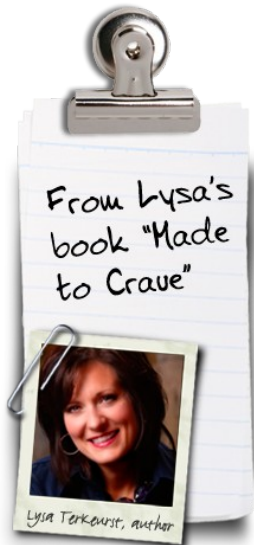


Introduction: Finding Your “Want To”



A typical book on healthy lifestyle choices should contain lots of talk on vegetables, calories, colon cleanses, and phrases like “you must,” “you should,” “or else.”

I have a problem with all that talk. I know most of it. It’s not the “how to” I’m missing. It’s the “want to” ... really wanting to make changes and deciding that the results of those changes are worth the sacrifice. More than once, I’ve stood in the aisle at Walmart holding said typical book in one hand with the other hand wedged into the back pocket of my jeans.

Jeans, I should add, I wished were several sizes smaller.

While I stood there looking at the healthy eating book, a shopping cart full of things I felt I could not live without stared back at me. Yea, verily, that cart mocked me. Part of me hated the junk food in that cart; but another part of me—a bigger part, evidently—loved the junk food in that cart. So, I’d return the book to the shelf, toss my head back, and think, “Another day, another time. I’m doing the best I can.”

In light of this admission, I think it only appropriate to be honest with you about a few things right up front.

1. I am emotionally allergic to typical books on healthy eating.
2. Not once in my life have I ever craved a carrot stick.
3. I am not bouncy perky about giving up two of the greatest delights of my taste-buds—Cheez-Its® and box-mix brownies. In fact, I’ve even asked God if it would be such a terribly difficult thing to swap the molecular structure of Cheez-Its® for carrot sticks. They’re both already orange. And, really, how hard could that be for someone who’s turned water into wine?
4. I wasn’t sure I had any business writing a book like this. I’m a simple Jesus girl on a journey to finding deeper motivation than just a number on my scale for getting and staying healthy.

You see, I'm not writing this book to beat your taste buds into submission. I'm not writing this book because I have discovered the magic diet program to get you skinny by tomorrow. And I'm definitely not writing this book because I'm an expert.

I'm writing this book because I've struggled way too long with my food choices and my weight. And word on the street says most of my girlfriends fight this same draining battle day in and day out as well.

Which brings me to the fifth thing you should know about me:

5. I started this journey weighing 167 pounds.

To some, this is a horrifyingly high number. For me, it was a sign I needed to make changes. I was heading in a dangerous direction with my weight and my health. Again. I had been as high as almost 200 pounds after the birth of my first child. And now I was headed straight back to a place I thought I'd never be again. Maybe it was because I was knocking on the door of my fortieth birthday, or perhaps it was because I had exhausted my search for the miraculous overnight solution. I finally realized the weight was going to continue to go up unless I made changes.

But the thought of taking the plunge and signing up for another diet made me want to sit down and cry. And eat. And cry some more. Then eat some more. Well, you get the not-so-flattering picture.

To others, 167 is a dream weight. In my case, the number itself was not the issue. The issue was how I felt mentally, spiritually and physically. It was time to be honest with myself.

I think we all get to a place sometimes in our lives when we have to give a brutally honest answer to the question, "How I am doing?" It's not really a conversation we have with a friend or family member. It's one of those middle-of-the-night contemplations when there's no one to fool. There's no glossing over the realities staring us in the face.

I knew certain things about myself needed to change but it was easier to make excuses than it was to tackle them head on. Rationalizations are so appealing. See if you relate to any of these:

I'm good in every other area.

I make so many sacrifices already.

I need treats as a comfort in this season of life; I'll deal with my issues later.

I just can't give this up.

The Bible doesn't specifically say this is wrong.

It's not really a problem. If I really wanted to make a change, I could; I just don't want to right now.

