fitting in. I was still comparing myself, and in comparison to the ones with the long hair, the skinny ones who didn't feel the need to wrap a jumper around their

waists to cover their behinds, the ones who exuded confidence, I felt different. Nowadays of course, we help kids at school to build their sense of self confidence, self worth, and I hope, self love, but back then it simply wasn't part of our education. Everyone just got on with it, I know this for sure, even my skinny friends felt inferior to someone or something at some point.

I spent a long time feeling unattractive and so I developed a coping mechanism. Instead of learning to understand that I was attractive just the way I was, instead of learning to love and accept myself, I developed the belief that it didn't matter how I felt about myself. I tried to reverse what I had learned growing up, and convinced myself that being attractive in a stereotypical way was undesirable. For many of us, looks don't matter, at least not so much as what's on the inside. We're all beautiful in our own way of course, but I managed to develop a belief that attractiveness wasn't desirable or applicable to me - simply as a defence mechanism.

Later, after I left school, I went to art college and university and something brilliant happened. I was surrounded by other non-traditional types and I fitted in. In this environment I learned to appreciate there were plenty of other people who were different too. My self esteem and confidence grew and I felt pretty good about myself. Coincidentally (or not) I lost weight and felt comfortable in my body - the most comfortable I've felt in my life until

very recently. I was learning to like myself, comparing myself less to others, and accepting myself for who I was.

After university I entered the world of work. Like many of us, I had to shape-shift somewhat to fit into a new environment. I had switched the art college world for the tech world which, at the time was incredibly exciting. It was the early days of the internet. My early career was going well and I was confident and rather full of myself. Then I tried a new thing. Along with my now husband I launched a business. It was a huge deal for us and basically over a period of a few years, it failed. The business world I found myself in was less forgiving, and I was lost and lacking. I lacked business skills, money, the ability to present well to large audiences on big stages. The experience tested me so very much. I threw myself into it but kept getting knocked back. I felt knocked down and knocked out. I also felt very small in this big new world.

None of these things are that bad you might be screaming? 'Nothing awful happened to you!' You're right, I was lucky, I always found work when I needed it, I did interesting things, I travelled, I had people around me who loved me.

No, nothing awful happened to me. But around this time, there were negative, bad and absolutely awful things happening to people around me. Relatives and close friends died. I learned I wasn't immortal, or invincible. I learned life could be hard and cruel.

My sense of self worth was seriously low, and, out of resignation and rebellion, I found myself comfort eating. I was resigned to the fact that life was hard and I was rebelling. I'd comfort eat, and also I'd comfort drink. A lot of comfort. A lot of calories. A lot of weight gain.

I knew I was gaining weight and I continued to gain weight as I simply couldn't find the positive self love to lift me out of the malaise. I kept telling myself that it didn't matter that my business wasn't a success, that it didn't matter that I was gaining weight, that it didn't matter because it wasn't important to be attractive. I may even have convinced myself that being attractive was for dummies just to make gaining weight and feeling really unattractive ok somehow.

So while I grew up striving to be attractive, at some point, too many small (and some large things) tipped me over the edge, I felt I was losing or had lost the battle, and so I gave up and turned it all around in my tiny mind and got lost in a comfort eating mess. Now while being attractive is absolutely not the be all and end all, as someone who was perfectly attractive in reality, it was shocking that I opted to gain so much weight and basically give up on myself. I most definitely 'let myself go' and I most definitely sent everyone and the universe the message that I didn't love myself at all. And even though I was bloody miserable, without that self worth, self respect and self love I was unable to do anything to lose weight.

Without loving yourself, no amount of dietary knowledge or expertise, or basic maths for that matter, is going to help you lose weight. You have to love yourself to be able to say, 'enough!'. You need to love yourself just enough to make a start, to make a change. Loving yourself enough to read this book is a huge step. Reading a book about weight loss is an impressive first step on any weight loss journey.

