

## **Phase I of Peter's Life**

Some people are born fat, some achieve fatness, others have fatness thrust on them. I don't quite know in which category I fell, but one thing was quite clear I was fat for most of my life.

It wasn't always so. I was a scrawny kid born in Madras, brought up on a staple diet of Rice and Rasam and Curd. At the age of eight, our family shifted to Bombay and my problems started. My mother always encouraged me to study; games and exercise were actively discouraged. Not being a particularly athletic type and generally having poor muscular co-ordination, I contented myself by eating and growing fat. This was a vicious cycle the fatter I got, the more inactive and hence I put on more weight. I got excellent grades in school but was failing in "PT" short for "physical training". For me, it was more like "physical torture". I couldn't do any of the exercises and couldn't play any of the games.

Then at the age of fourteen, I had my first lucky break - puberty. I shot up in height and all the puppy fat disappeared. I became lean and lanky and developed an interest in long-distance running and exercise. Between sixteen and nineteen I was probably in the best shape in my life. I weighed 66 kilos and my precious only precious pair of Levi's were waist 32, length 34. I could run six kilometres at the drop of a hat and do ten chin-ups or pull-ups on demand

And then my next disaster Chartered Accountancy. It took me four years to qualify and I put on exactly seven and a half kilograms per year. During this period I had to study a lot and at these times the only exercise was the long hike from the bedroom to the refrigerator and back (fifteen seconds). So by the time I was 23, I weighed ninety-six kilos and was heading for my the first century in my life.

The excess weight kind of creeps into you -- you never really notice it coming on. The Dutch truffle pastries, the vanilla ice creams accompanied alternately with gulab jamuns or hot chocolate sauce, the sizzler with extra cheese accompanied by bottles of cola- none of these have an instant effect. You feel just the same after eating them- so what the hell. But the fat insidiously creeps in between the clefts of your chin, the folds of your abdomen and the pits of your thighs. Very soon you find yourself loosening one belt of your buckle and then it's a long road downhill as the trousers don't fit any more, and the paunch has to be tucked in. I watched in horror as my waistline expanded and my wardrobe contracted. My waistline went to 40, then 42 until the Levi's guys told me that my waist and length could not be matched out of their regular line.

Not that I didn't try to lose weight. I tried lots of things. Diets. Gymnasiums. Jogging. Cycling. Yoga. But nothing worked. Three things were against me my weight, my appetite and chocolate cake. Let me explain.

Being ninety-six kilos kind of makes it difficult to engage in any protracted exertion for long periods. To put it simply, you get tired fast. So you can't exercise as long as you need to, to burn those dreaded calories. And still, it doesn't work I can tell you from experience. At the height of my fatness I was panting my way through four, six, eight kilometres of slow jogging every other day but one soft drink sometime later put paid to all my efforts.

My appetite was the other deciding factor. I was the guy the family relied upon to polish off the extra food ordered at the restaurant when our family went out for dinner which was often. I loved to eat. And eat often. If I missed a meal or even if it got delayed I couldn't function. I would get headaches and become irritable and snappy. "Feed the animal at regular intervals" was the sign outside my bedroom. Food was what I needed and in healthy quantities. Breakfast at nine am to lunch at one was fine, but I needed lots of help (read snacks) to weather the long break until dinner at nine. So you can imagine the trouble I would have to stick to ANY diet for any period. It just wouldn't work.

I don't think I need to explain much about chocolate cake except that I loved it. We used to buy two cakes on birthdays one for me and one for the other guests. I would finish half my share at the party itself. The other half was transported to the refrigerator but it didn't stay there long. Regular trips to the refrigerator every fifteen minutes made short work of what was left. And soon there was none. Until the next birthday, that is, which was never far off

I kept making valiant attempts to lose weight with diets. Some were partly successful, but the weight I lost came back with interest when I got back to my regular habits. Besides, when I tried to reduce the quantity of food I would eat, I would get up from the dinner table, hungry. And I couldn't function. I would go around with that hungry look on my face until someone took pity on me and fed me something. If nobody bothered I helped myself to whatever was available. I think I must have spent a fortune on diet books with little or no effect. Finally, I guess I resigned myself to a lifetime of being fat.

