

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU!

This year has undoubtedly been one of the most interesting of your life! Maybe you have been preparing for weight loss surgery and your date is just around the corner. Perhaps this is the year you had your procedure and you are in the process of losing weight, feeling better than you have in years! Maybe you have kept your weight off for a year or two years or many years already and continue to celebrate life at a healthy weight. Perhaps you have gained some weight back and are ready to get back on track and lose it for the final time!

Wherever you are in your weight loss journey, I am thrilled that you are signed up for Tips for Keeping It Off.

Coming in 2010:

- you will receive Tips on a more consistent basis
- they will also be posted on YouTube so you can watch them there
- I will hold contests in the following year where you submit YOUR best tips; if your tip is selected as a Tip for Keeping It Off, you will receive a free gift!
- if you get friends to sign up for Tips I will send you a gift...
- stay tuned for details in the New Year!
- *Also – your feedback is welcome and encouraged. It will be a pleasure to share your stories about how Tips are helping you in your daily life!*

So off we go to 2010! Your gift from me this holiday season is a copy of all of the Tips I shared in 2009. Please print them out, save them on your computer, share them with your friends, and USE THEM in your daily life as you continue to make healthy choices in your life.

My wish for you in the New Year is that you focus on the many blessings in your life while cherishing the gift of your improved health as a result of your weight loss surgery. Maintain an attitude of gratitude and life will be easier, regardless of what is happening at the moment.

“Give Thanks, oh Thou who has given us so much. Mercifully grant us one more thing – a grateful heart.” George Herbert

All the best to you and your loved ones.

Connie Stapleton, Ph.D.

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The following Tips for Keeping It Off were written at various times during 2009.

1/19/09

A VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TIP FOR YOU!

I was working on my book last night and it dawned on me that I wish I had shared the following TIP with the support group when I spoke last week. It's a good one and can help tremendously if you take the time to use it!

Here goes: We often eat when what we want or need at the time has nothing to do with food. Many times we have an emotional need that we try to fill with food. In order to avoid engaging in negative eating behaviors when what you need is an "emotional fix", use this TOOLBOX TIP to help!

Any time you find yourself in a "bad eating situation"... or, if you're fortunate and catch yourself before you engage in a "bad eating situation" (which I am defining as any bad habit or eating behavior that is not good for you – especially if you have had weight loss surgery). Examples of a "bad eating situation" could be:

- * eating ice cream – or any of your favorite foods (from the carton or from a bowl that has TOO MUCH FOOD IN IT) and you feel like you cannot stop
- * eating the same unhealthy foods as you did before you had surgery (Remember: "IF IT'S WHITE, DON'T BITE"... meaning it's not in your best interest to eat things like mashed potatoes, grits, white rice, cake, cookies, etc.)
- * eating fried foods
- * eating junk food
- * "grazing"
- * being in the grocery store and piling things into your cart that you know are not good for you
- * going to a fast food restaurant – and ordering unhealthy food (which most of it is there)...

BEFORE you overeat or eat the wrong things (if it's not already too late)... and if it is already too late and the damage has been done, then AS SOON AFTERWARD AS POSSIBLE, ask yourself the following question(s):

"WHAT DO I NEED EMOTIONALLY RIGHT NOW?" or... if you have already engaged in unhealthy eating behavior, ask yourself:

"WHAT WAS I NEEDING EMOTIONALLY WHEN I ATE THAT?"

To figure this out, you may need to ask yourself some questions:

- 1) What is going on that I feel like I want to eat this unhealthy food? OR...
What was going on at the time or during the day before I ate that food?
- 2) What am I thinking right now? What is it related to? OR...
What was I thinking about before I ate that unhealthy food?
- 3) How am I feeling right now? OR...
How was I feeling before I ate that unhealthy food?
- 4) WHAT IS MY EMOTIONAL NEED RIGHT NOW? OR...
WHAT WAY MY EMOTIONAL NEED BEFORE I ATE THAT?
- 5) HOW CAN I GET THAT EMOTIONAL NEED MET IN A HEALTHY WAY? OR...
WHAT COULD I HAVE DONE TO GET THAT EMOTIONAL NEED MET IN A HEALTHY WAY?

For example, let's say you find yourself with a gallon of ice cream in one hand and a spoon in the next, ready to go at it! (Or, suppose you already finished off the ice cream and are now wondering how it happened that you ate all of it)... Here's how the conversation in your head might go if you were to use this Toolbox Tip:

- 1) What is going on that I feel like I want to eat this unhealthy food?

