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Not Victims— Experts By Experience

by Jill Jones-Soderman, LCSW, ACSW

Alice Walker begins the story of women—
“Dear God, I am fourteen years old. I have al-
ways been a good girl.”

Women are raised to be good girls—children in blossomed bodies—directed to follow the images and directives of a still-paternalistic society where the word victim is synonymous with women and children. Good manners, obedience, silence are the hallmarks of a socialization that lays the groundwork for victimization by those who capitalize on the assets of the well behaved. Questioning, verbal, assertiveness, independent thought, precocious intellectual development are qualities quashed in children who then become easy prey for predators or women who become easy prey for obsessed abusers.

Public advocacy for victim posturing in misery, helplessness, fear of reprisal, submission; painting the picture of pain and suffering is exacerbating the problem and feeds the perpetrator community. Abusers want to hurt, inflict pain, fear, have a sense of control and power. Stories of abuse teaches how to abuse. Stories feed the imagination of perpetrators who can then plan, refine their craft and teach others of their ilk.

The ranks of the disenfranchised still include women and children whose voices are silenced by excuses. Women are vindictive and manipulative. Children are children; they do not know what they have seen, heard, thought, experienced, believe, unless informed of such by the dominant force in their life and that force will define and articulate, publish their experience.

I do not think so! The ability to talk specifically about what one has done, can do, will do, will persist until the problem is solved and belongs to the expert by experience, because they know with whom they are dealing and what the outcome must be to resolve that which has been experienced. Not the suffering but the solution to suffering must rise above the cacophony of victim chatter. The ability to learn from experience, to transform a crushing event into an event that crushes and then gives rise to new life, liberty and the pursuit of an environment free from harm must be the outcome of terrible events.

*Jill Jones-Soderman practices psychoanalysis & psychotherapy, and is the founder of the Reach for the Sky Foundation, a non-profit that helps Rockland children with autism.
(845) 353-6111*

Menopause and Weight Gain

by Janice Style

Going through menopause? Notice any extra pounds around your belly? If it's any consolation, you're not alone. This weight gain is normal and to be expected. Research shows that weight gain



during menopause is created by shifts in your hormones. Early stages of menopause makes maintaining weight difficult and losing weight almost impossible due to the fluctuation in your hormones which impact appetite, metabolism and fat storage.

Androgen is the hormone responsible for sending the weight directly to your mid-section. One of the first signs of menopause is an increase of androgen in your body that causes you to gain weight around your abdomen instead of your lower half. Estrogen levels drop rapidly, causing your body to look to other sources for estrogen. Fat cells produce estrogen, so your body works harder to convert calories into fat to increase estrogen levels.

Progesterone levels also decrease and cause weight gain or at least the appearance of it. Decreased progesterone causes water weight and bloating. Though this doesn't actually result in weight gain, your clothes will probably feel tighter. Testosterone also drops resulting in the loss of lean muscle mass, meaning a lower metabolism and the slower your body burns fats. Muscle cells burn more calories than fat cells do.

Stress and anxiety also contribute to weight gain, as does sleep deprivation. Many women experience interrupted sleep during menopause with hot flashes or just difficulty staying asleep. Research shows that even partial sleep loss alters hormone levels causing weight gain. Leptin is the hormone that tells the brain you're sated, but levels decrease due to lack of sleep. Ghrelin is the hormone that triggers hunger. This hormone increases when you're sleep deprived.

Embrace this phase of your life. You will come through it. This is a point in your life to adapt and make changes. Reduce calories. Pay attention to the foods you're eating and slightly reduce portion sizes. Increase your aerobic activities to boost metabolism and burn fat. Strength training exercises increase muscle mass to boost metabolism and strengthen bones. But if you could use some guidance and motivation, as a trainer who relates to what you're going through, I can help.

Janice Style is a personal trainer, owner/operator of Janice Style Workout. (845) 353-3415.

The Nyack Villager*Specially for Women...*

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