

Along The Weigh

Your Thoughts & Reflections
On Your WLS Journey

Your Life Before, During
& After Surgery

The Companion Journal to
Weight Loss Surgery: Understanding & Overcoming Morbid Obesity
Life Before, During & After Surgery

Michelle Boasten
FBE Service Network & Network Publishing
Akron, Ohio

Thank You for your support of the book

Weight Loss Surgery Understanding & Overcoming Morbid Obesity

Keep the message of hope...

The "Along The Weigh" journal is offered as a gift and as a thank you for the support of the book, *Weight Loss Surgery: Understanding & Overcoming Morbid Obesity*. If you like the book and/or the journal and want to support others struggling with morbid obesity, please continue reading. You don't need to spend any money.

As you know, being morbidly obese is an emotional journey. Many people are still unaware that morbid obesity is a complex disease stemming from a genetic combination that makes weight loss and weight maintenance difficult if not impossible for millions of people. Surgical intervention is the best and most effective form of treatment at present. But sadly, many doctors and others perpetuate the myth that morbid obesity is a matter of gluttony, laziness and poor self-control.

If you've had surgery and been helped through surgical intervention, then you will understand how tempting it is to want to stop every morbidly obese person you see and tell them about the success of weight loss surgery.

There's another way you can help. You can be a part of getting the word out about the effectiveness of weight loss surgery simply by recommending to your local librarian to order a copy of the book. Just call the local libraries in your area or sign and give a copy of the letter on the next page to your local librarian. The goal is to have at least one weight loss surgery resource available at every library in the country. Everybody should be aware that weight loss surgery is a healthy, safe and effective form of treatment for morbid obesity. News stories about weight loss surgery will soon get old and lose media attention, but together we can keep the message of hope about weight loss surgery alive.

Thank you for your support,
Michelle F. Boasten

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to every person who has ever struggled with morbid obesity.

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Along The Weigh

Your Thoughts & Reflections On Your WLS Journey

Your Life Before, During & After Surgery

The Companion Journal to
Weight Loss Surgery: Understanding & Overcoming Morbid Obesity
Life Before, During & After Surgery

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Contents

Life Before Surgery 9

- My Obesity Story Begins...
- My Weight
- My Challenges
- My Memories
- My Emotions
- My Co-Morbidities
- My Diets
- My Stereotypes
- My Obesity Philosophy
- My Thoughts & Reflections Before Surgery

Life During Surgery 49

- My Feelings About Weight Loss Surgery
- My Family, My Friends
- My Expectations
- My Physician (PCP)
- My Surgeon
- My Surgery Choice
- My Insurer
- My Consultation Visit
- My Pre-Surgery Preparation
- My Big Day
- My Thoughts & Reflections During Surgery

Life After Surgery 87

- My Post-Op Journey
- My Post-Op Medications
- My Post-Op Diet
- My Post-Op Recipes
- My Victories
- My Adjustments
- My Weight & Measurements
- My Photo Journey
- My Support Group
- My Thoughts & Reflections After Surgery

Before You Start Your Journal...

The road into obesity and out of obesity is paved with lots of emotions, stories and memories. Some are painful; some may even be humorous (in retrospect). As a morbidly obese person, I am on this same journey. I understand this road firsthand. Even though I would describe my life as good, I was unhappy and dissatisfied with my size. I did not hate myself and in many ways, I felt very good about who I am and how God created me. I was not clinically depressed, nor was I reclusive. But I had limitations due to my size and I wanted to free myself from the mental and physical challenges associated with carrying an extra 100 pounds and more.

I kept many of the feelings to myself and while I was smiling, a small part of me was crying. I used avoidance as a coping technique. I would not deny the painful parts of my life, nor did I allow myself to dwell on them. But when I found hope to escape the morbid obesity through weight loss surgery, I felt free for the first time in my life to remember and even share the most intimate, painful and humiliating parts of my life.

I would never share things about my weight, let alone the actual number. It seemed that nearly every time a group of women would get together, somebody (in a normal size body) would talk about weight, or the latest diet or diet gimmick. It bothered me that they could speak so openly and discuss the topic so casually. I could not do this. My problem far exceeded theirs and I knew it.

