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## Never Satisfied

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# Never Satisfied

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“So, how’d you do it?”

The dreaded question I get asked a lot now. The conversation starter with many people that I haven’t seen in a while. A backhanded way of complimenting my weight loss, while trying to find out my “secrets”. No, losing weight is not my personality trait. If anything, I lost myself in the process.

I stand there, trying to hide my disbelief in the question every time it is asked, but disgust is most likely written all over my face. I start fiddling with my hands, playing with my fingers. A nervous habit I’ve always had. I look down at my stomach, making sure it’s still small, impressive. I suck in. I throw my head back and let out a small laugh, a silent cry. It will buy me more time to come up with an answer, without saying what really comes to mind. “A lot of working out and eating right turned it into a lifestyle”. You can almost hear the boredom in my mundane response. Even I was starting to actually believe it. Yet, nothing about it is actually “healthy”.

No, this is not meant to be a sob story. I’m not asking for pity or sympathy. I am just sharing my experiences in the hopes that other people will read and understand that they are not alone. I have been through this. Other people have been through this. I just want to put it out there that losing the weight will not always find you the happiness for which you are looking.

## Grocery List 9/25

- Raspberries
- Two Good yogurt
- Baby spinach
- Sweet potatoes
- Bananas
- Chicken breast
- Turkey bacon
- Almond milk
- Broccoli
- Brown rice

I was always the fat friend. The fat sister. The fat cousin. The fat daughter. I was reminded of it every day. Whether it be my own thoughts or comparing myself while I stand in a room full of people, I was always aware of my appearance and just how large my presence was.

Growing up, my parents always instilled a decently healthy diet. Along with a thoughtfully packed lunch and a home-cooked meal for dinner every night, my sisters and I were allowed one sweet treat a day and a snack of our choosing when we got home from school. Along with the daily 100 sit-ups, it is fair to say that my parents were concerned about our health and tried to teach us the importance of healthy eating.

It’s not easy to admit this, because I do love my parents. However, their genuine concern of our eating habits came with difficult conversations, hurtful words.

One night when I was in high school, probably around the age of 15, my dad had brought home Wendy’s, a fast-food luxury that was not often brought into the Medeiros household. I had gone downstairs when he had gotten home, and we got into a small argument

about something. As the fight came to its climax, my father thought the best way to insult me was to hit me where it hurt most. My weight. As I turned my back to him, I heard, “fat ass”. I quickly ran up the stairs and made the decision to skip dinner that night.

Often times, especially as I grew older, my parents would voice their concerns of my weight and eating habits to me. Most of the time, I would just turn the other cheek. I did not like what they had to say, even if it was right. The more they said it, the less I wanted to do anything about it. The more I wanted to eat just to piss them off. On the worst of days, they would make remarks or hurtful comments that they knew would bother me. After all, being called a “fat ass” by the people who are supposed to accept you the most and love you for who you are, will really do some damage to a young girl. So yeah, I’d let it bother me. I’d run upstairs, cry it out, and then go eat a brownie. At the time, it seemed like I was only bothered by it in the moment. Little did I know those words really stuck with me, even now.

### **Gym Split**

Sunday- Bi’s & tri’s

Monday- Cardio & 3 mi walk

Tuesday- Legs

Wednesday- (active rest) 3 mi walk

Thursday- Back

Friday- Cardio & 3 mi walk

Saturday- Legs

The setting was the dance studio. I believe I was around 7 years old in a dance where we were dressed up as rag dolls. One day during rehearsal, we

were told that some of the parents had volunteered and were going to pick us up and put us on stage, to complete the vision of looking like actual dolls. One of the girls in my group turns to my teacher and says, “No one will be able to pick up Sara and put her onstage; she’s too heavy.” And that ladies and gentlemen is the reason I would go home and weigh myself after every dance practice. Ah, the pure excitement of a young child when they step on the scale and realize they’ve dropped a whole pound.

I wasn’t the athletic type at all, so staying active through sports was not an option for me. However, I was a competitive dancer and had been dancing since I was 2. Now this is where the awareness really hit the hardest, especially as I got older.

For starters, when we took class, we were expected to wear skintight leotards or required to wear anything black and tight-fitting. Understandably, seeing how a major factor in dance is form, and tight-fitted clothes allow for form to be seen. The older I got, the less comfortable I was wearing tight-fitted clothing, showing up to classes where my friends with flat stomachs would also show up, sporting only a sports bra and booty shorts.