The lack of love

A lack of self-love isn't always obvious to everyone else. In fact, you might come across as someone who is completely happy and appears to have their life sorted. But the problem might spill out in other ways, perhaps, as in my case, via angry outbursts, or just being constantly grumpy. And even if you do hold it together and are able to come across as calm and competent, your lack of self-love is something you can't ignore yourself.

As someone who has experienced a profound lack of self-love, I can share with you some of the kind of messages I was subconsciously telling myself:

- I don't ever think about how I love or care about myself.
- I don't really care about me.
- I'm not in control.

- I need to sort out this massive and awful problem, but I never get round to it.
- It doesn't matter.
- I don't matter.

My lack of self-love wasn't massively apparent to others until I got bigger. It was subtle and building, the fact that I didn't love myself led me to gain weight, the fact that I had gained weight further eroded my self-love.

Note that a lack of self-love is not self-hatred. I am not suggesting that anyone who doesn't love themselves feels hatred instead. No, it isn't that extreme. You don't need to hate yourself to treat yourself badly and put on weight. You just need to not love yourself enough. Without self-love you are completely ambivalent about yourself, and that's rather depressing. What an awful position to be in… not being excited to be you!

A lack of self-love stops you from enjoying yourself, from really loving being you, and being excited about what lies ahead. It stops you from welcoming joy into your life, grasping opportunities, and building relationships. And importantly, a lack of self-love can cause you to put on weight, and then to find it hard to lose again. Without self-love, it is hard for you to achieve the things you absolutely deserve.

Self-love is obvious to others. It's the thing that makes people attractive. Achieving self-love doesn't mean you have to suddenly become one of those braggy, arrogant types. You know the kind of person I mean: someone who struts about, busily telling everyone how wonderful they are when they probably don't love themselves that much at all. You really don't want to become one of them! To my mind, someone who genuinely loves themself is confident, friendly, polite, excited, positive, and dynamic, and the kind of person who brings out the best in others.

This is what self-love feels like:

- I think about myself in a positive light.
- I care about myself enough to treat myself well.
- I'm in control.
- I'm going to do something good for myself today.
- I want to do something good for someone else today.
- I'm working towards my goals, and I know I can achieve them.
- I've got this!

The link between self-love and weight loss is that self-love is the enabler, if you like. It enables you to lose weight as you're in control and you care enough about yourself to live well, to enjoy life and to achieve your goals. Fundamentally, gaining self-love shifts you from a position of not caring about yourself to caring enough about yourself so that you

will do whatever it takes to give yourself the gift of weight loss, or anything else you desire, for that matter.

Self-love is effortless, and it's not mysterious or magical. In fact, with a little practice, it is something that everyone can acquire. I'm going to show you how to make a shift, to learn to love yourself and to lose weight easily.

MAKING CHOICES

If, as someone who is overweight, you aren't choosing to make a change, then are you actively deciding to stay overweight? Is that what you really want, and if so, why? Why are you not choosing to make the change? What kind of weirdo wouldn't choose to have a fit or even sexy body? What kind of masochist would choose to be fat?

I think it's fair to say that many people, especially slim people (and I don't mean to offend anyone here) who have never been overweight, just don't understand why others allow themselves to get big. But to be honest, I don't really think most overweight people get this either – in fact, they often see all those excess pounds as something that has just 'happened' to them rather than as something they have chosen. Often the weight just creeps up on you, doesn't it?

You were slim once. You were slim, then you put on just a few pounds. Then a year went by maybe, and you put on a handful more. Then another year went by. Then a decade flew by and not very suddenly, you're five stones overweight. It's not dramatic, it's a gradual process. In fact, it is slow enough for you to increase a size and be able to convince yourself that clothes are getting smaller without it being a big deal. That is until the dress is a size 18 or the top is an XXL – or a big number that you have always associated with fat people.

The fact is that overweight people don't consciously choose to be overweight, but by not doing anything to solve the problem, that is effectively what we're doing.