It wasn't free to talk about my obesity related issues until I decided to have weight loss surgery. With an on-line and in-person obesity surgery support group, I found myself sharing everything from how much I weighed to how I camouflaged the physical challenges of obesity. I arrived at a place where I knew that I was not alone and there were people who understood me because my story was in many ways their own story. Words cannot describe how freeing it was just to talk about the stuff I had bottled up inside of me for years.

Like I said, the journey into and out of obesity is an extraordinary journey. Your life story is enough to fill a book and this organized journal will help you chronicle the story of your own journey into and out of obesity. Take your time. It can take three years or more to complete this journal. If your memories are too painful, don't go there until you are able to handle the emotion. You have to be comfortable. The process will be cathartic, but there is a tremendous amount of healing as you write each word.

It is my prayer that at the end of the journey out of obesity, that you will look back and thank God that you made it over.

Sincerely,
Michelle

Life Before Surgery

My Obesity Story Begins...	11
My Weight	13
My Challenges	14
My Memories	20
My Emotions	24
My Co-Morbidities	32
My Diets	36
My Stereotypes	43
My Obesity Philosophy	45
My Thoughts & Reflections Before Surgery	47

My Weight

The "Weigh" We Were ...

My Weight Chart	Pounds	BMI	When
My Lowest Adult Weight			
My Highest Adult Weight			
My Pre-Surgical Weight			
My Current Weight			

Thoughts About My Lowest Weight...

Thoughts About My Highest Weight...

Thoughts About My Pre-Surgical Weight...

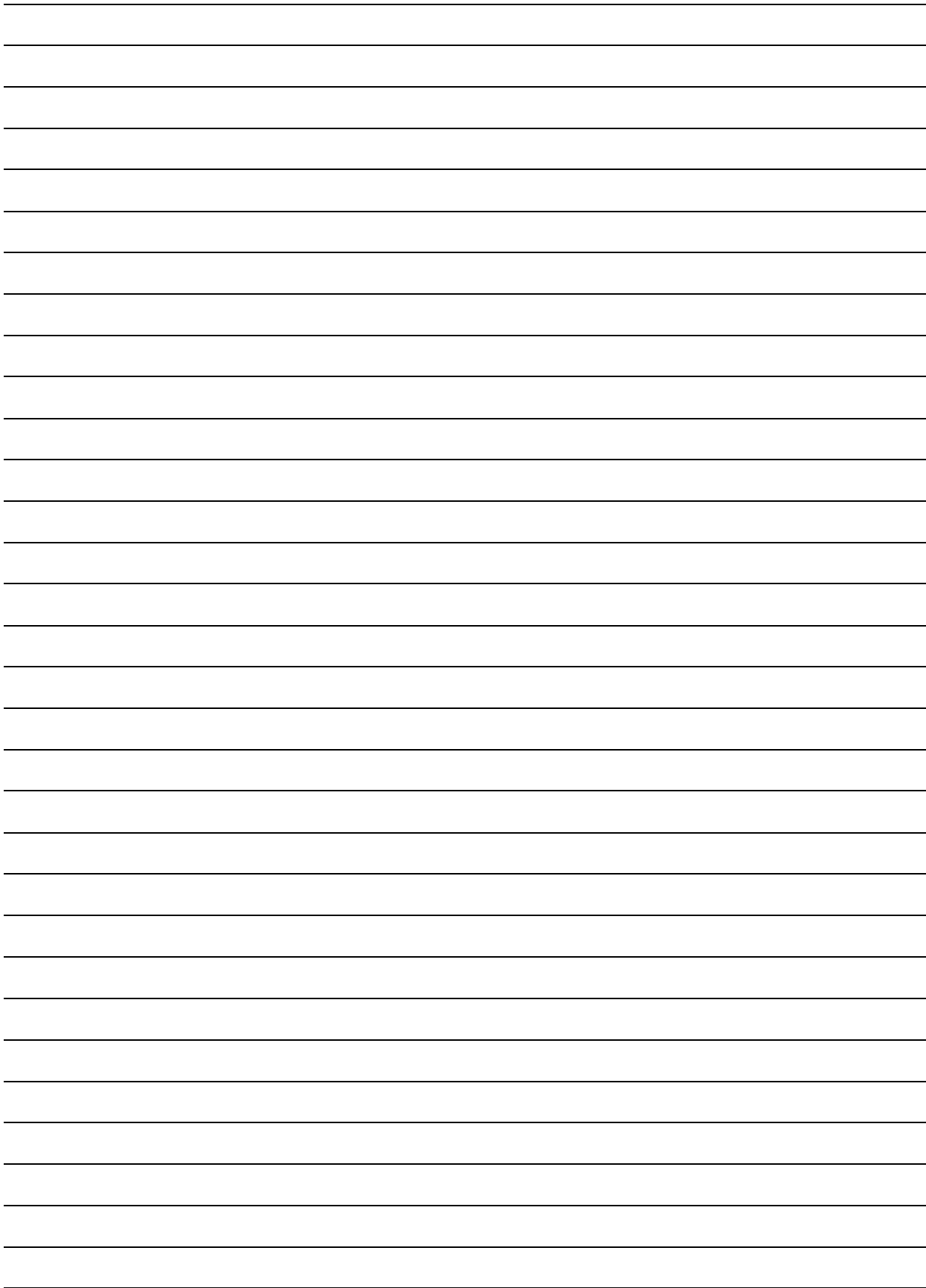
Thoughts About My Current Weight...

