

## Hooked On Recovery

March 2, 2007

*Eat Less, Move More*

*“Michael: I don't know anyone who could get through the day without two or three juicy rationalizations. They're more important than sex. Sam Weber: Ah, come on. Nothing's more important than sex. Michael: Oh yeah? Ever gone a week without a rationalization?”* –From The Big Chill (1983)

*“My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four. Unless there are three other people.”* –Orson Welles (1915 - 1985)

I have a hard time believing that at one point in my life I had a 28” waist and a 36” inseam. I was 6’4” tall and weighed a whopping 165. But then, I also had hair. I could eat anything I wanted. Over the years, my pant measurements have more than reversed. My waist, today as I write this, is somewhere above the 38” range, depending on where I position my belt. The only place I can find 38” is below the belly, but the problem with wearing my pants too low is the terrible inconvenience of applying butt crack spackle. My inseam has shrunk to 34”, did the extra weight squash me?

It must have because overall I’m shorter now, closer to 6’2” than 6’4”. I’m getting too large. Let’s just say that if I got to 200 pounds, I’d have lost a lot of weight. I told Joshua that if I get to 185 pounds I’m getting a tattoo (of what? I have no idea). I suppose I could point to my expanding waistline, like my good friend Mickey and say proudly, “This is my recovery!” Now that’s a juicy rationalization. Just because I was a skinny little pick at the end of my cocaine addiction is no reason to rationalize the many, many pounds I’ve put on over the last 19 years. Maybe “I’m just too short for my weight.” Oops, another juicy one.

My weight has gone up and down. I’ve done Atkins. One time I lost a lot of weight squeezing back into 34” waist pants. Problem with doing Atkins was my cholesterol went over 750. Plus I got so sick of eggs, meat and cheese. I never would have thought that possible. I read about Jack Nicklaus struggling with his weight. If you look back over his career you can see how he gained and lost weight. One of his more infamous ways of losing weight was to go on a cabbage soup diet. He’d lose a lot quickly but as Tom Watson said, “You wouldn’t want to play down wind of him”. Funny thing was, he found out he played better at a heavier weight because it restricted his backswing and gave him more control. I think I type a little better at a heavier weight, keeps me anchored to the keyboard. It helps while surf fishing, keeps my feet anchored in the sand especially in heavy surf conditions. I float a lot better too.

I have to admit though, that the change in my body shape from string bean to a pear on toothpicks presents many more problems than advantages. I’m not too fond of my second chin. I don’t like the ways my knees ache from carrying extra me around. My clothes touch me in all the wrong places. The idea of doing jumping jacks in front of a mirror terrifies me. I’d like to be able to stick it to Joshua on the soccer field (although his skill level may never allow that to happen). I’d like to have some energy other than that brought on by heavy doses of caffeine. I’d like to run the Thanksgiving Day Race in Manchester with my kids.

Focusing on how bad I feel about being overweight motivates me. The flip side is to focus on how good I feel when I'm in shape. Last year, I put in some serious time with Rael doing his Pilates exercise routines; just popped in his DVD and followed along. The first few times I thought he was a madman; no one could possibly do what he asked except the perfectly formed and fit women on the DVD. Sure enough though, I progressed. I worked "the core" and started to feel pretty good, pretty strong. Then in December, I had a bout with the flu and the flu won. It took a long time to recover and I got comfortable being sedentary. The weight came back on.

So now, I've gone through another contemplation phase. As a side note, I contemplate profoundly when nestled into my big ol' brown chair, TV on, feasting on plates of fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies. While killing stations, I paused on thousands of infomercials guaranteeing six-pack abs. I allowed the idea of "yeah, I can be that guy" to seep into the brain. I entertained visions of a re-sculpted me complete with rippling biceps, dazzling smile and perfectly coiffed hair. I embraced the feeling of supreme confidence as I pulled off my shirt on the beach and jumped in my kayak to paddle to Spain. Something usually snapped me out of my sugar-induced delusion and the tools of recovery kicked in. I took a personal inventory and accurately assessed my situation. I prayed and asked for help. Now with promise of spring, I've taken some action.

I've cut out the sweets, began walking regularly, visited with Rael and you know what? I feel better. I've adopted a new mantra (thanks Tom), that keeps it simple. Phillip...

Eat less, move more.

*"Never tell anyone that you're writing a book, going on a diet, exercising, taking a course, or quitting smoking. They'll encourage you to death."* –Lynn Johnston (1947 - ), For Better or For Worse

*Hooked on Recovery* is a biweekly message from CCAR Executive Director Phillip Valentine, person in recovery since 12/28/87, devoted husband, a father of five and just another surf fisherman. These thoughts, views and opinions reflect on his personal recovery and are not meant in any way to speak for the entire recovery community. He welcomes all your comments and suggestions on this column, email him at [phillip@ccar.us](mailto:phillip@ccar.us). Visit the website at [www.ccar.us](http://www.ccar.us) to read the entire series.