When I was overweight and heading towards morbid obesity, I never felt like it was my choice to be fat. I felt out of control, as if the weight gain was just happening to me, and I had no way of stopping it. It's not like I woke up every morning and said to myself: 'Hell, let's just get a bit bigger today.' It was more like it I woke up and ignored the issue because it was too big and scary to tackle. And believe me, I'd tell myself all sorts of crap to make it seem as if everything was okay – to convince myself that I wasn't choosing to be fat.

These are some of the total and utter lies I would tell myself:

- This is all okay, I'm not interested in being slim (this wasn't true.)
- I'm not actually that big (as I couldn't do up boots over my calves.)
- I look fine (I didn't.)
- I feel fine (I most definitely did not.)
- I don't care what other people think of me (it totally mattered to me that people would just see my size.)
- I really love food (I didn't actually love the food I was eating.)

- I could easily fix this if I wanted to (er… WTF!)

I was living in total denial. It wasn't that I was choosing to remain overweight, it was rather that I couldn't find it within me to make a choice to do anything about my weight problem. Every morning I woke up with regret that I was overweight, sad I'd have to feel uncomfortable in my clothes, but seemingly without the capacity to do anything about it. It was as if the problem was too big, too difficult, required too big a change that I simply couldn't face it.

I believe many people are in this same situation, the same limbo land of miserably sleepwalking towards getting bigger, and yet feeling completely unable to choose to change.

And it's a lack of self-love that is the culprit for this passive weight gain. This stops us from even being able to contemplate choice, let alone choosing to change. Until we learn how to love ourselves and start to feel some genuine self-love (which, by the way can come very quickly), it is impossible to even see that there is a choice to be made.
Well, the good news is that there is most definitely a choice, and once you start to love yourself, you'll be able to see it clearly. You will be able to make thousands of tiny positive choices with ease and to achieve the weight loss you desire.

DIETS ALONE DON'T WORK

If I had once tried dieting and it had worked, I would not be writing this book right now. If it was easy to diet, to lose weight and keep it off, fewer people would be overweight, and living unhappily. If it was so easy to shed the pounds my Instagram followers wouldn't cheer me on every time I go for a slow, short run around the park or eat a tomato.

We know that diets don't work. We're over it. I am sick of hearing about the fact that diets don't work, especially whilst reading diet books. Diets are losing popularity and have been reinvented as communities or lifestyles. Authors of diet books are keen to establish their eating methods or way-of-life as 'not a diet', but they are really the same thing despite the re-branding.

I also believe diets don't work, at least not alone. It is true, however, that if you did manage to stick to a diet you would lose weight. If a diet restricts your calorie intake so much it creates a calorie deficit, then you would burn your stored fat to make up for it. You would lose weight. So why don't they work then, if, in theory their premise is so simple?

They don't work because they're often hard to stick to as they require you to eat foods that you are unused to, and to eat in new ways that don't fit your lifestyle. Or they specify that you eat foods that mean you lack energy and vibrancy,

or they lock you into paying weekly to stay on track, or they make you crave the things you're not allowed to eat. They also fail because they focus purely on food, rather than on you.

They entirely fail to help you understand why you've put weight on in the first place, or to help you find the self-love you'll need to lose the weight.

To lose weight IS A BIG DEAL. Mechanically, it takes a calorie deficit, (eating fewer calories than you need) but to be able to lose weight, to keep it off and to achieve a healthy lifestyle for good, you need a bigger shift. Of course, you have to get the calorie deficit mechanic right, but you also need to have the right emotional environment.

My method focuses on those two key components - achieving the calorie deficit (the mechanics) AND creating the right emotional state. In fact, the emotional state must come first so that the calorie deficit bit becomes easy.

Right now, let's focus on diets, and why diets alone don't work, then we'll deal with how to create a positive emotional state that'll ensure you're capable of anything later. Before we can build the right emotional state, it's important to understand why a diet alone isn't going to help you and why you absolutely need more than they have to offer. My issues with diets are varied and numerous, but I've tried to keep it short and simple with regards to their shortcomings. It is important to say that some of these diets

do work for some people, but for most of us we need something more. Below is a list of various diets, and why they don't work for me. I should know – I've tried them all!

