

The Weight You Carry: What If It's Not Just About Food?

By Robert Ferguson

Have you ever heard of **ACE**?

It stands for **Adverse Childhood Experiences**, and it may be *the missing link* between you and the breakthrough you've been desperately seeking.

You see, many people want to lose weight.

They want to feel better, have more energy, eat differently, and live free of medications.

And yet...

They remain stuck.

They try. They fail. They try again. Nothing seems to work for long.

But what if the issue isn't just about what you eat—or how much?

What if the reason you can't move forward is buried in the past?

The Breakthrough That Changed the Conversation

In the 1990s, **Dr. Vincent J. Felitti**, along with the CDC, led one of the largest and most groundbreaking public health studies in American history. Known as the **ACE Study**, it revealed a powerful connection between childhood trauma and later-life chronic conditions—including obesity, diabetes, depression, and even early mortality (Felitti et al., 1998).

The study found that the more trauma a person experiences before age 18—things like abuse, neglect, household dysfunction—the higher their risk for physical and emotional health problems as an adult.

And yet, most doctors never ask about ACEs.

Most weight loss programs never bring it up.

And most people have no idea how much their past may be controlling their present.

Mary's Story: The Weight Wasn't the Problem

Mary was 28 years old when she entered a medical weight loss program, weighing **408 pounds**.

With structure and monitoring, she lost **276 pounds** in just **51 weeks**—an incredible transformation that brought her down to **132 pounds**.

The clinic was thrilled. But within **three weeks**, she regained **37 pounds**.

Mary initially blamed sleep eating. But after compassionate and persistent questioning from the clinic's lead, she opened up:

An older man at her job—who was married—had recently made a pass at her. That interaction triggered old trauma. She then revealed that her grandfather had **sexually abused her from age 10 to 21**.

The attention she received at a lower weight made her feel unsafe. Her body reacted the only way it knew how: it put the weight back on. Fast.

Her story became a cornerstone case cited by Dr. Felitti to illustrate how weight gain can be a subconscious *solution*, not a problem—especially when weight serves as a barrier between a person and perceived danger (Felitti, 2010).

Why You Might Feel Stuck

Maybe you've said this before:

- “I don't get it—I'm eating better but not losing weight.”
- “I always sabotage myself.”
- “I know what to do... I just can't seem to do it consistently.”

You're not lazy.

You're not broken.

You might just be protecting yourself.

I've seen this repeatedly in my work.

Linda's Story: “I Just Don't Know Why the Weight Isn't Coming Off”

Linda had been working with me for two years. Her weight never budged. She'd lose a pound or two, gain it back. She was consistent—but stuck.

One day, during a coaching session, she finally opened up.

She had been **molested as a child**. Even as an adult, she was often the target of inappropriate attention. And she'd watched her mother struggle with cycles of weight loss and gain, which became emotionally tied to pain, disappointment, and instability.

The extra weight had become her protection—keeping unwanted attention at bay. Once she made the connection, the emotional fog began to clear.

John's Story: “I'm Afraid of What I'll Look Like If I Lose Weight”

John weighed **440 pounds** when we met.

He had tried every method—but nothing stuck.

In one honest conversation, he shared a long-suppressed memory: as a boy, he accidentally saw his mother undressed after she had lost over 200 pounds. Her loose skin shocked and disturbed him. He didn't understand it at the time, but the image lodged in his mind.

As an adult, that visual memory became an unconscious *fear*. He couldn't lose weight because doing so would bring back the trauma of what he saw—and what he didn't want to become.

Again, the weight was serving a purpose.

What the Scale Doesn't Show

What Mary, Linda, and John all have in common is this:

They weren't stuck because of a lack of knowledge.
They were stuck because of **unresolved trauma**.

Once those experiences came to light, real transformation could begin.

What You Can Do Today

If you've been stuck, ask yourself:

- Have I ever experienced trauma, especially as a child?
- Do I associate weight loss with fear, exposure, or vulnerability?
- Is part of me afraid of being seen or pursued?
- Am I using weight as protection without realizing it?

These questions are hard—but they're also healing.

Final Word: Your Past Is Not Your Fault—But Healing Is Your Responsibility

ACE doesn't define you. But it may be *informing* your decisions, cravings, and resistance.

You can heal.
You can change.
And you don't have to do it alone.

But to move forward, we must stop blaming ourselves and start *understanding ourselves*.

You Deserve to Feel Better—Let's Talk

If this article spoke to something deep inside you...

If you've struggled with your weight, your energy, your relationship with food—and nothing seems to stick—there may be more going on beneath the surface.

Let's find out together.

I'm offering a **free consultation** to anyone who's ready to explore a different path. A path rooted in compassion, understanding, science, and healing. No judgment. Just a conversation that could change everything.

Schedule your free consultation today: <https://calendly.com/dietfreelife/free-consultation>

Let's uncover the *real* reasons behind your health challenges—and create a plan that finally works for *you*.

References

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2. Felitti, V. J. (2010). **The origins of addiction: Evidence from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study.** *The Permanente Journal*, 14(3), 82–87. <https://doi.org/10.7812/TPP/10-019>
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Robert Ferguson is a California- and Florida-based single father of two daughters, nutritionist, researcher, best-selling author, speaker, podcast and television host, health advisor, NAACP Image Award Nominee, creator of the **Diet Free Life** methodology, and **Chief Nutrition Officer for iCoura Health**. He also serves on the **Presidential Task Force on Obesity** for the National Medical Association and the **Health and Product Advisory Board** for Zinzino, Inc.