

# A SUCCESS STORY UPDATE - IN HIS OWN WORDS

By Tim Ostrich (A.K.A. Dr-Boz, Super Neurotic and Fantastically Handsome Columnist Guy)

Last time I checked in with the Babble (a year ago), I was celebrating a pretty awesome milestone: 100 pounds lost. I made it a little further, down almost 108 pounds total. To quote the Nationwide commercial, "Life comes at you fast." I was no exception. Not only did life come fast, but it rode the express train all the way to Bummersville, dragging me along for the trip. To put it bluntly (but in a non-vulgar manner): Stuff Happened.

It started innocently enough. I began to plateau with my weight. No big surprise, since I was in uncharted territory with my weight loss journey. Motivation began to wane as well. I hit the big goal of 100 pounds, but I had no goal beyond it. Sure, there was more weight to lose. I still wasn't at my lowest adult weight, but the enormity of losing 100 pounds made any other goals pale in comparison. So I fluctuated up and down. I hovered around the 100 pound mark for about 3-4 months. Then the "Stuff" REALLY hit the fan.

First issue was my sleep. I kept waking up in the middle of the night with back pain. My routine became the following: take a pill, wait for it to kick in, eventually go back to bed. Unfortunately, while the pill part worked, I was spending two, three, up to four hours "waiting." My doctor referred me for a sleep study which revealed I have Narcolepsy. I wasn't falling asleep out of the blue, but I was certainly zoning out periodically throughout the day, impacting my ability to sleep at night. I started some medication for THAT, and while the back pain was still an issue, the sleep problems weren't as bad. However, I went to another doctor to address the back pain, and that's when "Stuff" REALLY REALLY hit the fan. They found a mass.

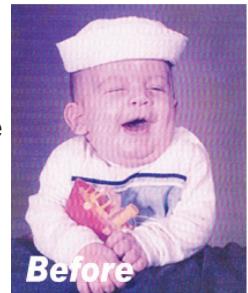
Maybe some of you have gone through the emotional upheaval associated with finding out you have some "thing" growing inside of you, but this was new ground for me. Further tests revealed some concerns with the mass being malignant. So I ended up going in for surgery. Since the mass was in my rib, they removed the entire thing. I'm not sure why someone would voluntarily have a rib removed, because I can tell you with 100% certainty this was the WORST pain I've experienced. Any movement hurt – BAD. One time I had a catch in my throat and accidentally coughed. I seriously cannot describe the pain. I have a newfound respect for women who give birth, because I imagine THAT pain is worse than the pain I had, and I basically wanted to be hit over the head with a mallet when it happened.

As you can imagine, losing weight and exercising was not exactly a priority during this time. From the month of August (when I found out about the mass) until the end of 2009, I paid little attention to my diet. I didn't keep track of what I ate, and quite frankly I didn't care how many calories I ingested. Food was definitely a comfort. I readily admit I was not in the best place physically or emotionally during those five months, so in hindsight it's not surprising to see I was eating every awful thing I could find. I ended up gaining about 30 pounds during this time, most of it after the surgery (October to December). Not being able to exercise certainly didn't help either.

But let's turn this story around. First of all, that mass in my rib turned out to be benign. In other words, no cancer, no chemo, no radiation. Just a pat on the back from the oncologist while telling me I didn't need to come back. Second, I finally got my head out of the sand (since I'm an Ostrich this was quite the task), stopped the downward spiral of (bad food) relapse, and hopped back on a different train – the train of Recovery. The Biggest Loser challenge at Park Center came at the perfect time for me. I was ready to refocus and dedicate myself to being healthy once again. I am competitive by nature, so it was the perfect motivation. Finally, after riding a storm of stress, anxiety, and "why me" –ism, I am pleased to report I am BACK above the 100 pound mark for weight loss (101.8 to be exact). I'm eating healthier than ever (really!) and am working towards getting back in shape physically. I don't have the endurance I had pre-surgery, but I suspect it will eventually return. I still have pain as well, but I can manage. Some days are better than others. All I can do is my best. If that means a couple days I end up doing nothing, so be it. The end result is health. My motto is "Just for Today," which should sound familiar to you Addictions folk. Every day I set a goal, so when I'm lacking direction I can recite the mantra of "Just for today." It keeps me grounded.

Even though I have a new goal each day, I still needed the next "big" goal to reach. I wanted to avoid the problem I had the last time I hit triple digits. So my new goal is to hit my lowest adult weight (210 pounds). I'm about 30 pounds away from this goal. I figure these will be 30 of the hardest pounds to lose, but at least I have a direction this time. It's hard to get to your destination if you don't know where you're going. Sounds obvious, right? My experience suggests otherwise.

My purpose in providing this update is not to whine about the things I've gone through, nor is it to brag about



the success I've had along the way. I wanted to tell my story, or at least the latest chapter of it, because it brings home a bunch of issues I suspect many of you have or will experience at some point. Whether the "Stuff" that "Happens" to you is physical, mental, situational, family-related, work-related, or something else, I just want to encourage you to stay in the fight. It's easy to fall victim to circumstances and to feel bad about whatever "Stuff" goes on, but this doesn't mean you have to completely fall apart because of it. Sure, you might struggle, and I'm certainly not suggesting everyone should just "suck it up and deal" when the "Stuff" happens. What I'm saying is you don't have to let the "Stuff" beat you or get in the way of whatever goals you set. There's a pretty wonderful sense of satisfaction when you can look that "Stuff" square in the eye and tell it, "Not today my friend... not today and not again."

So my journey rolls on. One might look at it and say I haven't gone anywhere in the last 12 months. My weight is exactly the same as it was last April. But I still think of myself as a Success Story. Sometimes success is simply making it through the muck and mire, ending up on the other side still intact. I feel like that's where I am right now.

But I'm not staying put.

Until the next time Dearest Babble Readers....

Dr-Boz (A.K.A. Skipper Boz and about 9000 other names, most of which are publishable)