Single Food Diets

Diets like the Cabbage Soup Diet, that only allow you to eat one or a few types of foods will leave you craving everything else. They might reduce your calorie intake for a few days, but in the long run, they are completely unsustainable. I might be able to eat cabbage soup for a couple of days (and I actually like cabbage) but no longer than that, surely!

Location Based Diets

Diets that follow the cuisine of other places like The Mediterranean Diet are ooh so appealing but completely unrealistic. I live in rainy, soggy England. It is literally pelting down as I write, and I know that the tomatoes we planted a few months ago never made it into anything resembling a Spanish tomato; suffice to say they never made it onto a plate. Adopting a Mediterranean diet, or another diet from a faraway land doesn't work because we don't necessarily have access to the right foods, and more importantly, our climate means we'll want different foods. What happens in winter when we need something warming but the diet says it's tomato salad again?

Shakes

Drinking your food in a shake or smoothie is not the same as eating. And it will make you feel as if you are seriously unwell because you can't eat normal meals like everyone else. Other than using the odd protein shake as a snack to help you build muscle whilst losing fat, I am not a fan of drinking my dinner.

Points Systems

Diets that use their own food classification system are likely to be horribly confusing and are more about constructing something you need pay for, than about giving you any real nutritional benefit. I tried one of these points based diets relatively recently. I know it works wonderfully for some, but personally, I found counting points was confusing and unsustainable. Slim people don't go around counting the points in food!

Sinful Diets

Diets that treat some foods as naughty have never worked for me either. I am not a fan of instilling the idea that some foods are bad, but that you can eat bad food anyway. Surely if it's that bad, you shouldn't eat it. Or maybe it's not bad? To my mind, eating a chocolate bar is a silly thing to do if you want to lose weight because it will give you a rush of sugar, which, when it's subsided will simply have you craving more sugar. It is true that it is possible to lose weight through a calorie restricted diet that includes chocolate, chips and so on, but in my opinion it's harder to

lose weight while eating those foods. Eating those foods makes you want more of them; it's addictive, whereas eating healthy food is not addictive, it's just nourishing. Oh, and by the way, I absolutely do eat chocolate occasionally, but I don't rate diets that use the fact that you can still eat junk as a selling point.

Other people's meal plans

Diets that give you meal plans expecting you will follow what other people have specified as a balanced diet each day are likely to fail because, well, eating is personal. We all know what we like and we all like different things. Sticking to what someone else tells you to eat sounds like being in prison. It's not sustainable; at some point you'll have to decide for yourself what to eat. What then?

Hard work diets

Diets that expect you to do all the work in the kitchen don't really work in real life. I like to cook, and I like to eat healthy, delicious food, but I don't want to have to follow elaborate recipes three times a day. We need losing weight to be as easy as it possibly can be. I once subscribed to a food & recipe box that sent me a food parcel to cook three times a week. Whilst I liked the cooking bit at first, I don't have 30 to 60 minutes spare every dinner time and so after the initial excitement wore off, I went back to my old ways of needing speedier eats.

Diet drinks

Many of my overweight friends drink copious amounts of diet drinks. I was totally addicted to a popular brand of diet cola, but I gave it up as part of my weight loss plan. I believe (although I have no scientific evidence to back this up) that the bubbles bloated me, making me feel full, then I'd feel hungry afterwards. If you are trying to lose weight, the best drink you can drink is water, plain and simple.

Diet Pills

I hate to admit it, but I've also tried these. I am really not proud of this, but I was looking for a quick fix, and I'm afraid there isn't one. Nope, sorry, taking pills just makes you feel bloated. And miserable. And a bit sick. And a bit silly.

