

My Transformation Story

Introduction:

He used to weigh 200 pounds. People used to fondly call him “Little Fatty”. However, he worked some wonder (not surgery) and lost about 35 pounds. He is Tom Tan. Today he is going to share his transformation story.

(Opening) (Attention catcher) Good at math, not reaching puberty until the age of 30, and all skinny no matter what they eat. Which Asian stigma is the most unbelievable to you? I cannot grasp that some Americans would think that Asians are all skinny. They clearly have not seen those colossal sumo-wrestlers or the tubby Happy Buda-like people. (HAND Gesture to describe size). I know this stigma is wrong because I used to weigh 200 lbs.

(Speech topic) Today I am going to share with you the secret of my success. Although many books focused on the physical or medical aspects of weight loss, little has been discussed about the mental aspect. In particular, I will explain to you my three techniques - a simple mantra, a progress tracking tool, and an understanding about self-control. In short, it all happens in our brain.

(Main Body) (What are the problems of being overweight). People control their weight for different reasons: improving energy, looking good, avoiding saying goodbye to tight jeans. To me, watching my weight is a practice of self-control. If I am self-disciplined, I will be ready for other challenges in my life.

(Main Body) (three techniques). Then how did I lose my weight from 200 lbs? First, I learned a simple mantra (a hand gesture for mantra – clapping hands) from my wise grandmother. That is, “Guan Zhu Ni De Zui, Mai Kai Ni de Tui” (gestures). Apparently, it rhymes in Chinese. It literally means “watch your mouth, and move your legs” or “watch your mouth, and get up to move.” It is so easy to remember! Whenever I pass the chips aisle in the supermarket and feel tempted, I will ask myself, “does indulging in chips reflect this mantra?” No, I move on and forget this aisle. Whenever I feel lazy about climbing the staircase to my office, I will ask myself again, “does using the elevator for two floors reflect this mantra?” No, I turn to the staircase. (*volume down*) A simple mantra provides an easy and quick mental check to avoid impulsive, irrational and irreversible decisions (*Alliteration*).

Technique #2- tracking your progress (a gesture for tracking - writing). I first use a mobile App to calculate my maximum daily calorie allowance to reach my ideal weight. Then I use the App to log my daily calorie intake. Logging has at least two benefits. First, I became educated on how many calories there are in an item, so that I can distinguish a low calorie item from a high calorie one (*Hand gestures for low and high*). Second, doing the calorie accounting triggers my value system, the fiscal conservatism in the business professor of me. I want to balance or stay in “black” in my calorie flow, just like my cash flow. If I eat too much (i.e., debit), I should run or swim more to have more credits (*Metaphor*). Besides logging the calorie intakes, I also track my weight progress. When seeing a weight reduction, I feel gratified and more motivated to stay in the course. This positive feedback is extremely constructive for people like me, who work harder with encouragements and positive affirmation.

Technique #3-understanding self-control (a hand gesture – one hand in, one hand patting). Does self-control require us to torture ourselves (*Hand gesture for choking and torturing*) every time we are tempted in order to avoid it? Absolutely NO. It is not only ineffective but also dangerous. Self-control is like stamina. Although we will train to increase it over time, it can be depleted if we overuse it too quickly. For example, controlling our diet too tightly will make us lose self-control in other departments,

such as temper or ethics. People are found to cheat more during the exam if they are starved. In other words, we should NOT take any dieting to extremes. Research suggests that some glucose actually helps to regain self-control. It is OK for me to eat that delicious chocolate cheesecake. It's just that I might want to control the portion. The first bite typically gives us the biggest pleasure, while the following bites bring us less and less. It is called diminishing utility function in behavioral economics. Understanding this meaning of self-control will make it possible to have a cake and eat it, too.

(Conclusion) Today, I shared with you my three techniques of controlling weight. They are having a simple mantra, tracking your progress, and understanding self-control. Applying these techniques, I managed to come down from 200lbs to 164 lbs. Now I feel energized, confident, and more importantly strong. These techniques are useful not only for weight management, but also for other practices of self-disciplines, such as learning a new language, improving public speaking, or managing relationships. Do you want to be more self-disciplined? If yes, let's (repeat after me) have a simple mantra (hand gesture), track our progress (hand gesture), and understand self-control (hand gesture).