My Challenges

Living inside a morbidly obese body invites many physical and mental challenges. Review the list of mental and physical challenges and describe what these challenges mean to you.

The Mental Challenges

- I lack self-confidence
- I don't feel good about the way I look
- I want to be free from obvious public ridicule about my size
- I often feel embarrassed about my size
- I want to be free from worrying about obesity related health problems
- I have obesity related fears about being accepted
- I get tired of hearing "You have such a pretty face"
- I have lied about something related to my weight
- I have turned down an invitation because of my weight
- I have felt shame about my weight
- I have felt guilt about my weight
- I have been rejected because of my weight
- I am very self-conscious about my weight
- I know people treat me differently because of my size
- I am tired of being pre-judged based on my weight
- I fear that I will not live to see my children grow up
- I am embarrassed that my children will be teased about having a fat parent
- I am ashamed to look at myself naked or have others see me undressed
- I won't see a doctor because I am too large
- Summer clothing is embarrassing to wear, especially shorts and swimsuits
- I try to cover up my body so that no one will see the skin on my arms and legs
- I am unable to look at a full-length reflection of my body
- I quickly get away from full-length mirrors where others can see my reflection
- I run from the camera
- When I must be in a photo I try to hide in the back row



The Physical Challenges

- I have physical limitations because of my weight
- I can't enjoy sex fully at the size I am
- I want to wear normal size clothes and shop in a normal size store
- I lack energy
- I have experienced shortness of breath without a lot of exertion
- I wake up in the middle of the night gasping for air due to sleep apnea
- I am unable to run, jump and play with my children
- I sweat more than I should
- I have body aches, especially in the joints
- Movement is hard for me
- I can't bend over
- I can't stoop down and get back up
- If I sit on the floor, getting up is difficult or even impossible
- Pantyhose are hard to wear and get on
- I cannot cross my legs above the ankles
- I have had trouble fitting in restaurant booths
- I have had trouble fitting in seats with arms, including theater seats, airline seats, the dentists' chair, amusement park rides, school desks, sporting events, barber chairs and more
- I have ankles that are not normal looking
- I have to use seat belt extensions or go without using a seat belt putting myself at risk
- I have sat in a chair that was unable to hold my weight
- I have opted to stand instead of sitting in a chair because I thought it would not hold my weight
- I am unable to play sports due to my size, lack of energy or embarrassment about how I would look or be teased
- I have been limited by weight restrictions including horseback riding, ladders, exercise equipment and more
- I have checked the weight limit sign on the elevator
- I have weighed more than a scale will measure
- I have developed skin rashes associated with my obesity
- I have problems with a very large abdomen; like spilling things, getting wet, driving or bending
- I have had to use the handicapped stall in a public restroom
- I have been unable to use a turnstile properly or at all
- I have had trouble fitting in aisles, including turning sideways to fit through
- I do not have a neck or jaw line
- I have had trouble fitting into hospital gowns, hairdresser smocks or the dreaded gynecologist paper robes
- I am unable to tie my shoes
- I am unable to wear normal jewelry like necklaces, bracelets, anklets and watches
- I want to wear clothes without elastic or stretch quality
- I can't wear boots
- I can't wear pull up socks
- I can't fit into the back seat of a two-door car or I have trouble getting out of them
- I do not have a lap; my large thighs are like a sliding slope
- I have trouble with urinary incontinence
- I have trouble with toileting hygiene from not being able to reach
- I am unable to fit in a standard bathtub or a shower stall

20 horizontal lines for writing.

