

Overcoming Obesity – Marcia’s Story

Pre-reading

Questions:

- What do you know about this subject?
- What questions do you have about it?

Definitions:

- Obese – very overweight to the point of negatively affecting one’s health
- Challenge – to demand effort or work
- Adjust – to change; to become used to something



Reading

20 Marcia Potts had been overweight for most of her adult life. “I ate all the time, and I ate a
39 lot. I could eat a whole large deep dish pizza by myself.” She tried and failed on many different
diets.

40 “To walk was unbelievably challenging,” she remembers. “I couldn’t breathe. I couldn’t
52 even stand without leaning or holding onto something. The grocery stores were great because I
67 could hang onto a cart.”

72 As for seeing a doctor, “I just never went. I knew I’d be told to lose weight. I believed I
92 was going to die from being obese,” she says. Marcia called her sister, a nurse, to ask for help
111 getting diet pills. Instead, her sister suggested a well known weight-loss program that emphasized
125 keeping a journal, cutting fat and calories, and reducing portion sizes.

136 On May 23, 2000, Potts joined the program. She remembers the day well. At 48 years old,
153 5’ 3” tall, she weighed 317 pounds. “I began by going to the salad bar and filling-up on healthy
172 foods like lettuce, broccoli, mushrooms, and radishes.” Gradually, Potts adjusted to eating lower
185 calorie foods. “After a while, I didn’t **crave** fatty foods anymore. It’s amazing how your body can
202 adjust.”

203 Potts lost 163 pounds the first year and another 25 pounds the next year. She attributes her
220 **success** to drinking water. “I had no trouble drinking water. Water is my drink. I would drink 32
238 ounces in the morning, so I’d be sure to get it in.”

250 She also began walking. As weeks passed, she slowly began adding time and distance to
265 her walks. Eventually she was walking the 3/4-mile from her home to work and back.

281 “My energy level is very strong now, and I’m going to need my strength as I get older,”
299 says Potts, who at age 51 weighs 129 pounds. Her message to someone who has given up trying to
318 lose weight: “Try it one more time. You can find a way to make it work for you!”

336 Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – smallstep.gov

Level 5.0

Understanding

1. What were the main methods used in the weight-loss program Potts joined? _____

2. What does the word **success** mean? _____

3. How did being obese affect Potts' mobility and health? _____

4. In addition to the weight-loss program, what other strategies helped Potts be successful? _____

5. How could Potts' story impact someone else's life? _____

6. What does the word **crave** mean? _____

7. What does Potts no longer crave? Why? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the story in your own words.

Option B: Do you or someone you know struggle with weight loss?

- If yes, what methods have been tried? What has been successful, and what hasn't?
- If no, how do you stay trim?