Possible answers:

- * Work was horrible today. I couldn't wait to get out of there.
- * My husband/wife is in such a horrible mood and is taking it out on me.
- * My mother is coming to my house this weekend and that stresses me out.
- * I saw an old flame in the store and I hate that he/she saw me looking like this.

- 2) What am I thinking right now? What is it related to?

Possible answers:

- * I'm thinking that I hate my job sometimes! The boss expects me to meet deadlines in an impossible timeframe.
- * I'm thinking that I hate it when my spouse is in a bad mood because I'm afraid he/she will yell at me.
- * I'm thinking that when my mother visits, she always finds things about the

house to criticize.

* I'm thinking that my old flame still looks great and I look like sh*#&@#~!

3) How am I feeling right now?

Possible answers:

- * I'm feeling frustrated and irritable.
- * I'm feeling scared and concerned.
- * I'm feeling anxious.
- * I'm feeling disgusted.

4) What is my emotional need right now?

Possible answers:

- * I need to let off some steam about my boss asking me about this deadline again.
- * I need to remember that my husband/wife being in a bad mood is because he/she ran out of gas and not about me or anything I did.
- * I need to remember that this is my house and I like it that way I have it.
- * I need reassurance that I am loveable and desirable.

5) How can I get this emotional need met in a healthy way (rather than eating this gallon of ice cream and then hating myself?)

Possible answers:

- * I could call my friend Sally and talk with her about my frustration; I could get on my exercise bike and holler about my frustration at work while I ride; I could journal about my feelings.
- * I can tell my spouse that I understand being upset because he/she ran out of gas but that I would appreciate him/her not taking it out on me; I can remind myself over and over that his/her bad mood is not my fault and I choose not to punish myself by eating too much.
- * I can call my mother before she comes and tell her I would appreciate her keeping her thoughts about my decorating to herself; I could tell her that it hurts my feelings when she criticizes and I would appreciate her stopping that behavior; I could ask her not to visit.
- * I can call my spouse and tell them I need a reminder that I am lovable just the way I am; I can make a list of ten things I like about myself; I can write a paragraph about why anyone would be blessed to have me in their life.

The idea here is that eating poorly is often a way of dealing with an unmet emotional need. By uncovering what the emotional need is, you can make a healthier choice about how to get the need met without turning to food!

USE THIS TIP THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY!

PASS IT ON!

Please share these TIPS and my website address with people you know outside of our area so they, too, can benefit from the VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TIPS! Just have them email me at cstapletonphd@mindbodyhealthservices.com and I will happily add them to the list!

Gratefully,

My Health. My Responsibility. This Day. Every Day.

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1/26/09

A VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TIP...

"THINK IT THROUGH"

When you are tempted to engage in one of those behaviors you know you really "shouldn't"... such as eat greasy fast food, have ice cream, overload on sugar, eat white rice/pasta/grits/other 'worthless' food, etc... THINK IT THROUGH.

For example, let's say you are on your way home when you pass the place you used to get your favorite milk shakes from. You have an urge, a craving, a STRONG desire to have a thick, creamy milk shake. THINK IT THROUGH!!! This means to have a conversation with yourself that goes something like this:

- Okay. I really want that milk shake.
- If I DO have that milk shake, I'm gonna be upset with myself.
- But I've been so good for such a long time. I would love to have even just a little bit of the milk shake. I wouldn't have to eat it all.
- Wait. I need to THINK IT THROUGH...
- If I have the milk shake, I'm going to be really disappointed in myself.
- If I'm really disappointed in myself, I'm likely to punish myself or others.
- That means I'll be in a bad mood by the time I get home.
- If I'm in a bad mood when I get home, I'll be short with my spouse and kids.

- If I'm crabby to them, they'll have a bad evening.
- If I'm crabby to them, I'll also have bad evening. I'll feel guilty and sad and angry and upset.
- Then I'll go to bed mad...
- which means I'll wake up in a bad mood, which is a lousy way to start a day.
- I've THOUGHT IT THROUGH and having that milk shake is NOT WORTH all of that misery.
- PLUS... if I go home and have some string cheese:
 - I'll increase my amount of protein for the day...
 - I won't be hungry until dinner time...
 - I'll be proud of myself for the choice I made...
 - I'll be in a good mood...
 - I'll be more pleasant to be around...
 - I'll treat my spouse and kids better...
 - We're all likely to have a better evening...
 - I'll go to bed happy with myself...
 - And I'll wake up happier, which is a great way to start a new day!

