Taking It Personally: Finding the Will to Lose Weight

by Katharine Swan

The media is full of materials to motivate weight loss. Besides the inundation of images of pretty, waif-like young women, there is also an assortment of articles to choose from, citing the health benefits of maintaining a certain weight or promoting another diet that promises results in record time. So with all of this motivation at our fingertips, why is weight loss still an issue?

Regardless of how much attention it gives the issue, the media still lacks one thing: personalization. In order to successfully lose weight, the goal needs to speak to you on a personal level, and no amount of health awareness or diet marketing is going to make that connection for you. Instead, you need to define for yourself the value of weight loss.

Set personalized goals. Setting your sights too high can turn your efforts into an all-or-nothing scenario; when you fail to achieve your lofty goal, you're more likely to give up entirely. Instead, set reasonable short-term goals: lose five pounds, work out three times a week, eat a salad every day, etc.

Focus on what motivates you. What is it that triggers your desire to lose weight? The clothes you want to wear? The decreased health risks that accompany weight loss? Figure out what motivates you, and surround yourself with it: tape reminders to the fridge, the bathroom mirror, the computer.

Savor your successes. Regardless of what else you find motivating, your successes are sure to strengthen your determination. Make a list of your goals, tack it to your fridge, and mark them off as you achieve them. Use each achievement as a boost to help you reach the next one.

In order to realize your desire to lose weight, you must find meaning in it beyond a manifestation of society's standards. Your goals must mean something on a personal level before you will find the determination to achieve them.