Oh, for heaven's sake, everyone has issues. So what if this is mine?

And on and on and on.

But excuses always got me nowhere fast, especially when it came to healthy eating. I suspect if you've picked up this book, the same laundry list of rationalization scripts have played out in your mind.

So, the cycle continues day after day, week after week, year after year. A whole lifetime could be spent making excuses, giving in, feeling guilty, resolving to do better, mentally beating myself up for not sticking to my resolve, feeling like a failure, and then resigning myself to the fact that things can't change.

And I don't want to spend a lifetime in this cycle.

I suspect you don't either.

So, before you put this book down and give in to the unhealthy cravings screaming inside your head, wait for just a second. Don't let go. You've already spent a few minutes headed in the right direction by picking up this book and reading this far.

The book you hold in your hands could be the missing companion you've needed with every healthy eating plan you tried and cried over. I believe it will help you find your "want to." In addition to helping you find the desire to conquer your unhealthy cravings, it also holds the key to something very significant for most of us women—spiritual malnutrition. We feel overweight physically but underweight spiritually. Tying these two things together is the first step on one of the most significant journeys you'll ever take with God.

It reminds me of a journey described in Matthew 19. A rich young man comes to see Jesus and explains that he is following all the rules but still feels something missing from his pursuit of God. "All of these [rules] I have kept," he says to Jesus. "What do I still lack?"(Matthew 19:20).

I doubt Mick Jagger got his inspiration from this story but the young man's desperate question sure does remind me of his Jagger's wildly popular song, "I can't get no satisfaction ... no, no, no. "

Unsatisfied.

Lacking.

Incomplete.

Hollow.

Shallow.

What do I still lack?

In other words, *How do I really get close to God?*

Such a vulnerable question. Such a relatable question.

Jesus responds, “If you want to be perfect [whole], go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21).

The rich young man then goes away sad because he won't give up the one thing that consumes him. He is so full with his riches he can't see how undernourished his soul is. He's just like people today who refuse healthier breakfast options like egg whites and fruit so they can fill themselves up with candy-sprinkled, chocolate-frosted doughnuts. Even when their sugar high crashes and they complain of splitting headaches, they steadfastly refuse to consider giving up their doughnuts.

In my past, sugar-filled life, I might have had some personal experience once or twice that led me to think of that frail little analogy.

Anyhow.

It's at this point in the biblical story that most of us ordinary Jesus girls start thinking of all the rich people we know. “Well, I sure hope they get this message. Good thing I'm not rich. Good thing this doesn't apply to me. Good thing Jesus doesn't ask me to sacrifice in this way.”

Or does he?

Jesus didn't mean this as a sweeping command for everyone who has a lot of money. Jesus meant this for any of us who wallow in whatever abundance we have. I imagine Jesus looked straight into this young man's soul and said, “I want you to give up the one thing you crave more than me. Then come, follow me.”

Piercing thought, isn't it?

Suddenly, Jesus isn't just staring at the rich young man; He's also staring at me—the inside me. The part I can't cover up with excuses and makeup.

When Jesus says, “Follow me,” it’s not an invitation to drag our divided heart alongside us as we attempt to follow hard after God. When Jesus wants us to follow Him—really follow him—it’s serious business. Here’s how Jesus describes it: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

With Jesus, if we want to gain, we must give up.

If we want to be filled, we must deny ourselves.

If we want to truly get close to God, we’ll have to distance ourselves from other things.

If we want to conquer our cravings, we’ll have to redirect them to God.

God made us capable of craving so we’d have an unquenchable desire for more of Him, and Him alone. Nothing changes until we make the choice to redirect our misguided cravings to the only one capable of satisfying them.

Getting healthy isn’t just about losing weight. It’s not limited to adjusting our diet and hoping for good physical results. It’s about recalibrating our souls so that we want to change—spiritually, physically and mentally. And the battle really is in all three areas.