Being fat was more than a social inconvenience that I used to get tired standing at weddings, or that I could no longer run any more. All this extra weight was telling on my health though I didn't realize it at that time. I used to take six to eight trips a day to the toilet to relieve myself something I thought was normal! I had an extremely sensitive throat it's the first thing that would get badly sore when I ate something out of the way. Coughs, colds, fevers, upset stomach, diarrhoea, constipation all followed one another in regular procession. But they came once a month or so, and I had a lot of company in the doctor's waiting room, so I didn't think much of it. I thought this was all a part of life. I regarded myself as a healthy specimen because I didn't have any major illness or ailment

And so life would have gone on with one more fat guy joining the hordes at the buffet table. This book would never have been written if it were not for my second lucky break my marriage to my lucky mascot Rita. On this momentous occasion, one of my sister's friends, Niloufer, thought I needed to lose some weight. Not an Einsteinian observation, but I am eternally grateful for her wedding gift to me a book on weight loss called "Fit for Life" by Harvey and Marilyn Diamond.

For three months the book lay on the shelf (as gift books usually are), until one fateful day in June 1996, I was scheduled to take a four-hour train ride to Pune. As I was looking for a book to keep me company, I spotted my sister reading "Fit for Life". As is my wont, I snatched the book and ran for the train. Books snatched in such manner invariably make for better reading and I highly recommend you try it.

And so it was on a hot summer day somewhere on the Western Ghats was I introduced to the concept of Natural Hygiene. And I was hooked. For the first time, I understood why I was fat. I understood why all my past efforts to lose weight came to nought. And I learnt how I could get the weight off, effortlessly and permanently. And then came the unbelievable part- I could

do all this, eating three square meals a day, each to my stomach's content!!! No portion counting. No calorie counting. No starvation diets. No drinking wheatgrass juice with one hand, holding your nose with the other. I had to eat lots of fruits which I loved. And lots of salads that would be new, but nothing scary. And I would have to give up a few things, none of which I considered vital to my life.

I couldn't believe what I was reading. I re-read the whole book on the train itself and decided that at least it was worth a try. I got off at Pune at 10 am and my business associates picked me up for breakfast. At the restaurant, while they ordered a three-egg omelette with toast and baked beans, I settled for a glass of orange juice. They looked quizzically at me and I felt compelled to explain. All about Natural Hygiene, Fit for life, Fruits for breakfast, lots of salad for lunch the works. it was all fresh off the oven after all.

They exchanged a glance between each other and looked at me carefully for any other signs that I might have lost it. Luckily there were none. So it was dismissed as "one more of Peter's fads" which would last for three and a half days, maybe four. I had some salad along with my lunch and I returned home that night feeling quite OK my first brush with my new diet.

The next day I explained the whole system to my wife and god bless her soul - she supported me. I don't know how immeasurably more difficult my task would have been otherwise. So I switched to having fruit breakfasts. For a guy who used to have a full loaf of bread with jam or cheese and ketchup (yes, ketchup- try it it's delicious), or one dozen idlis or home-made dosas for breakfast, this was a novel experience. Remember, I was doing this off a book and had no other guidance.

The next day I was terrified of going hungry. So just before leaving for work, I had a large slice of watermelon, four oranges, two or three apples, and a couple of mangoes for good measure. Maybe some grapes as well. I don't remember but it was almost a full fruit basket. Surprisingly I filled up. I did feel a bit hungry at around eleven o'clock, but a few bananas (half a dozen, I think) took care of the problem. Lunch was my regular meal with the only change being I had a large salad first. Dinner too was the same. So the second day passed off without much ado. And so did the third, the fourth.. and very soon a week had gone by.

Since I was stuffing myself with fruits the moment the slightest sign of hunger turned up I was never hungry. And when I climbed on the weighing scale it showed ninety-five kg. One kg off in a week! That's remarkable. I felt the system deserved to be persisted with. So I stuck with it, and one week later, I had dropped another kilo. And so it went on four kilos in the first month, another four in the second. In four months I had knocked off sixteen kilos effortlessly.

