

The Oprah Enigma ...

A Weighty Question

By Robert Skversky, M.D.

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When one thinks of Oprah, her celebrity status, immense popularity, enormous wealth, empowerment and philanthropy, few would argue that she is in a class by herself. However, when one thinks of Oprah, and her struggles with weight; her yo-yo dieting, short term successes, long term failures, feelings of frustration, self loathing and blame ... she is in a class of 130 million other overweight/obese Americans who have tried and failed to maintain weight-loss over and over and over again.

But let's not forget that Oprah has a triumvirate of highly specialized, renowned, "health care" providers that surround her. There is Mehmet Oz, a brilliant physician and everyone's Marcus Welby; Bob Green, fitness guru to the stars, and Michael Beckwith, her spiritual advisor. (Almost forgot... a personal chef.) So, if Oprah, with the help, support, and guidance of these extraordinary people is unable to take weight off and keep it off, one might rationally ask, "What hope does anyone else have?"

At first glance ... not much, zero, nada! But wait a second. To this physician there seems to be a major disconnect. Thus allow me to weigh-in. (pun intended)

Why is it that over the past 18 years there have been thousands of our patients at Weight No More Medical Associates who have been successful at long term weight-loss and maintenance? Is it possible that physicians like myself, who specialize in medical weight-loss, i.e.; Bariatric physicians, who see patients day after day, month after month, year after year, know something that Oprah's gurus do not? The answer, I believe, is yes!

When Bob Green stated on Larry King (Jan 7, 2009) that losing weight is not "rocket science"; one simply has to eat in moderation and exercise more; he is doing a great disservice to the millions of overweight Americans who

do exactly that and find it doesn't work. Bob doesn't understand that diet and exercise by themselves fail miserably for most, for sound physiological reasons. When you eat less, metabolism slows, fat oxidation and muscle expenditure decrease, with resultant eventual weight regain, frustration and failure. And when Bob tells Larry that "weight is a symptom of something else that needs to change in your life;" suggesting that until one begins to make better choices, become more disciplined, maybe more religious; in other words "get their act together," they have little hope for weight-loss success. Once again, a great disservice to the millions of overweight/obese who make correct choices, are disciplined, exhibit self esteem and "have their act together" in spite of their weight issues. Which reminds me, maybe someone should inform the Dali Lama ... because he's about 25 pounds overweight; and maybe he's on the wrong spiritual path!!!

Yes, I believe Oprah and millions like her would do well to see a physician who treats obesity as a chronic, metabolic, progressive, and genetic disease on a long term basis for control, not cure; someone who understands and empathizes with the psychological, prejudicial, and discriminatory aspects that can have a profound effect on quality of life issues; someone who has the expertise to effectively and safely use combination pharmacotherapy as an integral component, in addition to diet and exercise protocols, for long term success; someone who knows, based on clinical studies, that a lot of money is squandered on worthless B12 and HCG injections and dietary supplements touted for weight-loss that serve only to "slim your wallet, not your waist."

If you are serious about losing weight, not just a quick fix, but for a lifetime of success, go see a weight-loss specialist; a Bariatric physician. And while you're at it ... email Oprah to do the same!

Thank you for listening ...



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