Restrictive Diets

Restrictive diets make you want the thing that's restricted (the thing you can't have) so you'll crave it even more, become completely miserable, and probably fall off the diet quite quickly. Controversially, as I love the idea behind keto that fat is not bad but carbs are, I simply couldn't do it. I found keto so hard as it restricted practically all carbs and whilst I don't eat many carbs, I wanted and perhaps needed a few. For me, it was too restrictive, and the 'eat as much fat as you want' rule meant I ate way too many sausages and

ended up putting on weight as I couldn't get into ketosis (fat burning).

It's likely I was doing something 'wrong', but after the initial dramatic water loss, which had me running to the loo every 30 minutes or so, I just felt lethargic and greasy. Any diet that makes you count your macros (I needed to eat less than 20g of carbs per day to get into ketosis) is pretty hard going in my opinion.

It is important however, to explore why these diets don't work; and it's different for different people. Some of it is circumstantial, like having time to prepare food, or having access to the right ingredients. What most of these diets have in common is that they restrict what you eat and restricting what you eat asks you to make a massive change to your life. Massive changes are hard to implement, out of the ordinary, and possibly out of your comfort zone. In addition to making a big change, they need you to do that out of the ordinary thing for a long period of time. This is unsustainable for most people.

Some of these diets ask you to not just eat different foods, but to count what you're eating, keeping track, and using a new-fangled points system that's at odds with how we live our lives. Sure, many of us enjoy tracking and can even cope with calorie counting, but if this becomes overly complicated it is easy to get lost and to give up.

Many diets don't work because they are too restrictive, too taxing, too unnatural, and not really focused on eating healthily, just on achieving weight loss, as a quick fix, for a fee. There's a lot more to dieting than weight loss though, by the way; what you eat can radically improve your mood and energy levels, your complexion and even your sex drive. Weight is only part of the picture.

A GOOD DIET

Now we've looked at what makes a diet bad, let's talk about what makes a good diet. There are some fundamental principles that make some weight loss approaches more effective. The Love Yourself & Lose Weight method is not about restricting certain foods (although some foods are way better for losing weight than others), but it is focused on how you eat, not necessarily on what you eat.

I will outline the basic tenets of the LYALW method:

Intuitive Eating

Like me, you were probably brought up to eat three times a day – breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It is a standard pattern that has evolved over the years and became established to fit around working patterns – and would have made complete sense during the Industrial Revolution when workers needed to eat big meals to sustain their energy. But how relevant is that to your life today? My guess would be, not much.

The Love Yourself and Lose Weight method is based on intuitive eating - whereby you eat when you're hungry, regardless of whether it neatly correlates with a mealtime. To lose weight and to maintain it, I eat five or six times per day, and I tend to have two breakfasts! Some days it seems like I am always eating but eating whenever I feel hungry

means I am always able to give my body just what it needs. I never overload it My experience of weight loss is that by spacing the same number of calories over more 'meals' I am keeping my body on an even keel; never too hungry and never too full. Various studies have been unable to draw a firm conclusion of the benefits of six meals versus three meals per day, but I think it's personal, so I would advise you to listen to your body and to eat as often as is right for you.

Eat when you're hungry

This sounds like a silly one, but many overweight people often fail to do this. By not eating when you are hungry, you are telling your body that when you do eat, it better store the energy as fat as you don't know when you'll be eating again. This is raw, animal instinct at work here. It's nature's way of trying to protect you. The best thing you can do is to train your body to use the energy it gets is to eat when you are hungry.

Have breakfast

I know lots of overweight people who don't have breakfast. When I was obese, I often skipped breakfast. Now I never do. Eating breakfast (at breakfast time) or shortly after waking, literally wakes up your metabolism. It tells your body to start processing the food, burning the energy, and to get going.

When you eat

Eating too much food late at night before bed means your body won't use up that energy and will instead store it as fat. A recent study that advocates front loading your day food-wise made newspaper headlines although it has been called into question by the NHS[3]. To me, this idea of eating more in the morning and lighter meals in the evening makes sense, certainly my own experience is that when I was eating no or light breakfasts and lunches then eating larger meals later plus snacks in the evening, I was much bigger.