My Memories

Let The Healing Begin...

There are many painful memories associated with being morbidly obese.

Names I was called...

Being teasing and tormented...

School Memories...

Family Memories...

Lessons from the fat kid...

The "fat kids" learn many valuable lessons early in life. The experience of being teased and left out are hard, but what's learned is invaluable and irreplaceable. As you read them, you may at first think, these are horrible lessons, but you will find that they are lessons we all must learn, it's just a matter of what life chooses to use to get the message across to you.

Emotional Control

I knew that I couldn't cry in front of all those kids, or my suffering would have been magnified. In fact, I thought at times it was the goal of my tormentors to see me "crack". Have you ever felt this way on a job? Crying is healthy, but there's a place to show emotion and a place not to show emotion. I'll bet Bill Clinton cried many times when he was going through that impeachment process, but every time that man got on television his eyes were dry. Learning when and where to show emotion and learning to exercise some emotional control is a skill that's needed every single day. How many times have you been angry with someone and you knew you should clam up instead of blow up? When people don't know how to deal with their emotions, they are unstable. I credit my fat kid experience for teaching me to exercise some emotional control.

Stand For What Is Right

Early on, I learned that there were kids who would tease me and there were kids who would be silent, but then there was that third group. Those were the kids who knew that teasing was wrong, and when I couldn't speak up, they spoke for me. I appreciated those kids and it taught me something about friendship. They also taught me how to defend what was right and to do it without shame knowing that backlash might be coming my way just because of the position I took. It taught me that being right or correct may not always be the easy choice, in fact it could be down right difficult, but standing on principle was the right thing to do. I credit having some backbone to my "fat kid" years.

How To Decipher Character

Most kids know that teasing and name-calling are wrong. Most mothers teach "If you can't say something good, don't say anything at all". When I was teased, it was easy to tell whom not to trust, it was my tormentors. Early on, I learned that those who stood by in silence, but still befriended my tormentors were taking a stand. It was taking a position of approval; it was just a quiet stand. I learned that people could give hearty approval through silence. I also learned that this group was not trustworthy. This is an excellent lesson. Birds of a feather flock together. You can tell the character of a person by the company they keep.

How To Forgive

While at times I did loathe some of the teasing kids, I did learn to forgive. I learned that some people really are ashamed for what they have done and they want to make amends. I am glad that I didn't hold grudges and God knows this is a skill that's needed for any human relationship. Whether intentional or not, somebody is going to hurt you. Holding the anger inside and being unwilling to forgive will eat you alive. Early on in life I had to practice forgiveness and I owe my first forgiveness experiences to the "fat kid years".

My Emotions

The emotions associated with being morbidly obese are difficult. Next to each emotion, journal a story that captures the essence of that emotion.

Have you ever felt guilt...

Have you ever felt shame...

Have you ever felt embarrassed...

Have you ever felt disappointed...

Have you ever felt in patronized...

Have you ever felt rejected...

Have you ever felt fear or panic...

Have you ever felt like you were a failure...

Have you ever felt misunderstood...

Have you ever felt ignored...

Have you ever felt heartbroken...

Have you ever felt hopeless...

I remember feeling

I remember feeling

My Co-Morbidities

Morbid obesity is the primary cause of many other health related disorders, like hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea and joint dysfunction. These diagnoses are called co-morbidities. Many of these problems are masked in youth, but become fully developed beyond the 30's. Do you have any co-morbidities?

My "Co-Morbid" Diagnosis

When was this diagnosed?

Which doctor is treating you for this diagnosis?

How is your diagnosis being treated?

Describe what life is like living with this diagnosis

My "Co-Morbid" Diagnosis

When was this diagnosed?

Which doctor is treating you for this diagnosis?

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When was this diagnosed?

Which doctor is treating you for this diagnosis?

How is your diagnosis being treated?

Describe what life is like living with this diagnosis

My Diets

Most morbidly obese people have been on more diets than you can count. What diets have you tried? What were the results? This list may help you remember some of the diets you may have tried.

