

## Morbid Obesity and Roger P.

I've been fat my whole life. Being the fat kid in school made me an outcast. When you're always on the outside looking in, your level of caring declines. I felt that everything and everyone was against me, and I was an angry kid.

Not only was I fat but I was weird looking, too. I carried all my weight in my hips and thighs, like a woman. I was one of those obese people who seem to be not a "he" or a "she" but an "it." I looked like two different people stuck together.

In my line of work, which is designing and building binary data systems, I'm able to work solo as a contract employee. I always chose to work from home, going in for meetings as infrequently as possible. I fashioned my career to allow for maximum reclusiveness.

I was always ashamed and embarrassed. Whenever I went out to eat I would find the darkest, most secluded corner in the restaurant to hide out in. Clothes were a problem, too. For years I wore bib overalls, the monster size. I couldn't button them all the way up on the sides.

And I lived in fear of children. Children would see me in public and pipe up with something totally humiliating. I started scheduling my visits to the market for the middle of the night just to avoid being humiliated by little kids.

In the midst of all of this humiliation, I had a strong feeling that this obesity was not my fault. I would keep going to doctors to try and get some help. Normally their response, after they'd taken my money, was to say, "Go home, kid, and quit eating so much." I would tell them, "I don't eat that much," and I didn't, I never have. You and I could eat the same exact meal and you'd be unaffected, but I'd wake up the next morning and my pants wouldn't fit. But every doctor I tried to get help from told me that although I probably didn't think I was a huge eater, in reality I was. They made me feel like a liar. Some of them gave me amphetamines.

At age 23 I started getting leg pains, and then later on I developed full body cramps. I was cramping all the time, having night sweats and weird vision problems. None of the doctors I went to had any solutions for me. These problems were variously misdiagnosed as gout, pseudo-gout, tendonitis, and a bunch of other things.

My life was miserable. I'd do my work, come home, drink a six-pack of beer and a half bottle of Tequila every night, and go to sleep and get up and do the whole thing over again. One night a friend infuriated me on the phone by telling me I was like some little old lady with her two dogs and no life. It sent me off the scale. I yelled at her. But I thought about it all night, and the next day I realized that she had only described me as I really was.

I had heard Dr. Platt talking about weight loss on the radio. The day after the fight with my friend I went to see him. He sat me down and talked to me for over an hour. He wanted to know everything about my family history and my life. After my initial visit he put me on progesterone and DHEA and started me on the diet. Right away I started losing weight.

About three months into the program I had a real bad flare-up in my knee, hip and in between; it felt like having hot steel shoved up your leg. I tried a chiropractor and then a sports medicine specialist, but they didn't help. Finally I thought, "What the heck; I'll ask Dr. Platt about it."

I was totally shocked by his reaction. "Look, I'm your physician and I'm treating you," he said. "I want to know everything that's happening to you." I found that such a strange attitude for a doctor.

He added testosterone and thyroid to my medications, and changed the type of DHEA I was taking. That same day he diagnosed my fibromyalgia, which is the pain in my leg that had been misdiagnosed by so many doctors. About three days later I felt as though I'd come out of a fog. It's hard to describe. I had been there so long I didn't know I was there. I had an amazing change, a new clarity of thought. It was startling.

And I was pain-free for the first time in 24 years. Strange things started happening to me physically at this point. All my life I've been kind of a big, white farm-boy-looking guy without any muscle definition at all. Now I've developed all this muscle definition. I'm much stronger. I used to sleep eight or ten hours a night and then sit all day without wanting to do anything. Now I sleep about four hours a night and I'm never tired. Life is good.

I weigh 195 pounds. It's the first time I've been less than 200 pounds since I was 12 years old. My brain hasn't kept up with my body and my biggest challenges now are social and psychological. I'd say socially I'm probably at a junior high school grade level because I've never participated in society outside of work.