Naturally, I began feeling a lot lighter. The trousers began slipping off my waist. My T-shirts no longer burst at the seams. And finally, when I had to send off my belt for an extra hole to be drilled into it, I knew I was really onto something. So I kept at it. Read Fit For Life II, then their cookbook. I surfed the net and found out some more books which I devoured. I met up with people in Bombay who also followed the system. We exchanged notes. I had the unique opportunities to meet Natural Hygiene Gurus like Dr Keiki Sidhwa in the UK and others in the US, which I exploited to the hilt. I brought up my difficulties and got them explained. I reached a plateau of weight loss, and then after some more effort, got off it. Finally, after about one and a half years, after having lost almost thirty kg, the weight loss stopped.

Thereafter I did put on a few kgs, but nothing spectacular and now for over two years, my weight has been stable.

I am now fit as a fiddle. I can slip into my college jeans once again. I share clothes with my teenage brother who is seventeen years younger than me. I go for long treks in the Himalayas and 1998, reached 14,500 feet at Tapovan. I look five years younger than my age.

Considering that I looked at least five years older before, you can say I look almost ten years younger. My wife says she has got a new husband! I have had to change my entire wardrobe but it was well worth the expense. People who have not seen me for a couple of years fail to recognize me when I pass them on the street. At times, I have had a good laugh, when someone like this comes to my office and asks me where Peter is!

Another of my friends saw my "new" photograph in the press and called me up saying "Peter, I have seen your article and photo in Business India. Only thing, they have put someone else's photo". He refused to believe it was me. Once as a prank, my wife introduced me as my younger brother to one of her friends who had just met us once at our wedding!

Coming back to practicalities, my coughs and colds have disappeared. I rarely get fevers. I have not seen the doctor once in the three years I have been following this system. Neither have I needed to pop even a single aspirin or antacid in this period. I threw away my medicine pouch from my toilet kit. My stomach has settled down. I feel much lighter, much more energetic. I can do a lot more in my day. I sleep better and my wife says I have stopped snoring! None of this is really surprising. Just imagine, you are carrying a 30 kg rucksack on your back all your life. Now suddenly, you are putting it down. You don't have to carry it anymore. You will feel better, you can function better!!

Society, I must say, has not been supportive. As a rule, first, everyone says it won't work. Then they say that yes, it might, but you can't stick to it. Then they say that you have lost too much weight and look sickly, you must put some on. Then they ignore you altogether. They will give a pretty tough time to anyone trying to follow this system. That was one of the reasons for putting up this site and writing a book.

What were the other reasons? Well, lots of people asked me how I did it. After a while, I tired of explaining it to each one and said "Please wait. I'm putting up a site and writing a book with all the answers". Now the time has come to put up or shut up. More importantly, I see so many overweight people around, trying to desperately lose weight. Mostly, they don't succeed. I feel a deep fellow feeling for these people. I have been where they were and I can understand what they are going through. I genuinely feel I can help them. I have found one of the ways to achieve permanent weight loss, naturally, with minimum expense and effort and would like to share this knowledge with anyone and everyone in the world who is interested. I see people struggling and I have an answer. It would be criminal to keep it inside me. I feel I owe a debt to Natural Hygiene, which I can pay off in part by making it more popular. I strongly feel the world would be a better place if people followed even just a part of the system.

Finally, I see the plethora of weight loss systems floating around in the market. Most of them do not work. Some are downright harmful. Many are expensive and insist on your buying their special powders, pills or potions or biscuits!!!. And people are getting taken for a ride. I feel that someone has to come forward and show the light to dispel the darkness. Then at least people will be able to decide for themselves what is the right thing to do. I don't claim my

system is the best. I don't even claim it is my system. It's just something I discovered and would like to share with you. Don't take my words for it. Try it out yourself and then decide.

You, dear reader, are now at the threshold of the greatest health discovery of your life. Read on, and then most importantly, implement the suggestions given in this book. And watch the excess weight melt away before your eyes. There are no ifs and buts. With a few exceptions, this system suits everyone. And it will almost certainly work. And it has NO major negative side effects.

But all I can do is show the way. You will have to walk it. You have to lose the weight for yourself, I cannot do it for you. You have to decide that you want to do something about it. Buying the book or visiting the site is a good first step.

This represents the first phase of Peter's introduction to Natural Hygiene - 1996 to 1999. In April 2000, he entered into the second phase by doing a 31 day, water-only fast at Dr Scott's Natural Health Institute. Read on to learn about his experiences..