

# The Inner Diet

You Can't Change Your Weight Until You Change Your Mind!

Dr. John H. Sklare

## Part VII: Secondary Gain

Welcome to Part VII of my eight part series on emotional eating. I would like to begin this discussion today by addressing the sixth and final most common issue that leads to dieting failure called **Secondary Gain**. My Inner Diet research shows that this issue is a serious problem for only about 5% of all overweight people who are trying to lose weight. So what exactly is this thing called Secondary Gain and how does it interfere with your ability to diet, lose weight and control your eating.

Simply put, this issue identifies people who hold a deep belief that there are good reasons not to lose weight. Individuals who share this issue clearly believe that there are benefits or advantages to remaining overweight. If you are one of these people, it's easy for me to understand why you have been unable to succeed at dieting and weight loss! It's almost as if you have two different personalities struggling for control inside your head. There's the part of you that wants to eat better, feel better, lose weight and do the right thing nutritionally and then there is this other part of you that doesn't seem to care at all about what you weight, what you eat or how you feel and is constantly making excuses that ultimately result in diet failure.

From a motivational point of view, Secondary Gain is the most psychologically serious issue and, as a result, may be the most interesting of all of the six **Inner Diet** scales. It is also the issue that appears to affect the least number of people as my research shows that only about 5% of those who are overweight are identified by The Inner Diet Questionnaire. I actually strongly believe that this number is larger than 5% and my experience tells me that there are two primary reasons why it doesn't show up more often. First, secondary gain is more often than not an unconscious issue. Since the origins of this issue are often repressed, many who struggle with this are simply not aware that this is causing them a problem. And second, many others are aware but, as a coping mechanism, simply deny its existence.

Let me give you an example of conscious secondary gain that was brought to my attention by a young woman at a presentation I conducted a while back. I had just completed my explanation of Secondary Gain when a woman said to me. *"You know, my roommate needs to hear this. I think she has a Secondary Gain problem"*. I asked her to explain, and this is what she told me. She said that her roommate was an aspiring actress who was overweight. She studied hard to learn the craft, but every time an audition would come up, her roommate would always say that she was too heavy for the part. No matter how much encouragement she gave her roommate, she would never go to the auditions. The young lady concluded by saying *"you know what, I'll bet that she is using her weight as an excuse to avoid auditioning, so that she won't have to deal with the disappointment should she not get the part!"* Well, I never met her roommate so I don't know if that is true, but this scenario is an excellent example of secondary Gain. If true, her roommate had an underlying motivation to remain overweight.

An example of unconscious secondary gain that I have heard all too often involves those who have been sexually abused as children. These people often use their weight as a safety and coping mechanism. They hold on to the misguided belief that being overweight will make them less attractive

to the opposite sex and, as a result, will help them avoid dealing with painful issues such as intimacy and sexuality. This is often an unconscious issue for these people, having repressed this very traumatic and devastating memory. People who have this experience in their background often benefit greatly from making professional counseling a part of their dieting and weight loss program.

This ends Part Seven of my eight part series. In the next and final article, I will summarize this series and share a few more of my thoughts with you regarding the six most common emotional eating triggers addressed by The Inner Diet.

Wishing You Great Health,

Dr. John H. Sklare