The heavier I got, the worse it got, and the more I began to notice what was going on. There were several occasions in which the costumes for certain dances of mine were hand-made or even put together with simple materials. I would be in group dances where everyone had a different costume, but they were also similar. For example, the costume theme for one of my dances my junior year of high school was teal and grey. Just the colors teal and grey. Well, most of the girls wore teal and grey sports bras, paired with either booty

shorts or leggings. What did I wear? Leggings, a sports bra, and a grey button-down shirt, that was completely buttoned, covering everything.

I am certain that instances like this were not meant to hurt my feelings, (obviously it did). At least from my experience, my dance teachers were very accepting of all shapes and sizes and just wanted their students to be comfortable. Or at least that's what I told myself. I hope that's the case.

### **This Week's Meal: Orange Chicken**

(3 meals)

Boiled broccoli, chicken breast cooked in "G Hughes' Sugar Free Orange Ginger Marinade", brown rice, topped with sesame seeds and fresh scallions.

I guess it's safe to say that I started to become more aware of my weight around middle school. My friend group consisted of mainly skinny, fit girls. I was not extremely big at the time, but I knew I was the biggest one out of all of us. Imagine being a middle schooler comparing yourself to your friends, secretly jealous of the amount of food that they eat and the way that they still somehow manage to keep their slim figures. It wasn't fair.

### **Weekly Goals**

1. Eat clean
2. Follow workout plan
3. Stay hydrated

I remember my first dedicated attempt at losing weight. It was my senior year of high school, around the time of prom. Our school had an Instagram account, where the seniors would post photos of the dresses they

had purchased, to spare every girl the embarrassment of showing up in the same dress as someone else. I remember the trend that year. Fitted gown that flared out at the bottom. Seeing one skinny girl after another flaunt their flawless bodies in gorgeous gowns, I decided I no longer liked my two-piece prom dress and felt even less comfortable in it. It was in that moment that I had decided I no longer liked my prom dress and wanted to lose a serious amount of weight so it couldn't even be tailored, and I wouldn't be stuck wearing it. As dedicated as I was, I ended up losing a few pounds but not enough to get me a new and improved dress.

The dreaded day had come. I walked out of the house in full hair and make-up, dress on. As my prom date met me at the front of the house, he looked at me and said, "Wow Sara, you look beautiful".

I turned my head, played it cool, pretended I didn't hear it. That was the first time a boy had ever told me I was beautiful, yet all I could think to myself was, *probably because of the 10 pounds I lost. Wait until he sees all of the skinnier girls in their dresses tonight.*

### **Reminders:**

1. Drink green tea before you go to bed, you'll thank yourself when you do your daily mirror check in the morning.
2. Working out helps with your anxiety (even though it also gives you anxiety).
3. Most importantly, you wanted this. Don't go back to your old ways.

When my college years came around and I

thought my love-life was doomed, I had given up on all hope that I would have some bizarre love story on how I met my significant other, and succumbed to the dread of dating apps, as many girls in this day and age have. I always carefully selected the photos I put on my profile, making sure I looked decent and making sure my body looked the best it could be. You could say in the few times that I was on the app, I hit it off with some guys. When a few had asked me to meet up, that is where I hesitated. You may be surprised, but I was not actually hesitant because of the fear of meeting up with a stranger from an app.

Was I catfishing? No. I just always held the fear of meeting them in person and not having as nice of a body as they expected. So, when it came to the photos, I tried to keep it as real as possible. What you see is what you get. For the most part.

“But what if I’m not what he expected?” I say to my best friend as I sit across from her at a restaurant, flipping through the menu.

“What do you mean by that?” she asks with a confused look on her face.

“You know, I’m even fatter in person”.

### Daily Affirmation

You’ve worked hard getting where you are, but you’ll never be done.

Going into college, I had always heard about the “Freshman 15” but never really worried about becoming a victim to those 15 lbs. I only thought it affected the people who lived there or were on campus often. Not a commuter like me, who was only there 2-3 times a week. But God, was I wrong. I was the heaviest I had ever been my sophomore and junior years of

college.

Around that time, I hadn’t seen my grandfather for a few years, and he came down from Florida to grace us with his presence. He came over to our house for dinner one night, and we were looking at photos from a year or two before. I still remember the exact photo we were looking at when he turned to me and said, “Wow Sara, it looks like you’ve gained a lot of weight”. I stood there, speechless. Yeah, I was used to my parents making remarks on my weight, but now my grandfather too? Hadn’t seen him for years and the only thing he gave me was a comment about my weight that would stick with me forever. I would’ve much rather taken a present or even a souvenir from Florida. Thanks Papa.

