

## **Living With the Forever Dieting**

Dieting for specific health issues is serious business, fortunately, that's not what this is about. This is for the millions of men and women who suffer in the same household with an on-again/off-again, carb counting, food obsessed, digital scale weighing, fad dieter. Many of whom don't even need to lose weight, but have become ensnared by the national obsession with thin. People who don't have a clue as to their IQ, but know their morning weight to within a few ounces. Individuals who couldn't recite their social security number, but can tell you how many carbs they consumed last Thursday.

“That’s a nice dress you’re wearing today. What size is it?”

“It’s a minus two, I can squeeze into a minus three, but then I don’t cast a shadow.”

Pity the poor non-dieter, sometimes unwillingly dieting by association, who lives with one of those starving, self-obsessed, sufferers. (For convenience we'll refer to the non-dieter in the masculine tense.) He may be like most men in that he appreciates the esthetics of the gentle curve, over the simple

math of the angle. He may prefer a Glamazon to someone who looks as if she just staggered out of Auschwitz.

The dieter won't care. You've never heard a woman say, "I'm trying to pack on a few extra pounds because my husband likes me better plump." No!

In spite of his wishes, she'll pay a diet professional who will use a computer program to chart her caloric intake by the minute so she'll lose weight at the correct rate because as everyone knows, if you lose weight too fast, it just comes back. I guess because it hasn't had time to get very far away.

The diet guru charting a personal diet plan is similar to an astrologer charting the heavens so the stars reveal your personal future. The diet chart guides you to thin, and the astrological chart tells you who you'll be compatible with when you get there.

The only star our westering pioneer forefathers could recognize was the North Star. They had to know it, so they wouldn't become actually, physically, lost. Not just astray from their life path, but lost! Here's what the pioneers knew about the stars:

“That’s the North Star. We’re facing it. We need to go left.”

Many of those pioneers walked to California. Okay, this may not be a good analogy because the alter ego of many hobby dieters is the walking, or jogging or running or... the aerobics freak. However, none of them have walked to California. Oh sure, they may have clocked up two or three thousand miles on their treadmill, but did they see any buffalo?

Many of those pioneers walked to California on a healthy, consistent diet of...varmint. They ate what they could kill along the way; rabbits, squirrels, birds, turtles... and they walked to California.

I told my girlfriend that if she had been a pioneer she would have died before Pittsburg. When we go out to eat, I order steak and potatoes. She chews the parsley from my plate, and sips water with a lemon twist. If she tells me how bad the meal is for me, I gnaw the bone.

We should sympathize with the normal eater who lives with one of those forever dieting, self-examining, obsessed souls who constantly yammers

away about the latest diet du jour. And if she's taking diet pills she probably is yammering away.

Diet pills have a long and interesting history. Always the drug of choice among long distance truck drivers, pep pills or bennies, found new fans in the 1960's among the young, open-minded, explorers of the inner universe. That's back when there were diet pills that were so good they would cause you to slowly, and deliciously, explode. At least that's what I've been told. Men sought out overweight women just to have a good source. So I've heard. However, just as Crack took the romantic edge off drugs, Meth has taken the fun out of speed. Being a little high on an Orange Heart or a White Cross was one thing, but staying awake for twenty-six days on Meth is something else.

“You look great! How much weight have you lost?”

“Since the first of the year, I've lost an additional thirty-seven pounds. I hope to lose enough by Christmas to disappear.”

Investing time, money, and effort into turning yourself into a twig (Is that where it all started, with Twiggy?) seldom has anything to do with self-

esteem. Television's *American Idol* successfully exposes the lie of self-esteem by showing young people who couldn't carry a tune in a lunch pail who are, none the less, convinced they are great singers and are going to make it big in the music industry. They're fat with self-esteem.

That whole self-esteem movement was started by an education official who wrote a book espousing the supposed importance of teaching children self-esteem, and the result has been generations of kids who can't read or write, but who think they are the greatest thing since sliced bread. Real self-esteem is an ingredient of chocolate.

Those here today/gone tomorrow, trendy diets are proof that some people will believe anything. In the 1970's the macrobiotic diet was touted as beneficial until people started dying as a result of following it. The grapefruit diet sounded good, but the Florida Citrus Commission never dreamed people would really do it.

Some dieters would probably buy diet appliances. You could take a floor model room humidifier, hang a pine tree air freshener in it, put a Slim-Air logo on it, and tell people that if they keep it running in the dining area,

they'll eat less, and lose those unwanted pounds. "Better air for a thinner you."

"What's for dinner, honey?"

"I've prepared a veggie platter with celery stalks, sliced tomatoes and cucumber, a tofu dip, and a whole wheat muffin."

"Sounds great. You go ahead; I'm gonna call out for pizza."

All that rabbit food! It's just a matter of time until her ears get real long, and her greeting becomes, "What's up Doc?" Unfortunately, she probably won't become rabbit-like in any other way. You know, soft and cuddly.

Dr. Lulu Hunt Peters started all this in 1918 by writing the first best-selling book on fitness. It was called, *Diet and Health*. Since then there have been hundreds of diet books; most have had the lifespan of confetti. Losing weight has become like curing hiccups; everyone has a method.

It must be hard for the thinning to pass that, "Hot Now" sign at Krispy Kreme. Maybe their mantra is a line from an Amy Winehouse song ("No, no, no").

Many of those seeking change through diet follow Diet the way some of us follow Professional Bull Riding. They can tell you the calories, fat, protein, sugar, and more in any portion of any food you name. I don't even know what some of those things are, but then, I'm not overweight. I was on the Fair Food Diet for a while, all I ate was food from the fair; corn dogs, Coke, fries, popcorn, cotton candy – never felt better! That was back in my Carney days.

If your significant other is a dietist, you should tell her everyday that in your eyes she's perfect. When my big girl was away visiting relatives, I replaced all our furniture with big giant furniture, so she would feel smaller. I replaced our bath towels with bath sheets. One time when she told me she had lost ten pounds I got a ten-pound plate from my weight set, and handed it to her. She was impressed with just how heavy ten pounds is.

I made a sock puppet and named him Pierre. Pierre has a French accent, and when my diet bunny needs cheering up Pierre will whisper in her ear and tell her how hot and sexy she is. Then Pierre will kiss her neck and try to get fresh with her. That Pierre, he's a rascal.

So if you're living with someone who is forever dieting bring her one of those small red velvet heart-shaped boxes of chocolate candy, and tell her you love her.