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Amazon Trail: The Weight of the World

Weight is a weighty subject. I've been sensitive about being skinny. Now I'm sensitive about being heavier than I'd like to be. I can't win, even when I'm arguing only with myself.

Nobody else wants to hear about it. This blocky shape that I've become worries no one but me. My partner doesn't seem to mind my new solidity. I seem generally more confident and outgoing these days, but I have no idea if that has anything to do with shape shifting.

I grew up skinny. Everyone in my family who's been long-lived has been thin. This convinces me that with my genes I would do well to shed whatever pounds might bring my silhouette back toward the Ichabod Crane model.

Believe me, I love that my characters Chantal and Pam and Lucy are big women. I'm not into judging anyone but myself although I'm sure society's measuring tape has ingrained itself in my consciousness.

Have another Ghirardelli chocolate chip. I only know how to spell the name because they're in front of me. Seventy calories per 1 and 1/3 cup. Not bad. Calories from fat: 35. Oh.

I hate knowing these things! And I hate having no will power. How did this happen to me? I loved being a skinny androgynous person.

Age happened. I remember when I first started getting a tummy. I got an exercise book. It detailed the YMCA or Marine or some such regimen. I was gung-ho and followed it religiously. It didn't take many push ups to develop the tendonitis of the shoulder that I live with to this day.

Another book was specifically geared to flattening one's stomach. I was not religious enough. Yoga was great, but I suspect only yoga instructors can put in the time to shape up. Certainly I couldn't, balancing a full time job and a writing career.

>For a period of time, I was cured of my food allergy. Before that my eating choices were severely limited. After the cure, by an acupuncturist using the NAET program, which re-programs the body, I began experimenting.

My allergy had been to



corn. Because corn is so pervasive in America, I couldn't eat white flour, white sugar and a host of other foods processed with corn or containing some derivative. Over those months I learned to eat Mexican food (corn tortillas), returned to Chinese food (corn starch) and dove into American food (corn syrup). I could eat pick-

when the thickening of the body occurs with no help at all. When menopause makes a person like me more nervous and I add compulsive eating to my recipe for living. When arthritis set in and I, for one, became disabled for a year because of corrective foot surgery. I couldn't partake of optimal exercise (no complaints from me). When I needed medications to resolve one problem and their side effects created another - weight gain.

I understand that it's okay not to be an anorexic model. That's not what I aspire to. I just want to be able to climb stairs again without feeling like I'm lugging sacks of potatoes in my pockets. I just want to stop buying all new sizes year after year. I just want kids to taunt androgynous me on the streets like they used to.

Someone said it was good

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les again, and tartar sauce and Cheerios. Potato chips and fudgsicles and Three Musketeers! Rich butter-fatty ice cream and anything I wanted at potlucks.

We went to the fair one weekend. I went hog wild, eating Italian sausage for lunch and cinnamon-sugar doughboys for dessert. I tasted funnel cake.

Last night I swore I'd have tea instead of indulging in taste orgies. Ha! I'm a born-again glutton ready to take on any dish that appeals plus thirds. I dream of creamsicles. I fondly recall the summers of my youth when I lay on the beach reading and delighting in a Milky Way. I haven't tried corn on the cob yet, but give me another week.

This burgeoning middle-aged appetite came at a bad time: middle age, to be specific. This is

to see me enjoying food. She'd witnessed me discovering Ben and Jerry's Cherry Garcia. A whole pint of it at once. So much good food, so little time.

I went shopping on the Web. Climbing pants have roomy gusseted crotches. Baggy jeans are still in style. T-shirts come in extra-large. Send me clothes with room to move.

There's no stopping me now. The joy of cooking's become a lifestyle. I only follow one rule, the quote we have posted on our refrigerator door: "Never eat more than you can lift." - Miss Piggy. ▼

Copyright Lee Lynch 1998. Lee had a death in her family, and offered us an earlier column. She is the author of eleven books and lives on the Oregon Coast. Her web page is at leelynch6.tripod.com.

Erica Schoenberg, Ph.D.

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