

Module 2 Lesson 5

Transcript

I think one of the biggest worries people have when they gain weight is that they'll never ever be able to lose it, and even if they do lose it, they fear it will be impossible to keep the weight off. And if they keep the weight off, it's going to be a life doomed to eating lettuce leaves and never indulging in another donut for the rest of their lives. This lesson is a positivity rant on information on obesity and weight loss. We're going to discuss key factors in helping obese clients lose weight, the role of genetics, behavior and environment in weight management, and the importance of finding and sustaining positive motivation in your clients. You have a big job to do here, but it's an amazing job. We start today with a favorite client of mine. I told Cecilia, a 60 year old empty nester who presented to me at 5'11" and 270 pounds, that she was not doomed to a life of being heavy.

She told me she was not ever going to be a thin person. I told her she was hot stuff and I was actually glad she was worried about her high triglycerides and low HDL because they motivated her to come in and take serious control of her weight and wellness. I assured her we were going to find a much healthier version of herself and she would feel confident and great in that new body. Cecilia told me she had gone to culinary school. She would not be giving up her prime rib or her pastry. She was so resistant. Again, I know you've worked with people like this. She was doubting. She was skeptical. I mean, she had been on every single diet out there. Seriously, I think every single one. She had read every book. She walked for an hour a day already. She balked at my questions about sleep and stress like I was cray cray.

Cecilia was one tough cookie, but she was already doing some really good work, so I knew we could build on that good work. I had to meet her where she was at. To her credit, Cecilia kept a beautiful food journal. She wanted a pat on the back for every bite of cheese she didn't need and she wanted a hug for every healthful choice she made. She was really proud of those moments. It was kind of exhausting and it took almost a year of her insisting on trying new things, and at one point I got an email from Cecilia that she'd watched a documentary and started reading Michael Pollan. She was converting to vegan. Long story short, it has been three years, Cecilia lost over a 100 pounds. I get a holiday card once a year and an email, text or call or something on her year anniversary of the weight loss. They are some of the brightest professional moments I have each year, so fulfilling.

A quick second of science here. You learn in biochem that fat cells split when they get over full. You never lose fat cells and they are eager little that like to be half-full at all times. There are hormones involved and chemical reactions in play. The science is really fascinating, but the truth is what we're after in these lessons. So I'm going to tell you that the keys to maintaining weight loss are

not a universal prescription. Honestly, I don't need to tell you that all diets work in the short term. By and large, they all are impossible to maintain, which is why people fail at weight loss. I'm sure you've heard me talk about this and others talk about this, too, before you've probably talked about it. We know most people regain and usually gain more weight back. Then they blame their yo-yo or dieting cycle, and it truly does get harder to lose each and every time. Still, it's possible to lose weight and maintain weight loss. That's why we're here.

Chemically, physiologically, biologically, behaviorally, and in every way, I want to make it clear that it is possible to be a formerly obese person. Meaning, you can be obese and then change your trajectory and lose weight. You can do it. You may not be able to go from being morbidly obese to a BMI of 20, not all of us are genetically built to do that, but you can lose weight and keep it off. Genetics play a huge role. If you have one obese parent, your risk of obesity is 50%, both obese parents and your risk of obesity jumps to 80%. that means that behaviors, I love talking about behaviors, and environment, which I also love talking about, are key and essential to weight management. So for those of you who are freaked out by statistics, just remember to focus on those two things.

So, how do obese people lose weight? It's not so different from the rest of us who want to shed just a few pounds. First, I always recommend hanging out on the NWCR website. It stands for the National Weight Control Registry. I know it doesn't sound like that fun of a place to hang out, but there's lots of good info there and it looks at common things people do who have lost significant weight and kept it off. It can be a motivating resource and some clients may really connect with some of the content on that site, actually. So it's not just for you. It may be a place that you want to recommend clients even check out.

During your intake, make a list of behaviors or client is practicing. Maybe they skip breakfast, maybe they overdo the coffee. Hitting the snooze alarm is another good one that people do. Figure out with them which behavior is going to be the easiest to change first. Always start with the easy stuff. Build on that. When you slowly change behavior and shoot for focusing on positive behaviors, that's going to equal a positive wellness change. The half a pound to two pound loss a week is really a side effect. It's about building on these healthy habits and behaviors so you don't even notice the weight loss, or maybe you notice it in a positive way but it's really, again, a side effect.

I say this but you know as well as I do that some people just have to work more and work harder to do this. Some are more genetically lucky than others. This isn't a fair process, friends. I mean, we know. We just have to look around our friend group and our families, and we know that

some people have it easier than others when it comes to weight loss and maintaining a healthy weight.

Weight loss is going to stick if you speak to what motivates your client. This is super important. Cecilia was petrified of being sick. One or two labs out of whack and she told the line like a champ. Other clients may not care about their labs, but they have other goals. Speak to those goals in every exchange you have. "You're going to look great in your shorts on vacation," and, "You are doing everything you can to get pregnant. It's amazing to witness" are so much more success inspiring than hyper-focusing over the fries and cake they had on Tuesday. Make the voice you use one of permanence. Your client is not doing this your way for a while, rather have your clients see himself or herself as someone who always goes to bed at 10, never misses an hour long walk with their dog, drinks one cup of coffee a day and one extra large glass of water with each meal or snack, would say to themselves, "I am someone who eats salad for lunch. I do best when I meditate for 10 minutes, also, a day."

In short, meet your obese client where they are at. Speak to their individual motivation. I cannot emphasize that enough. Start with the easiest things to change and build from there. Be positive and build acceptance, that healthier choices or a new way of life. You are their cheerleader, it's another role we all play, and their coach, not their food police.

Here are the key points from this lesson I want to review quickly. Genetics do play a role in determining someone's body size, but it's possible to help obese clients lose weight through behavior and environment changes. Assess the client's daily behaviors and pick the easiest behaviors to change first. Build on that. Find out what truly motivates a client and use this motivation to keep a client on track and even excited. Work with your client to develop a new permanent way of life. This isn't a quick fix, friends. In a future lesson we'll focus more on those environmental factors that can contribute to obesity. I will see you in the next lesson.