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
154	154.2	153	153.8	152.6	152	152.8

I was the heaviest I had ever been the fall semester of my senior year. After going on a family trip to Florida, I decided it was time to make a change. Don’t ask me how this diet stuck, when all of the other previous attempts had failed miserably. The truth is, I’m not too sure. Maybe I was just fed up.

I had heard of this thing called intermittent fasting, which was the new fad at the time. Basically, I would eat for 8 hours of the day and fast for 16. With that being said, I always skipped breakfast. My lunch was a smoothie. I rarely ate snacks. My dinner consisted of a small portion of protein and vegetables, rarely any carbs. I stayed away from bread, too fattening. Didn’t eat fruit, too sugary. I was hungry all of the time and miserable. People blamed my misery on the

fact that I was probably starving. Not sure they were wrong.

If you cannot tell, I am extremely OCD and a creature of habit. With that being said, once I started a routine, I stuck to it. I really did want better for myself, and I was willing to do whatever it took to finally be comfortable in my own skin. I hate to say it, but the pandemic worked in my favor. I was out of work, taking classes at home, which left me nothing but time to focus on my health. I worked out at home every day because the gym was still closed and made healthy recipes from scratch for every meal. It was a lot of work. There were times when I was bored and wanted to give in and eat junk food. In that case, I would get up, drive to the nearest track, and start running as a distraction. Crazy, I know.

### **Peanut-Butter Power Balls**

Ingredients:

- Peanut butter
- Oats
- Maple syrup/honey
- Chocolate chips (optional)

When people would come over, I would bake something sweet for them, because I wanted it so badly. I made cheesecakes, cookies, lemon loafs, all things that I wanted and longed for on my worst days.

“So, you won’t even try it to make sure it tastes good while you’re baking it?” a family friend asks as he stands across from me at the kitchen counter, watching me hard at work.

“No, I’m just happy watching everyone else enjoy it”, I respond as I hold the rubber spatula in my

hand, folding in the flour, making a delicious lemon concoction.

Lemon loaf cake. A sweet I had been craving for so long. Smelling it was enough to satisfy my cravings. “Don’t do it Sara”, I’d think to myself as I take it out of the oven, my mouth watering. “If you give in, even the smallest bite, they’d think you’ve failed”.

From there, I’d sit down and watch my guests savor every bite of the delicious treat into which I poured my heart, soul, and hunger. Yes, it’s sad. No doubt, it’s obsessive. For sure, it’s not healthy. But at the end of the day, I wasn’t suffering from the guilt I was trying so hard to avoid.

### **HIIT Workout (repeat 4 times)**

High knees (**30 secs**)

**10 secs rest**

10 bicep curls each side with 12lb weight

**10 secs rest**

High knees (**30 secs**)

**10 secs rest**

5 push-ups

**10 secs rest**

Burpees (**30 secs**)

**10 secs rest**

20 front lunges with weights alternating sides

**10 secs rest**

Jump rope (**1 min**)

**Rest 1 min. Repeat**

Let me tell you, it’s funny how when you’re bigger, no one pays mind to you. They can’t even hold a glance in your direction, never mind take the time to make conversation with you, get to know you for who

you really are. In the dating world, what kind of guy would want that, right?

My boyfriend and I met during my prime-time weight loss. For a quick minute, I was confident. My confidence in myself and my appearance radiated off of me, and for a moment, everything finally felt right.

In the twenty-first century, it's common to use Instagram as just another dating app. You like someone's pictures to get their attention, and if they reciprocate, you are in. Yeah, when I started to post photos of my completely unrecognizable body, I began to get more attention. Guys were liking my most recent photos, trying to get my attention. But this one was different. He liked photos from when I was heavier too. And that's when everything felt right, even if just for a split second.

Once you become involved with someone, and they are a big part of your life and who you are, the worries start creeping in. It's normal, natural. At least, for me. I'd be lying if the thought of him leaving me for someone skinnier did not cross my mind at least once a day. I know it's silly, but it's thoughts like these that are the motivation that keep me going to the gym and eating right.

The very first time he came and met my family, they all decided to Door Dash McDonalds late at night. As we sat at the table, mounds of chicken nuggets, French fries, and burgers in front of me, my family asked me why I wasn't eating any of it. Irritated, I responded, "I already ate a lot today, I don't want to gain weight". He glanced at me, then back at my family saying, "I told her she'd still look beautiful, even if she put on weight". Even if I didn't show it, his comment made me happy. I grabbed a chicken nugget, dipped it

in hot mustard (what else?) and nibbled on it, savoring every last bite, enjoying the bliss of this moment.