THINK THROUGH what will happen in any scenario! This gives you time to consider the consequences of your behavior so that you can make a more conscious (and hopefully, healthy) CHOICE about what you want to do.

THINK IT THROUGH!

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A VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TIP!

PROTEIN PROTEIN PROTEIN!

You hear all the time that you need to eat lots and lots and lots of protein after having weight loss surgery... up to 60 grams a day!

Here is a list of high protein foods! Now, when you're "stumped", check out this list and get creative with these foods!

FOOD

Quantity

PROTEIN grams

Egg	1 medium	6	
Milk (skim)	1 cup	8	
Soy milk	1 cup	6 - 10	
Cottage Cheese (2%)	½ cup		16
Cheddar Cheese	1 ounce	7	
Mozzarella, part skim	1 ounce	8	
Ricotta cheese, part skim	½ cup		10
Yogurt, low-fat plain	1 cup	12	
Roast chicken	4 ounces	31	
Ground beef, extra lean	4 ounces	33	
Sirloin steak, choice cut, trimmed	4 ounces	35	
Tuna, canned in water	4 ounces	33	
Most fish fillets	3.5 ounces	22	
Turkey breast, roasted no skin	4 ounces	24	
Roast beef	3.5 ounces	28	
Pork loin or tenderloin	4 ounces	29	
Bacon	1 slice	3	
Ham	3.5 ounces	18	
Oatmeal	1 cup cooked	6	
Rice, brown	1 cup cooked	5	
Spaghetti	1 cup cooked	6	
Whole wheat bread	2 slices	6	
Almonds	1 ounce	6	

Cashews, dry roasted	1 ounce	4
Peanuts	¼ cup	9
Pecans	¼ cup	2.5
Sunflower seeds	¼ cup	6
Flax seeds	¼ cup	8
Lentils	½ cup cooked	8
Lima beans	½ cup cooked	8
Peanut butter	2 Tbsp	10
Red kidney beans	½ cup canned	8
Soybeans	½ cup cooked	10
Tofu	4 ounces	9

PROTEIN BARS

Special K Protein Bars	10
Zone Perfect Bars	12 - 16
Pure Protein	30
U Turn Bars	30
Methoxy-Pro Bars	30
Nitro-tech Bar	35
Met-rx Bars	27
Myoplex Deluxe Bars	24
ISS Research Pro42	42
Universal Hi Protein Bar	34

Detour Lean Muscle Bars	32
Worldwide Pure Protein Bars	32
Chef Jay's Protein Puffs	18
Trioplex Duo bars	24

SOURCES:

New-fitness.com
Weightlossforall.com
Bodybuildingforyou.com
Bodybuilding.com
Specialk.com
Topsupplementsonline.com
Lowcarbdietsabout.com

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A VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TIP!

Talk to Your Food

Talk to my food? WHAT?! Yes – out loud or inside your head. It doesn't matter. Just talk to it. WHY? There are several reasons to talk to your food:

- 1) Talking to your food helps you to slow down when you eat. Eating slowing is vitally important after you have weight loss surgery. You know what happens when you eat too quickly....
- 2) Talking to your food increases your awareness of what you eat. When you talk to your friends, it's nice to refer to them by name. When you talk to your food, do the same... as in, "Well, Baked Chicken. It's nice to see you. When I see you I am reminded that I am getting a lot of protein. It's really important that I get a lot of protein and by golly – you're full of that! I'm proud of myself for making such a healthy food choice by eating baked chicken."

3) Talking to your food can prevent you from making bad food choices. If you find yourself stuffing a cupcake into your mouth, the talk with your food might go like this, "Uh oh, cupcake. What am I doing? You're not good for me. It's lucky we're having this chat because now that I realize what I just did by taking a bite of you, I can make the choice about what to do next. If I eat more of you, I will probably feel physically ill and I don't want to do that to myself. And if I eat you, I will be upset and angry with myself. I know where that will lead... to being crabby and mean to my family. I am choosing not to do that to myself or to them, either. Therefore, bye bye cupcake. Down the toilet you go... the garbage isn't good enough."

4) Talking to your food helps you laugh at yourself... laughter IS great medicine! "Seriously, I'm talking to a hard boiled egg white. This is crazy! Hey, Mr. Egg White... did you know you look like a bald baby? So, Mr. Egg White... I'm eating you so I don't look like Humpty Dumpty, no doubt a friend of yours...". Laugh at yourself! Laughter helps your body produce chemicals that literally make you feel better. So be silly when you talk to your food – it will help in ways you didn't even suspect!

