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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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?