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A Travel Writer's Perspective: How Not To Lose Weight and Still Be Happy

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By Jan Ross

I finally gave up on [Weight Watchers](#) last month.

It was not them, it was me.

It's an excellent, healthy, weight lost program that really works. It worked great for the two friends who joined the program with me: They both immediately lost the extra 30 pounds and became lifetime members while I weighed in at every meeting at approximately the same weight I started with three years previously.

I have a lot of excuses.

[Because I'm a travel writer](#), I travel a lot and eat at wonderful restaurants because I also write restaurant reviews. When you write restaurant reviews, you have an obligation to order appetizers and desserts along with fabulous meals because you have to write a complete review. At least, that's what I tell myself. When I travel, it's really a pain to count calories/points, keep track of what I have eaten, exercise the self control to eat an apple instead of a chocolate croissant, and make time to exercise.

Come to think of it, it's also a pain to do all those things when I'm at home. Add to that the fact that I have zero willpower. If chips/cookies/candy/cakes/pies are available, I will eat them. And I will eat them until I am literally sick.

I have even more excuses I could list and I'm sure you do, too.

When I went on vacation last month, I looked at some pictures of myself on the beach with my grandson and I didn't wring my hands and moan about how I should really lose those 30 pounds. No, I thought I actually looked pretty good. I didn't have a flat stomach and thin, beautiful thighs like my daughter (oh, the days of being 30-something again!) but I looked pretty damn good. And I thought, *To hell with diets*.

And if you, like me, are part of the huge percentage of the female population in the United States who wears sizes 14-16 and would love to get rid of those 20-30 pounds, you might say the same thing.

Why are we depriving ourselves of some of the best things in life (yes, food)? Because of some ideal vision we see in a magazine, on tv, or in a movie?

Well, I'm not going to do it anymore. Instead, I've started acting like my husband who *has* lost 30 pounds recently and never went to one Weight Watcher meeting. He's just eating sensibly and working out on the treadmill every day. That's it. I'm not going to agonize over this any longer and spend all my time planning what I'm going to eat then worrying about what I just ate.

My goal is to be healthy and content with the way I look. Here's what I'm doing.

1. **I eat when I am hungry.** This is a hard one. You have breakfast every morning, right? Because you are supposed to have breakfast every morning? I don't do that anymore. Most mornings, I'm not hungry. If I am, I eat something. I try to eat healthy as much as possible. I love fruit, yogurt, oatmeal, so that's not too much of a problem. But if I'm not hungry, I just don't eat until I get hungry. This goes against every weight loss rule but it works for me.
2. **I try to eat sensibly when I get hungry.** I love fruits and veggies, grilled meat and whole grain bread. I also love



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dessert. So I have it. I just try to not go crazy.

3. **I have a snack when I want one.** I keep things like sugar-free Jello, fresh cut-up fruit and veggies, and sugar-free popsicles on hand. But if I want a piece of candy, I have a piece of candy. I don't keep an entire bag of candy in the house because I will eat it all if I do. I keep one piece of candy. Eat it. Buy another. Whatever works.
4. **I don't eat after dinner.** Sometimes this is a lie. I go back to the kitchen and get a snack, usually an unhealthy one. Those times are always when I haven't eaten enough for dinner, so I try to fill up: mostly veggies and fruits on the plate and a small serving of meat. My husband and I have learned we are very satisfied with a very small piece of chicken, fish, or steak so we usually cut one in half.
5. **I don't eat more than one unhealthy meal a day.** If I know I'm going to have something butter-drenched, cheesy, or fried for dinner, I try to have a salad for lunch. And I don't usually eat the whole dinner. Instead, I'll save half for the next day. When a dinner is really, really rich this is not much of a problem. Most American restaurants serve portions that are too big for one person anyway.
6. **I go to the Farmer's Market.** Most towns nowadays have a local farmer's market and it's the best place you can go for fresh fruits and veggies. There is absolutely nothing like a fresh summer tomato. I will take one of those sliced in preference to something unhealthy and fattening anytime.
7. **I buy organic.** When I can't make it to the local farmer's market, I head to Whole Foods or Trader Joes. We're lucky to have these stores in our town, but many supermarkets and even Wal-Mart have started stocking organic items. I was skeptical at first, but they definitely taste better and are better for you.
8. **I drink more water.** OK, this one if a flat-out lie. I should say I *try* to drink more water. I still love diet drinks and drink way more than I should, but I'm working on it. The idea of drinking gallons of water a day has been debunked by most diet plans, even Weight Watchers, but I know water is the best, healthiest thing to drink.
9. **I stay active.** I joined the local YMCA a few years ago and it was the best investment I've ever made. Even when I was struggling with Weight Watchers and not losing weight, I was going to the YMCA for classes. This is probably the only reason I don't weigh a whole lot more. I went to a lot of different classes before I discovered that I loathe spinning but adore Zumba. Pilates was too expensive but Yoga was free. That silly looking ball class where they bounce around on huge balls? Love. Working out on exercise equipment? Hate.
10. **I have a wonderful husband.** The other day, I had lunch plans with some girlfriends. I went to say goodbye to my husband, all spiffed up in my sundress, and he gaped and said, "You look beautiful. You look gorgeous. I am so lucky."

Yeah. He makes it pretty easy to enjoy the way I look. He would never in a million years tell me to lose weight.

I'm keeping him.

So let's hear from the ladies and gents out there. What do you do, if anything, to keep from packing on the pounds when *you* travel? Ladies, do you think you spend too much time worrying about it? Gents: Do you think the ladies in your life should relax and enjoy who they are, regardless of size? Tell us your thoughts and/or tips in the Comments section.

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