Spiritually. I had to ask God to give me the desire to be healthy. I knew a vanity-seeking “want to” would never last. Shallow desires produce only shallow efforts. I had to seek a spiritual “want to” empowered by God Himself.

So, I asked. I begged, actually. I cried out to God. And day by day, God gave me just enough “want to,” laced with his strength, to be satisfied by healthy choices.

God also settled in my heart that this is an issue of great spiritual importance. Think of Eve and one of the first interactions recorded in the Bible between a woman and food. Obviously, the core of Eve’s temptation was she wanted to be like God, knowing good and evil. But we can’t

ignore the fact that *the serpent used food as a tool in the process*. If the very downfall of humanity was caused when Eve surrendered to a temptation to eat something she wasn't supposed to eat, I do think our struggles with food are important to God. We'll talk about this again later because there is a lot more to unpack where Eve's story is concerned. But I can honestly say that this is one of the most significant spiritual journeys I've ever dared to take with God. I hope you soon say the same thing.

Physically. The spiritual perspectives in this book may stir the soul, but the physical realities require turning those spiritual insights into practical choices.

When I began this journey, I finally had to admit the truth that what I eat matters. My weight is a direct reflection of my choices and the state of my health. I started with a visit to my doctor, which I highly encourage you to do before starting your healthy eating plan. The doctor ran several tests. At the time, I hoped he'd find something that was slightly off so I could miraculously lose all my extra weight as soon as he put me on medication. Alas, it wasn't to be. Except for some results that indicated I wasn't exercising regularly or making the healthiest food choices, the tests came back normal.

Hmfff. Why do doctors always say the same old thing about eating right and exercise? It's the standard doctor script for any issue I've ever had. Feeling sluggish? Eat better, move more. Feeling blue? Eat better, move more. I bet the next time I go in for a sore throat it will be the same thing. Eat better, move more. Have mercy. And we won't even go into the issues I have with the scale in my doctor's office. What is up with that thing? I am positive it weighs me heavy just to prove his point. *See? You need to eat better, move more.*

The doctor and the test results were right. My weight issues were directly linked to my food choices. Period. I had to admit it and do something about it.

Mentally. I had to decide I was tired of settling, tired of compromising. What happens when you delete "com" from the word *compromise*? You're left with a "promise." We were made for more than *compromise*. We were made for God's *promises* in every area of our lives.

Honestly, I am made for more than a vicious cycle of eating, gaining, stressing—eating, gaining, stressing ... I am made to rise up, do battle with my issues and, using the Lord's strength in me, defeat them—spiritually, physically, and mentally—to the glory of God.

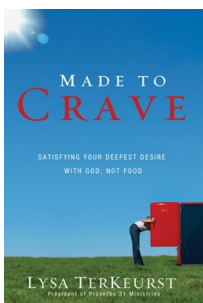
Well, I hope you'll stick around on this journey of discovering your “want to.” I can't promise it will be easy. But I can promise it will be the most empowering thing you've ever done. Just today I put on some jeans I never thought I'd wear again. And while my flesh did the happy dance of success, my soul was far from thoughts of vanity.

My soul felt free. I was amazed that I ever desired to satisfy my taste buds over satisfying my desire to break free from all the guilt, all the destruction, all the defeat.

But I think it only fair to tell you one more fact. Yes, I found my “want to.” Yes, I started eating better and moving more. Yes, I lost the weight. Yes, I feel great. Yes, I have most certainly grown closer to God than ever before.

And I still don't crave those blasted carrot sticks. I probably never will.

But my truest cravings are satisfied—and yours can be too.



This introduction is taken from Lysa TerKeurst's new book *Made to Crave*. [Purchase your copy today!](#)

Lysa TerKeurst helps everyday women live an adventure of faith through following Jesus Christ. As president of Proverbs 31 Ministries, Lysa has led thousands to make their walk with God an invigorating journey.

For more information, visit www.MadeToCrave.org

© 2010 by Lysa TerKeurst. All rights reserved.