

The Dreaded Weekend!

Dr. John H. Sklare

I've been receiving an awful lot of messages lately, from struggling weight loss warriors, with a common theme. That theme has to do with the emotional struggle that takes place every week between Friday afternoon and Sunday night. Yes – I'm talking about the dreaded weekend. The question that these frustrated people have in common is this – “*Why do I lose all control on the weekend?*”

I'm sure that many of you are nodding your head in agreement right now. The weekend is a very difficult and interesting time for a great many of you. One of the primary and most obvious reasons for the weekend struggle is that the weekend contains a great deal of unstructured time. With the busy work, family and school schedules most people have during the week, there is little or no time for relaxation and social interaction. However, when the weekend begins, a whole new schedule emerges and an entirely new team seems to take the field.

Other than discussing the nuts and bolts that differentiate the week from the weekend, I want to focus this article on something a little more subtle. Those of you who are regular readers of my columns know that I write a lot about semantics. Specifically I'm referring to the impact that the words you use and the thoughts you think have on your motivation, your sense of power and, as I am addressing in this article, your ability to nutritionally manage the weekend.

For example, some words doom you to failure before you even begin. Take the word *can't* for example. In my opinion, *can't* is truly a four letter word. If you're making statements like, “*I can't find time to exercise*”, “*I can't stop eating fast food*” or “*I can't control myself on the weekends*”, the battle is already lost. Your words eventually become your destiny.

Can't is an example of a very powerful, debilitating and telling word. On the other hand, if you avoid words that weaken you and use words that empower you, you create the framework for an entirely different emotional package and outcome. By using words and thoughts that give you strength, authority and control, you create a more positive and powerful frame of mind resulting in a happier you and more positive result.

Now let me relate this semantics issue back to the weekend. Again, the words you use influence you in very powerful and subtle ways. Now I want to point something out here that I find very interesting. Phonetically, the words *week* and *weak* are pronounced the exact same way. So every time I hear someone worried about or struggling with the *weekend*, I hear *WEAKend* in my mind.

Now granted, this isn't going to win me a Nobel Prize but it is an interesting thought. The real question is this; does this “*phonetic coincidence*” have some impact on the struggle that takes place at the end of each week? Is it possible that by saying *weekend* (*WEAKend*) you actually make yourself mentally and emotionally weaker? I suggest that it does and that perhaps you would be better served by referring to this period of time as the *STRONGend*. I know, I know. You're thinking I have way too much time on my hands.

But humor me for a moment and entertain this thought. After all, your thoughts drive your behaviors. Whereas negative thinking takes you one direction, positive thinking takes you in the exact opposite direction. My question is simple. Is it more advantageous for you to think *STRONG* or think *WEAK*? Mind/body theory would encourage you to think *strong* thoughts for the following reason.

Your thoughts have a powerful impact on your attitude, your health and your body. As a matter of fact, there are those who say that we physically become the result of our thoughts. In his book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, Dr. Deepak Chopra states the following: “*Our cells are constantly eavesdropping on our thoughts and being changed by them. A bout of depression can wreak havoc with the immune system while falling in love can boost it. Despair and hopelessness raise the risk of heart attacks and cancer thereby shortening life. This means that the line between biology and psychology can’t really be drawn with any certainty. A remembered stress, which is only a wisp of a thought, releases the same flood of destructive hormones as the actual stress itself.*”

Our thoughts are very powerful and influential tools and our bodies do respond to our thoughts. As a matter of fact, some say that our bodies are the physical result of our thoughts. Thoughts are actually electrical impulses that create biochemical reactions in your brain. These reactions release chemicals that impact every cell in your body. In that sense, the biochemistry of your body is the result of what you think. That is the very basis of mind/body medicine. Wherever a thought goes, a chemical follows. Are you starting to understand my concern about *week* and *weak*?

Every thought you have activates a messenger molecule in your brain. In other words, every mental impulse automatically gets transformed into biological information. By changing your thoughts, you can literally change your body. That’s why I always say that ***you can’t change your weight until you change your mind.*** It’s always the thought that precedes the action. The changes that you need to make in order to succeed at weight management and healthy lifestyle change are found from the neck up. Think positive thoughts, make healthier choices and your body will change – it can’t help it!

So think about this concept as you approach the end of this workweek. Are you preparing for a *WEAK*end or a *STRONG*end? This may very well make all the difference in the world regarding your diet and your dream of healthy living. Oh yes, diet. That’s another one of those words that always jump out at me. It sounds like such a negative word which is why I like to suggest that you don’t *DIE* it. I suggest you *LIVE* it. And I suggest you live it *STRONG* at the end of each week. The thoughts you think fuel your behavior so be mindful of the mental wood you through on your motivational fire.

Wishing You Great Health,

Dr. John H. Sklare