Eating slowly

The speed at which you eat could be the difference between feeling satisfied after eating half of what's on your plate, and routinely wolfing the entire plate down as quickly as possible and asking for seconds. Eating slowly is an amazing weapon in our weight loss arsenal. If you did nothing else at all, eating slowly would help you to appreciate the food you eat, notice how much of it you're eating, feel the feeling of being full, and therefore help you to stop eating sooner, meaning you'll eat less food.

Eating pretty

Making food, even simple food look good can have a huge impact on how you feel about eating it. Meals that are sloppily thrown onto the plate are a turn-off, whereas food that is beautifully presented will make you appreciate your

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3 https://www.nhs.uk/news/food-and-diet/should-we-eat-breakfast-like-a-king-and-dinner-like-a-pauper/

meal more. We all respond to visual cues so make the effort to present your food beautifully so you can enjoy how it looks as well as how it tastes.

Eating with love

Eating and self-love can work in unison. Imagine if every time you ate you reminded yourself of how much you loved yourself, how worthwhile and beautiful you are, how you can lose weight and deserve to lose weight - imagine how quickly you'd improve how you feel about yourself. By remembering each time that you eat to love yourself, you're giving yourself the opportunity to practise self-love three, or five or six times a day, every day.

Moving your body

Diet and exercise work brilliantly together when losing weight. To exercise well you need the right fuel. Exercising can make you work up an appetite, so you can really enjoy and metabolise your food. Of course, exercising your butt off (literally) will undoubtedly help you to get into shape, but don't worry - this method does not require you to suddenly become a marathon runner or to swim the channel. The kind of exercise I advocate is gentle and enjoyable and at your own pace. It's all part of getting your body working for you, not against you.

Changing how you eat can produce some dramatic results. But before you can even contemplate making the changes

listed above, you must love yourself enough first. You have to love yourself enough to want to start something new, to even imagine that change is an option. Self-love makes that possible, it makes pretty much anything possible.

ALL THE LIES

Sometimes it's good to be angry, and I'm angry about all the utter lies we're continually sold about weight loss. We are fed these myths daily which makes it not only harder to lose weight but means that some of us will never even embark on a weight loss journey because we believe that losing weight is simply too difficult.

We've been told a whole load of nonsense, frankly, by the billion-dollar food industry, so we should be forgiven for believing some of the rubbish we've been bombarded with over the past few decades. I know I've fallen for a lot the lies and I am sure you've believed some of them too. Let's forgive ourselves for that; after all, the food giants have all the wealth in the world with which to brainwash us. We are, in many ways, defenceless against this mighty machine. The lies are outrageous but because they're told over and over again, we believe them. Well, now it's time to think for ourselves and to question some of the stuff we've come to believe as fact.

Let's look at some of the lies we have been told. I bet you believe some of them, while knowing deep down that they're not true at all.

Lie 1: Healthy food, which is harder and more expensive to produce, does not taste as good as unhealthy food. You

probably believe that you should like a certain food just because everyone else does. 'Everyone loves cake. You must love cake too.'

Lie 2: Unhealthy food, which is cheap to produce, tastes amazing. 'Pizza is to die for.' Well, it is but not in that way.

Lie 3: It's a treat to eat cheap food with little nutritional value. 'You deserve this decadent, indulgent, luxurious ice cream'. If you believe treating yourself well is to over-indulge on cheap sugar.

Lie 4: Some foods are so good you're addicted to them: 'Once you pop…'

Lie 5: Eating foods that contain fat will make you fat and low-fat foods are good for you.

Lie 6: There are quick fix diets and exercise regimes that will help you lose weight quickly.

Lie 7: It's easy, and perfectly possible for you to follow a diet and exercise-based weight loss regime and lose weight without first improving your mental state. So why are so many of us still struggling to do this?

Lie 8: It's hard to lose weight so what you need is a personal programme that tells you what to eat. It may be hard to lose weight but having someone telling you what to eat is more likely to make you miserable.

