

Obesity Is Not A Choice

By Angela Chesworth

My first appointment with a dietician was at the age of 10. Nobody spoke to me. The conversation was aimed at my mother, the assumption was made that I was eating too many sweets and not being active. All I was being judged on was how I looked.

In reality, I was being physically and mentally abused every single day by my classmate. I would have to give her a chocolate bar (A Double Decker I still tear up when I see one) and 20 pence or she would beat me up, she would tell me "It's for your own good I'm stopping you getting fatter"

My mother stopped giving me pocket money as part of my "diet plan " so I turned to theft, I would steal milk from our neighbor's doorstep so I could keep the money my mother had given me to buy milk, just so my bully wouldn't hit me. If I had no money I would drink vinegar and put my fingers down my throat to make myself vomit so I didn't have to go to school.

After a number of years, I couldn't take anymore, it was our first day in senior school and my bully approached me demanding £1 every day and a chocolate bar. Something inside me snapped. I picked up a brick and hit her in the face breaking her nose.

I had become a thug, a thief, and a liar all because of how I was treated because of the body I lived in.

I never told ANYBODY this was happening to me because she was right. I was fat and if I told someone they would agree with her.

At the age of 10 the pressure I was under to fit into what others believed was "NORMAL" set me onto a path of self-loathing, hatred, worthlessness, and shame. Nobody sees what goes on in a person's life behind closed doors. People make assumptions. People make judgments. People cause hurt

WHY??? Why do these people feel the need to judge? Why do these people feel they know better? Why can I not be accepted by all and not just seen as ANGELA?

By no means am I perfect. By no means do I not take responsibility for my health. By no means do I think I have all the answers.

Since my bariatric surgery, I witnessed more weight stigma & bias simply because people don't know my history. I'm tired. I'm tired of trying to have my "patientsvoiceheard". Most of all I'm tired of having to explain and apologize for myself.

Maybe all those closed-minded people who judge and ridicule will only stop when they experience obesity for themselves. Maybe one day the stigma and bias will shift to those who judge.

Obesity is complex. Obesity is a chronic disease. Obesity is biological. Obesity is environmental. Obesity is judged. Obesity is NOT simply what we eat. Obesity is NOT simply how we move. Obesity is NOT A CHOICE