The Diets

- Fasting; Starvation
- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Low Carb, High Protein Diet: Atkins, Sugar Busters, The Zone, Carbohydrate Addicts
- Low Fat High Carb Diet
- Low Fat, No Fat Diet
- American Diabetic Association Diet
- Beverly Hills Diet
- Fit For Life
- Self-Induced Vomiting; Bulimia
- The Cabbage Soup Diet
- Weight Loss Camps; Spas; Structure House
- The Diet Centers; Physician's Weight Loss; Jenny Craig; Weight Watchers; TOPS; Weigh Down Workshop; Formu-3; NutriSystem
- The Grapefruit Diet
- The Vinegar Diet
- The Lemon Juice Diet
- Work Out Videos; Tae Bo; Jane Fonda; Richard Simmons; Kathy Smith; Susan Powter
- Richard Simmons Deal-A-Meal or Food Card Diets
- Hospital Diets; Mayo Clinic; Cleveland Clinic; Duke Diet
- The Rice Diet
- Shakes, Mixes and Drinks: Medifast; Optifast; SlimFast
- Metabolife; Metabolite
- Calorad
- BioSlim
- Prescription Amphetamines; Phen-Fen; Redux; Meridia; Xenical; Diuretics
- Private Cooks, Counselors, Trainers
- Overeaters Anonymous
- The Pritikin Diet
- Tony Robbins Motivational Tapes; Any motivational tapes
- The Scarsdale Diet
- Over The Counter Diet Pills; Dexatrim; Water Pills; Laxatives; Appetite Suppressant Gum and Candy
- Herbal remedies
- Jaw Wiring
- Stomach Stapling (no bypass)
- Plastic sweat suits
- Single food only diets
- Your own made up low calorie diet
- Your own form of exercise

Name of Diet

When did you try this diet?

How much did you lose?

Did you gain the weight back? How long were you able to keep the weight off?

Notable memories about this diet...

Name of Diet

When did you try this diet?

How much did you lose?

Did you gain the weight back? How long were you able to keep the weight off?

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Did you gain the weight back? How long were you able to keep the weight off?

Notable memories about this diet...