Lie 9: It's impossible to lose weight and keep it off.

Lie 10: Losing weight is simply down to diet and exercise.

Right, before we go on, I just want to examine Lie 9 and Lie 10 in a bit more detail. Firstly Lie 9: apparently, it's impossible to lose weight and keep it off – with research you read about everywhere suggesting that 95% of dieters regain everything they have lost within three years. Well it turns out this statistic should be treated with extreme scepticism. It turns out, this widely quoted statistic came from a study of 100 people in 1959. As The New York Times pointed out in 1999[4], we should treat this statistic very sceptically indeed.

I imagine that there is an unknown but rather depressing statistic about the rate of people who regain weight through restrictive dieting, but that it is the restrictive dieting that is the issue here. I lost weight and six years later, I am the same weight, give or take a few pounds. Yes, I had some minor wobbles, and yes, I've had to lose a little of the weight again but six years after losing 85 pounds, I have lost 85 pounds.

I believe it is possible to lose weight and keep it off AS LONG AS you don't lose weight through a restrictive diet

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4 https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/25/health/95-regain-lost-weight-or-do-they.html

alone. Weight loss requires consistent change, it is not a quick fix, and when you reach your target weight you can't simply stop what you were doing and return to a terrible way of treating yourself. By learning to love yourself, you are much more likely to the keep weight off - because if you love yourself, you're gonna be so excited about continuing to treat yourself well. By loving yourself, you will have dealt with the demons of self-sabotage, self-doubt, not feeling worthy and so on.

Now let's look at that false narrative (Lie 10) of weight loss being purely determined by diet and exercise. I will start by pointing out that both the diet and exercise industries are huge money-making machines. I guess what I am saying is that there is less money to be made from challenging how people think. But to me, the psychological part is the most important – by simply changing your mindset, you really can achieve anything.

The weight loss industry doesn't focus on self-love because it's harder to package, and harder to sell. If you previously believed that losing weight was just down to diet and exercise, I hope I am now managing to convince you that this simply isn't the case. Your mind has a huge impact on you achieving your target weight.

So, as you can see, we have all been continually fed a lot of misinformation, and to some extent we have believed it. And you might think that if you know you've been fed a

pack of lies you can now stop believing them, and undo those years of brainwashing and everything will be okay, right? Wrong!

Just as we have accepted the many false messages we have received over the years from the food industry, we have also been convinced by many of the stories we have told ourselves. Let's be honest here – we do tell ourselves stories. And sometimes the stories we tell ourselves are a complete load of bull. Oh yes, they are! Some of them are out and out lies.

Here are some of the lies I have told myself – all of them echoed by unconscious messages I had absorbed from the food industry:

- I love chocolate.
- Burgers are delicious.
- It's okay that I am addicted to chocolate because everyone is - all women are. It's normal to buy multipacks of Dairy Milk or Snickers chocolate bars, to hide them from my family, then eat them in secret, because that's what women do.
- I love food way too much to lose weight.

Then there are the lies I have told myself about exercise (I hated PE at school):

- I am not the right shape for running.

- I hate moving my body.
- I loathe all forms of exercise.

Next, there are the lies I told myself to make me feel less useless about failing to tackle my weight problem:

- Losing weight is hard.
- I need willpower and I don't have it.
- I would have to give up alcohol and my social life is too important to me.
- I'll never be thin.
- My body is naturally curvaceous.

And finally, there are the lies I told myself to pretend I was okay:

- I am healthy because I eat some healthy food.
- I'm not that big.
- I don't want to be thin.
- I don't care that I'm fat.
- I am fine.

Well, guess what? I was not fine. I was miserable. I binge drank to numb the pain of being fat, then binge ate to numb the pain of binge drinking. A lot of binging, a lot of bullshit, a lot of numbing, a lot of pain. And absolutely no self-love.