Be sure to fill your Toolbox and use these Tips throughout your day and night - one day at a time!

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A VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TIP!

Let's Make A Deal....

Some of you are old enough to remember the once-popular television game show, Let's Make A Deal with Monty Hall... people would dress up all crazy in the audience and Monty would offer them a fistful of cash OR what was behind Door Number One... about half the time the "prize" behind Door Number Whatever would be a goat or some chickens... other times, however, it would be a washer and dryer or a new car! Either way, there was always a trade-off! Sometimes it was a good trade – sometimes not so good.

It's time for you to play LET'S MAKE A DEAL with food!

Here's how it goes...

Let's say you simply can't stand that the entire office staff is having birthday cake. You KNOW that birthday cake has NO nutritional value whatsoever and therefore has no business going into your mouth if you want to lose that extra weight and keep it off (which, of course, you do). According to The Daily Plate (thedailyplate.com), one piece of birthday cake has 310 calories (140 calories from fat; 16 grams of total fat; 41 grams of carbohydrates and a whopping 2 grams of protein). This is NOT a good food choice for a post-surgical weight loss patient... So here's the DEAL...

IF you simply MUST have a piece of birthday cake, do so ONLY IF YOU ARE WILLING TO MAKE A DEAL WITH YOURSELF – and carry it out!

According to sparkpeople.com, it takes a person weighing 180 pounds, walking a 20-minute mile 70 MINUTES TO BURN 301 CALORIES.

THE DEAL: “If I choose to eat 300 calories of non-nutritious food, then the DEAL is, I walk the 70 minutes on the treadmill to counteract those 300 calories”.

THE DECISION: If you're not willing to do what it takes to burn the worthless, non-nutritious, full-of-fat calories, choose not to eat them!

KEEP “THE DEAL” IN MIND AS YOU GO THROUGH YOUR DAY AND MAKE FOOD CHOICES!

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Eat It – Wear It... LITERALLY

I have a challenge for you! Or a DARE, if you prefer...

You know how people sometimes joke that if they eat something it goes “straight to my hips”... or “straight to my hiney”... “or it sticks to my gut”...? Have you said something like that when you’ve eaten a Snickers or some French Fries or when you’ve had large chocolate Frosty?

Next time you eat something that is NOT something you need to be eating after having weight loss surgery – do this:

TAKE THE WRAPPER AND TAPE IT TO YOUR THIGHS OR YOUR REAR END OR YOUR TUMMY AND WEAR IT AS A REMINDER OF WHERE JUNK FOOD ENDS UP ON YOUR BODY!

If anybody asks... tell ‘em it’s none of their &#^@* business... ☺

If you’re gonna eat it... You ARE gonna wear it, so you may as well advertise it!

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If life gives you lemons... FOR GOD’S SAKE, IF YOU’RE A BARIATRIC PATIENT, GRAB THEM AND USE THEM!!!!

Are you aware of the wonderful soothing effects lemons can have on your digestive track? Isn’t it true that after weight loss surgery there are all sorts of “interesting” noises, gases, mini-eruptions, not-so-mini-eruptions, heartburns, and “other” often-less-than-pleasant activities taking place throughout the digestive system? (I KNOW you know what I’m referring to...)

So check this out! In an article called The Amazing Health Benefits of Drinking Lemon Water by Ann Heustad, R.N. reports, “Due to the digestive qualities of lemon juice, symptoms of indigestion such as heartburn, bloating and belching are relieved. By drinking lemon juice regularly, the bowels are aided in eliminating waste more efficiently thus controlling constipation and diarrhea.”

“Lemon Remedies” Published by Jethro Kloss in a book titled Back to Eden notes several other health benefits of lemons, including:

* For sore throat, dilute lemon juice with water and gargle frequently. Dilute one-

half lemon juice with one-half water. It is even better to use straight lemon juice.

- * A slice of lemon bound over a corn overnight will greatly relieve the pain.
- * To relieve asthma, take a tablespoon of lemon juice one hour before each meal.
- * For liver complaints, the juice of the lemon should be taken in a glass of hot water one hour before breakfast every morning.
- * A teaspoon of lemon juice in half a glass of water relieves heartburn.
- * For rheumatism, one or two ounces of lemon juice diluted in water should be taken three times a day: one hour before meals and at bedtime.