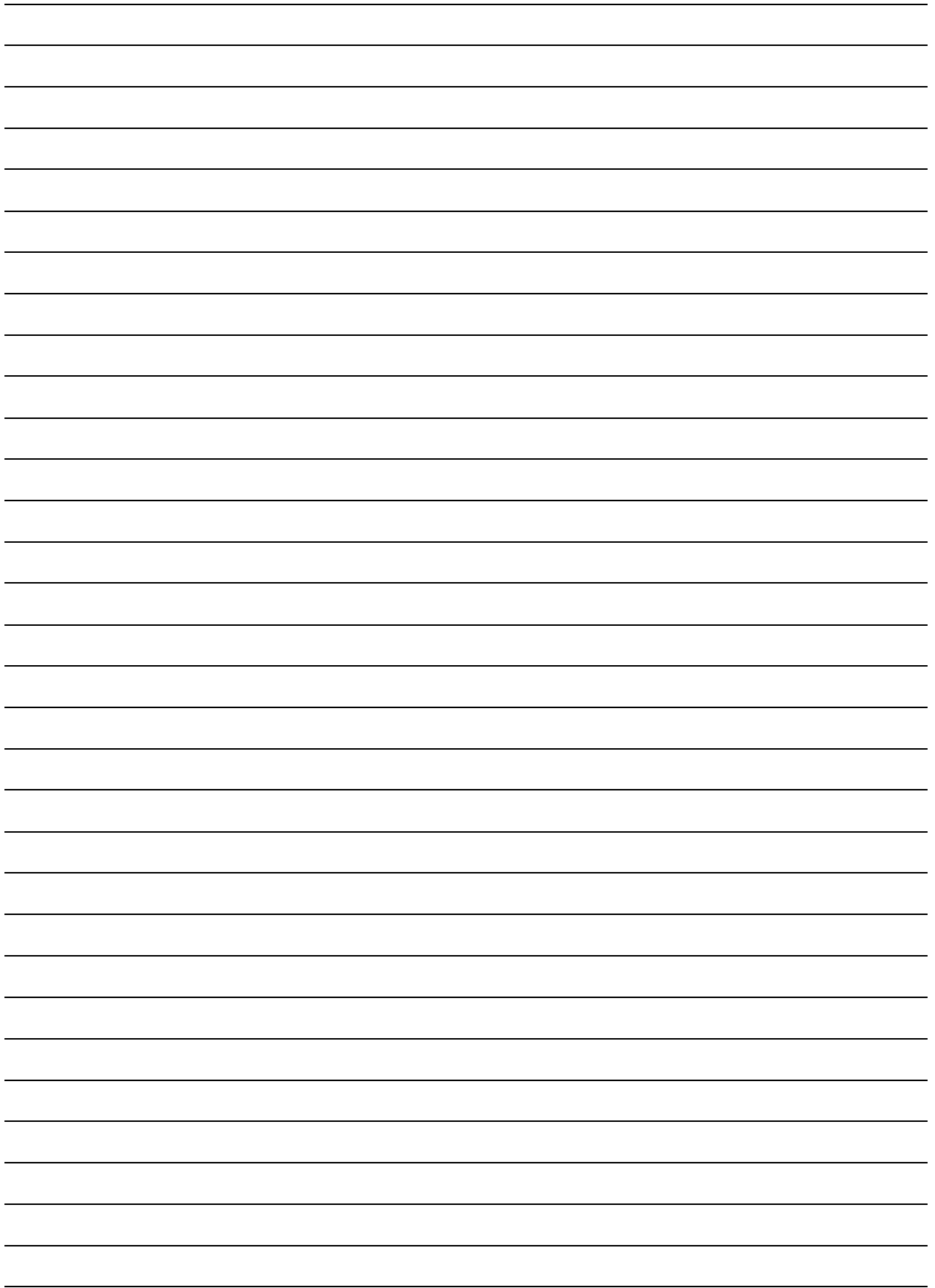
Name of Diet

When did you try this diet?

How much did you lose?

Did you gain the weight back? How long were you able to keep the weight off?

Notable memories about this diet...



Life During Surgery

My Feelings About Weight Loss Surgery	51
My Family, My Friends	53
My Expectations	63
My Physician (PCP)	68
My Surgeon	70
My Surgery Choice	72
My Insurer	75
My Consultation Visit	76
My Pre-Surgery Preparation	78
My Big Day	81
My Thoughts & Reflections During Surgery	85

My Family, My Friends

Who are your family and friends? What do they think of your morbid obesity? Are they a supporter, critic or cynic about your WLS? What happened when you shared your decision or thoughts about WLS with them?

Talking to others about this surgery is an issue at every stage, especially when the weight starts falling off. Even the casual strangers in your life, like the grocery store clerk will ask, "How did you lose all that weight?" Your philosophy and understanding about obesity will drive how you respond.

This section of the journal is for you to record how the people closest to you responded about your decision to have weight loss surgery. Include the people who you interact with on a regular basis. Your stories may include people at work or some of your neighbors.

As you arrive at the weight loss surgery decision, you will have to share your decision with someone. This decision is too important to keep it to yourself. As I arrived at the decision that weight loss surgery was for me, I observed how the people in my life responded. I labeled them supporters, critics and cynics.

The Supporters

The supporter wants the best for you. They will be willing to listen. They are teachable and they will be open to listening to your philosophy about your obesity. Often, they are open and curious about the surgery. Supporters may not share your excitement, in fact, they may appear very concerned. True supporters are concerned for you and they may even hold the belief that surgery is "drastic," but at the end of the day, they are behind you and they will support your decision.

The Critics

The critics are those people who have serious concerns about the surgery. Even though they might love you, and they may listen to you, they cannot lend their support. For whatever reason, they just cannot abide by your decision. They may or may not be teachable; it just depends on whether they are open to learning.

The Cynics

The cynics are no more than tormentors who teased the "fat kid" or befriended those who did. The cynics are bullies who are not teachable. They insist on making you feel badly about your size and your obvious lack of control. They may even laugh at your decision. For certain they will criticize you for being weak-willed and insist that you are taking the easy "weigh" out.

Name

Relationship

Supporter, critic or cynic?

Their thoughts and/or response about my obesity

What happened when I shared my decision to have weight loss surgery?

Name

Relationship

Supporter, critic or cynic?

Their thoughts and/or response about my obesity

What happened when I shared my decision to have weight loss surgery?

Name

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Relationship

Supporter, critic or cynic?

Their thoughts and/or response about my obesity

What happened when I shared my decision to have weight loss surgery?

My Expectations

In Chapter Nine of *Weight Loss Surgery: Understanding & Overcoming Morbid Obesity*, you can read about the difference between a realistic and false expectation. What are your expectations about weight loss surgery?