It was his comments such as these that made me feel paranoid. I know he meant it in a sincere way, out of the kindness of his heart. But he doesn't know what he would be doing to me. He still says it, to this day, to which I respond, "Don't tell me that. Then I will get comfortable and believe you, and I will put on all of the weight I've lost. If that ever happens, I will honestly and most truly resent you forever, I promise". Not only will I never forgive him, I will never forgive myself.

Eating with him is hard because I love food just as much as he does. But he loved the good kind of food. The cheese fries, double cheeseburgers, steak, cheese, and mayo kind of good. Trying to eat healthy around him and not giving into his ways is never easy, especially when he is always pushing for me to get dessert, because he knows how much I love it. It's torture really, the thoughts that go through my mind on a daily basis when we are contemplating what to eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Lately, I have given in more often than when I first met him, a year and a half ago. But it shows. None of my "skinny girl" jeans fit anymore, the number on the scale has gone up 20 lbs, and I'm left hatefully staring at my reflection in the mirror every morning. Could the weight and the tight-fitting clothes be due to the fact that I am now gaining muscle from weightlifting and trying to find more food freedom? Yes. Do I still fear him leaving me every day for a girl with a flat stomach, small waist, and big butt? Yes. Can I blame him in the slightest for these irrational thoughts or my weight gain? Unfortunately, no.

## Dessert 12/01

Fiber One chocolate brownie and Halo Top ice cream

Thanksgiving Day passed a few weeks ago, and that one was tough on me. Already uncomfortable in my jeans and my overall appearance, being surrounded by food all day is no walk in the park. I don't like the food options served on Thanksgiving anyways, so I never even eat a lot. I always joke saying it is a great day for a caloric deficit, because I eat so little. I remember exactly what I wore that day, because the rage I felt when seeing my body was just unforgettable. I wore a brown button-up body suit with a pair of two-toned jeans, and tan boots. As I looked at myself in the mirror for the first time after putting on the ensemble, I muttered "great" under my breath and rolled my eyes. As much as I wanted to break out into tears and let it bother me, I couldn't. I already had a face full of make-up and was running late. *You can't show up to his aunt's house in a bad mood, he can't know your upset about something as small as looking fat in your outfit. You have a lot for which to be grateful. Don't let this ruin your day.*

The whole time we were at my boyfriend's aunt's house, the only thing on my mind was my stomach in those jeans. How it looked when I was standing outside talking to a group of his family members. How it looked when I sat down at the table to eat. *Rolls.* I could just feel them pouring out and over my jeans as I sat there. One thing I am thankful for is the fact there wasn't a mirror in plain sight, because it would have been a lot worse.

After dinner at his aunt's house, we went to my aunt's for yet another meal, and my greatest weakness.

Dessert. Once again, the intrusive thoughts begin. *These jeans are so tight; it's because I ate too much. My stomach probably looks so fat while I'm sitting on the couch. I haven't seen them in a while. They might think I've gained weight. God, why are they even tight on my legs now?!*

## 12/11

**Breakfast-** Greek yogurt, tablespoon of peanut butter, raspberries

**Lunch-** Avocado toast on sourdough, 2 fried eggs, 2 pieces of center-cut bacon

**Dinner-** Chicken, rice, and broccoli

My morning routine begins with me getting out of bed and walking straight to the full-length mirror in my room. At 8 am, I assess the situation in front of me. I pull the waistband of my sweatpants out, to see how much extra room there is. I pull them down, see how small my waist is, how flat my stomach is. Unsatisfied, I quickly pull them back up past my belly-button. At least, I can slightly stand my waist, although some days it looks fat. One thing that absolutely repulses me is my bulging lower belly.

There isn't a mirror that I pass without looking at my body. I never look into it and see me for who I really am. A twenty-two-year-old woman, just wanting to channel her anger and anxieties through exercise while eating some damn good food. One day, I want to be able to live my life, satisfied with who I am, what I look like, no matter what I eat. If that isn't my greatest goal in life, then I am not too sure what is.

Will I ever be satisfied? The short answer to that is no. There are days where I want to start starving



myself again, excessively working out, and having a cardio body. There are days where I want to weight-lift, work on my strength, and incorporate carbs into my diet. And there are days I want to say, “screw all of this”, and eat what I want, when I want, and only workout when I actually feel like it.

“So, how’d you do it?”

The dreaded question I get asked a lot now.

*I didn’t. I’m miserable. But when I finally do it, when I have finally figured all of this out, you will be the first to know.*

### **About the Author**

**Sara Medeiros** is in her second year in the graduate program in English. Aside from attending school and working a full-time job, Sara enjoys spending her free time working out, traveling to new places, and searching for the best iced latte. Although she graduated undergrad with a degree in English, Sara is fairly new to the literacy community.