The Vitamin C in lemons is also impressive! Teresa Cheong reported on the Healing Properties of Lemons on www.RightEatingHabits.com:

“A large lemon contains about 45 mg of Vitamin C, a whopping 75% of the daily requirement! We need Vitamin C to fend off colds and heal cuts and wounds... **Limonin and Limonene:** Lemons contain two compounds - **limonin** and **limonene** - which appear to help inhibit some of the cell divisions that may cause cancer. Limonene is found in the zest or outermost part of the rind of a lemon. This is the yellow part of the lemon which we often discard after extracting the lemon juice. The limonene found in the lemon peel or lemon zest has the effect of increasing the level of enzymes in the liver that may remove cancer-causing chemicals. The limonene has also been shown to remove estradiol, a hormone linked to breast cancer.”

www.whfoods.com suggests some tips for how to cook with lemon:

- Place thinly sliced lemons, peel and all, underneath and around fish before cooking. Baking or broiling will soften the slices so that they can be eaten along with the fish.
- Combine lemon juice with olive or flax oil, freshly crushed garlic and pepper to make a light and refreshing salad dressing.
- If you are watching your salt intake (and even if you are not), serve lemon wedges with meals as their tartness makes a great salt substitute.

And, of course, squeeze some fresh lemon juice into your drinking water. And we KNOW you are drinking lots and lots of water throughout the day (except at and near meal time)!

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CHOOSE A LIFELINE – Part One

You've probably watched the show Who Wants to be a Millionaire on television. I wish I had a way for you to win a million dollars, but I don't. However, this Toolbox Tip comes from the LIFELINE aspect of the game show.

I did a Google search for "Who Wants to be a Millionaire lifeline" and got the information included in this Tip about the "lifelines" from the following source (just to ensure I am not plagiarizing):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Who_Wants_to_Be_a_Millionaire%3F

Most of us want to be on a game show (did you know I was on The Price Is Right? I was even in the Showcase Showdown... I lost, but the experience was fun and had what I think of as a "higher purpose)." It occurred to me that while the majority of people will never have the opportunity to be on a televised game show, many of us use sayings from them in our daily lives from time to time. For example, we may imitate the late Rod Roddy and say, "COME ON DOWN" now and then. Most of us have been involved in a conversation where you have asked or been asked, "Is that your final answer?"

Based on the fact that game show lingo is well-known in our culture, I thought perhaps you could use the concept of the "lifeline" in your daily life as you make decisions about your food choices, your exercise behaviors, and your overall health issues.

As you know, "lifelines" are used on Who Wants to be a Millionaire if a player is uncertain about the answer to a question. He or she can CHOOSE, at that time, to use one or more of their "lifelines" to get help answering the question. After the contestant has gotten input from their "lifeline" they can either CHOOSE to answer the question based on the information provided by their "lifeline," use another "lifeline source," or answer the question the way they want independent of the input from the "lifeline" source.

For example, one of the "lifelines" is the Fifty-Fifty. If a contestant chooses to use the Fifty-Fifty, he or she asks the host to have the computer randomly eliminate two of the incorrect answer choices, leaving the contestant with a choice between the correct answer and one incorrect one.

Let's apply this to food choices. The reality is, you *always* have a Fifty-Fifty when it comes to food choices: 1) Eat the food, or 2) Don't eat the food. 50-50! This can pertain to a healthy food... let's say you have the option of having a nice, juicy grilled chicken breast filled with that oh-so-desired PROTEIN. You can **choose** to eat it or **choose** not eat it. Fifty-fifty **choice**. This can also pertain to a not-so-healthy food choice, such as a bowl of fat-filled ice cream. Again, **choose** eat it or **choose** not to eat it. Fifty-fifty.

Each of these choices is theoretically a no-brainer (in case you're confused – you DO CHOOSE the chicken breast and you DO REFUSE the ice cream)! 😊

However, let's say you are at a luncheon where they are serving a plain chicken breast or a chicken-rice casserole with melted cheese, with that just barely crusty edge all the way around the pan. Those voices in your head start in on you (Not to worry... we all have them):

Voice #1: "Ok. The obvious choice for me here is the plain chicken breast."

Voice #2 "Yeah, but... look at that casserole. It has chicken in it, too, so I would still be getting protein."

Voice #1: "Well, yes, there would still be protein but also a LOT of fat, as well."

Voice #2: "Would you really call that a "LOT" of fat? It's just a little bit of cheese, after all."