I want you to have a wonderful weight loss surgery experience. I want you to have victory over the physical and mental burdens associated with being morbidly obese.

Normal size people take the benefits of living life in a normal size body for granted everyday. They don't think twice about zipping through turnstiles or shopping in a normal size store. Day in and day out they just go about their business without giving a second thought about how difficult life can be for us morbidly obese folks.

My point however, is that relatively soon after your surgery; you will begin to take advantage of the benefits of living in a normal size body. It's easy to intoxicate yourself on the good feelings and thoughts of being a normal size. It's also easy to commingle the benefits of life in a normal size body with the false beliefs about being a normal size person. I call these false beliefs the fantasy traps.

There are many fantasy traps. They are like snares that will snag your joy about your transforming physical frame. Make certain that your expectations are realistic. Make a list of your expectations about life after surgery. Your expectations should be a real benefit of life in a normal size body. I caution you to avoid the unrealistic fantasy traps.

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Expectation

My Physician (PCP)

Who was the PCP who referred you to your bariatric surgeon? Was your physician a supporter, critic or cynic? Who brought up the idea of bariatric surgery? What was your experience?

PCP Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

Fax

Email

Supporter, critic or cynic?

What was your experience with your PCP?

Lined writing area consisting of 28 horizontal lines.

My Bariatric Surgeon

Who was the surgeon? How were you introduced or referred to your bariatric surgeon? What was your experience?

Surgeon's Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

Fax

Email

Website

How did choose your surgeon?

My Surgery Choice

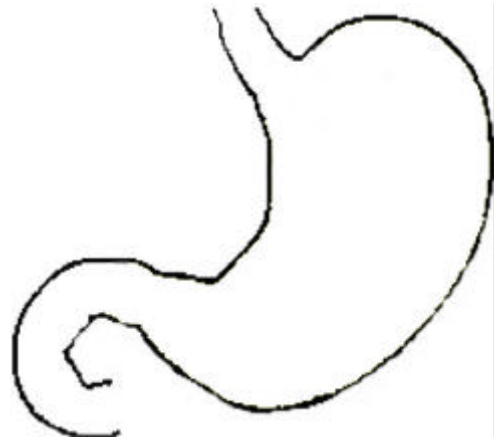
There are several surgical choices. Which surgery did you choose?

Name of Surgery

Describe the surgery in your own words

How is stomach altered in this surgery? How much does the new stomach pouch hold?

Using the graph, draw your new stomach pouch



Do your best and create a drawing of your gastric bypass surgery and reconstructed digestive system in the space provided below.

My Consultation Visit

The consultation visit with your surgeon is usually an exciting meeting. What was your consultation visit like?

My consultation was with _____

Date _____

Start Time _____

End Time _____

Consultation Location _____

How did you feel before the consultation?

How did you feel after the consultation?

My Pre-Surgery Preparation

What did you do to prepare for surgery? Were you well-prepared?

What did you pack?

How was the hospital admission and registration process?

How did you find out your surgery time?

My Big Day!

So much work goes into planning for the moment of surgery. What was your big day like?

My Surgery Date

What time did you wake up?

What time did you have to be at the hospital?

What were you feeling the morning of surgery?

What did you wear to the hospital?

Who drove you to the hospital?

What did you do when you arrived at the hospital? Describe your pre-surgery check-in.

What happened in the pre-surgery room?

What happened in the pre-operating room area?

What do you remember about the operating room?

What do you remember about the recovery room?

What was the first thing you remember eating after surgery?

Describe the rest of the day after surgery.

Life After Surgery

My Post-Op Journey	89
My Post-Op Medications	122
My Post-Op Diet	125
My Post-Op Recipes	130
My Victories	134
My Adjustments	136
My Weight & Measurements	142
My Photo Journey	144
My Support Group	151
My Thoughts & Reflections After Surgery	154

My Post-Op Journey



Post-Op Day Two

Date

Lined writing area consisting of multiple horizontal lines for notes.

My Post-Op Medications

Medication Name

Medication Start Date

How long will I be on this medication?

Medication dosage

When should I take this medication?

What is this medication taken for?

Medication Name

Medication Start Date

How long will I be on this medication?

Medication dosage

When should I take this medication?

What is this medication taken for?

Medication Name

Medication Start Date

How long will I be on this medication?