THE WEIGHT GAIN PROBLEM RECAP

So, I hope we have established in this chapter that people who put on weight aren't stupid, that we all understand the concept of calories in and calories out, and that of course it's possible to lose weight simply by eating less food.

I hope you have also understood that diets alone won't work as people put on weight for a reason. If the reason you've put on weight is because you found yourself lacking self-love, then this is something you need to acquire if you ever want to actively decide to lose weight and keep it off.

nds in the run up to, and during the first two days of my period, then drop three or even four pounds a day after.

If you get weighed every day, you'll see all this fluctuation. If you're someone who just really wants to know, that's fine, but many of us get put off if we go 'up'. However, it is important to point out that putting on weight does not necessarily mean you have got fatter, but so many people don't realise this. Sure, you might weigh more, but your fat percentage might be down, and your water percentage might be up. Some scales measure all these different changes - but even then, a number that isn't less than the last number can be disheartening.

It isn't essential that you splash out on sophisticated scales that can measure your water and fat content. If you are eating well and exercising, after the first few days when you will lose water, you are guaranteed to start losing fat too.

If you space out your weigh-ins to weekly, you're more likely to drop progressively; each week the scales are more likely to tell you that you weigh less than the last, and you'll feel nothing but positivity. Don't leave it too long though between weigh-ins because they will keep you on track, so you feel accountable.

I am still on the fence, really, when it comes to whether to weigh yourself every day. I used to weigh myself every single day and felt that it helped to remind me of the task ahead. If I had gone up, or not gone down for a while I might be prompted to be more conscious about what I was eating, or to move a little more. For me it was a motivator. Now I weigh myself about once a week, as I prefer the better news I get weekly than the occasionally rather confused news I used to get each morning.

It's up to you, if you're the kind of person who gets really disappointed to the point of giving up, if you go Sharing the love

As you get into your stride with this and see the pounds dropping off there will be huge cause for celebration. What a great feeling that is! Loving your achievements can be

done alone, but it can be done with others too. You might feel that the world isn't ready for your weight loss success, or that you aren't ready to share with your loved ones what you have decided to do in case they're not supportive. Those closest to us aren't always the best people to share this stuff with for lots of reasons, so it's totally okay if you don't want to share it with them. It's also okay if you want to wait a while to start sharing, to make sure you're on track and that this isn't some fad diet or quick fix. (It isn't!)

Lots of people turn to social media to share their story as it's not only a great way to help you celebrate, as others will celebrate with you, but it's also an effective means of holding yourself accountable. If you post that you're going to walk 10,000 steps to all your friends on Facebook, then you'd better well walk 10,000 steps. If you post pictures of your dinner on Instagram with the hashtag #eatbeautifully #consciouseating and #loveyourselfandloseweight you're less likely to wolf down the dinner, then eat a double helping of choc-chip ice cream for pudding.

Sharing your story on social media isn't for everyone, and you need to find the channel that works for you. For me, whilst Facebook is for staying in touch with friends on more general topics, Instagram is a lively, supportive community of people interested in self-love and weight loss - and a perfect space to share my self-love journey. If you do take to Instagram, there'll be others there too, and it's a great way to find out what they're up to and to support and learn from each other.

LOVE YOURSELF & LOSE WEIGHT RECAP

I hope you've enjoyed learning about how to love yourself. It still seems silly that we need to learn to love ourselves, but sadly, many of us do. But once we do, anything is possible; we become superhuman versions of ourselves, capable of great things.

In this section we've covered the fundamentals of the LYALW method, of settling in for the journey and considering this to be a process: a journey and not an event. It's vital to have a sense of realism, to abandon perfectionism and to accept and love yourself, celebrating all your wonderful achievements.

For me, building self love has meant I'm able to share my story with others, to help others to love themselves. Will you share your story too?

Read More

If you enjoyed reading the first few chapters of Love Yourself & Lose Weight: The Success Story of Self Love please head over to your favourite online book store and buy the rest of the book.

It is available on Amazon and on Apple Books as an eBook and on Amazon and other stores in Paperback and Hardback formats.

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