Voice #1: "It's not just the cheese. There has got to be sour cream or half and half or cream-of-something soup in there, as well. You're in denial..."

Voice #2: "WHATEVER. I've barely eaten anything all day. This could count for part of my dinner, then, too."

Voice #1: "Here you go. Pretending that you won't eat as much later. We fell into that trap for years before the surgery. Do you really want to fall into that pit again?"

Voice #2: "Well – no. I don't want to 'fall into that pit'... I was merely looking at that melted cheese, and well – I'M JUST SAYIN'!!"

Voice #1: "Let's use the 50-50! We clearly need a lifeline. We can eat the chicken breast and know that we have made the health *choice* in this situation or we can *choose* to eat the casserole with a LOT of fat and live with the consequences. Fifty-fifty."

Voice #2: "If we're gonna do math, then we could have HALF plain chicken and HALF casserole. That's another way of looking at 50-50."

Voice #1: "Sure, smarty pants, if you want to sabotage yourself and use that 'new math' we could do that. I want to succeed in my goal of keeping my weight off. I've worked too hard to lose weight and melted cheese is NOT on my food plan."

Voice #2: "Not on the food plan... then 50-50 your way... either eat it or don't. Eat the casserole? No – that would be a bad choice. Grilled chicken it is!"

Use the 50-50 every day in your life! Think of it as a true LIFELINE. Your choices for eating healthy, for choosing to exercise, for making food plans, for writing down what you eat in a food journal, for drinking water throughout the day, and for taking good care of your overall health ARE ABOUT YOUR LIFE! Making healthy choices – one choice at a time – is a 50-50 LIFELINE!

And remember, on the show Who Wants to be a Millionaire, each contestant can only use each “lifeline” once. YOU are able to use the 50-50 over and over every day!

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TOOLBOX TIP...

Lifelines... continued.

The last Toolbox Tip referenced the popular television show Who Wants to be a Millionaire. As you are probably familiar with the show, you are also probably familiar with the Lifelines contestants use to get help when they are “stumped” by a question.

As a surgical weight loss patient, there are situations you encounter when you may feel “stumped” about what to do. For example, maybe you don’t know how to get out of attending an office luncheon at a local buffet, a place that is a trigger for you in terms of overeating and/or eating the “wrong” foods.

Maybe you feel “stumped” about how to discuss with family members or friends your need to avoid being offered sweets or other foods you no longer partake of. Perhaps you have done a super job of avoiding the “white,” carbohydrate-filled breads, potatoes, and rice, but have been struggling to avoid sweets and need some help to get out a sugar rut.

Time to use another LIFELINE! The last Toolbox Tip focused on ways to use the 50/50 Lifeline. Another option is to ASK THE AUDIENCE! In this case, your “audience” can be a friend, a mentor, your support group, or online friends from Internet support groups. These are the people who are in your “personal audience;” they watch and encourage you as you journey down the road of life, post-surgery.

According to some tidbit online, Regis Philbin reportedly once said that the audience's answer is statistically correct 95% of the time. It seems to me that the people who are observing your weight loss and behavior changes will give you good feedback 95% of the time, as they want you to succeed in losing your weight, keeping it off, and implementing positive behavioral changes in your life.

To use one of the examples above, let's say that the entire office has a tradition of going to a local buffet once a week. Buffets are not healthy places for you, emotionally or physically. When you have gone to the buffet with your office mates in the past (after having weight loss surgery), you have felt depressed as you grieve the loss of some of your favorite foods, you felt angry because other people appear to eat like you had eaten before the surgery but don't seem to gain weight, you feel sad because you feel depressed and angry and you feel scared because you don't want to lose social connections with your friends from the office. You are uncertain about what to do in this situation. Should you continue to go with them and suffer through the aforementioned list of emotions? Should you make up reasons not to go to lunch with your friends on the days they go to the buffet? Should you be upfront with them about your reasons for not going, and make plans to do other activities with them?

ASK A FRIEND! The people who know and love you will talk through the issues with you and help you come up with a healthy plan for dealing with this situation.

The same goes for any difficult situation you encounter related to life after weight loss surgery. You have a lot of options for **ASKING A FRIEND!** So use them! Allow no excuses for not turning to your support people. If none of your close support people are available to talk when you want to talk, then get online. The Internet weight loss support groups run 24/7! **ASK A FRIEND FOR HELP!**

USE YOUR LIFELINES! More in the next version of Toolbox Tips...

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