Medication dosage

When should I take this medication?

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Medication Name

Medication Start Date

How long will I be on this medication?

Medication dosage

When should I take this medication?

What is this medication taken for?

Medication Name

Medication Start Date

How long will I be on this medication?

Medication dosage

When should I take this medication?

What is this medication taken for?

Medication Name

Medication Start Date

How long will I be on this medication?

Medication dosage

When should I take this medication?

What is this medication taken for?

My Post-Op Recipes

Any good post-op recipes?

Recipe Name

How did I learn about this recipe?

Ingredients & Instructions

Recipe Name

How did I learn about this recipe?

Ingredients & Instructions

Recipe Name

How did I learn about this recipe?

Ingredients & Instructions

Recipe Name

How did I learn about this recipe?

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Ingredients & Instructions

Recipe Name

How did I learn about this recipe?

Ingredients & Instructions

Recipe Name

How did I learn about this recipe?

Ingredients & Instructions

My Weight & Measurements

Date	Time Point	Weight	BMI
	Highest Recorded Weight		
	Day of Surgery Weight		
	First Post-Op Visit Weight		
	1 Month Post-Op		
	2 Months Post-Op		
	3 Months Post-Op		
	4 Months Post-Op		
	5 Months Post-Op		
	6 Months Post-Op		
	7 Months Post-Op		
	8 Months Post-Op		
	9 Months Post-Op		
	10 Months Post-Op		
	11 Months Post-Op		
	1 Year Anniversary		
	13 Months Post-Op		
	14 Months Post-Op		
	15 Months Post-Op		
	16 Months Post-Op		
	17 Months Post-Op		
	18 Months Post-Op		
	19 Months Post-Op		
	20 Months Post-Op		
	21 Months Post-Op		
	22 Months Post-Op		
	23 Months Post-Op		
	2 Year Anniversary		

Body Measurements

Date	Time Point	Neck	Chest	Left Arm	Right Arm
	Pre-Op Measurements				
	2 Months Post-Op				
	4 Months Post-Op				
	6 Months Post-Op				
	8 Months Post-Op				
	10 Months Post-Op				
	1 Year Anniversary				
	18 Months Post-Op				
	2 Year Anniversary				

Date	Time Point	Waist	Abdomen	Hips	Left Thigh
	Pre-Op Measurements				
	2 Months Post-Op				
	4 Months Post-Op				
	6 Months Post-Op				
	8 Months Post-Op				
	10 Months Post-Op				
	1 Year Anniversary				
	18 Months Post-Op				
	2 Year Anniversary				

Date	Time Point	Right Thigh	Left Calf	Right Calf	Shoe Size
	Pre-Op Measurements				
	2 Months Post-Op				
	4 Months Post-Op				
	6 Months Post-Op				
	8 Months Post-Op				
	10 Months Post-Op				
	1 Year Anniversary				
	18 Months Post-Op				
	2 Year Anniversary				

My Photo Journey

Suggestion: Consider using color copies of your photos instead of actual picture prints.

My "Official" Before Shots
Full Front & Side View

Photo of me and my bariatric surgeon

Photo of me and my supporter(s)

Photo of me at the hospital (before surgery)

Photo of me at the hospital (after surgery)

Photo of my incision or port holes

My 3-month post-op photo

My 6-month post-op photo

My 9-month post-op photo

My 1 Year Anniversary post-op photo

My 18-month post-op photo

My 2 Year Anniversary post-op photo

Photo of me wearing my "pre-op" clothes in my new body

My Support Group

Name

Email Address

Address

Phone

Notes

Name

Email Address

Address

Phone

Notes

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[Michelle Boasten](#)



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ABOUT THIS ITEM

From Our Editors

Those who suffer from morbid obesity -- a condition frequently accompanied by self-esteem issues as well as medical problems -- will find all the information necessary to explore the exciting new option of weight loss surgery in this much-needed book. With compassion and dignity, the author shares the pain of her struggle with morbid obesity as well as the triumph of successfully undergoing WLS. Readers will identify with Boasten, gleaning strength and hope from her story.

From the Publisher

This Is Your Weight Loss Journey

Are you tired of struggling with morbid obesity?

Weight Loss Surgery (WLS) is a powerful tool which will enable you to live in a normal size body.

The content of this book will walk you through every aspect of your weight loss journey.