If you’re reading this, if you picked this up, you probably have a food story of your own. Over the years I’ve become more and more aware of mine, that it was always there, the need to fill up, to find comfort. For me food didn’t show up on my body at an early age, but it showed up in between my ears as an obsession. I lovingly now call that the Itty Bitty Shitty Committee. The voice of hunger, that tells you to fill up on something, anything at all. And isn’t food the easiest thing to get to?

 As a baby, I breast fed until I was two years old. I guess I wasn’t willing to give up what I wanted even then. Food has always equaled comfort for me, even if it wasn’t chocolate cake and ice cream (which were, incidentally, my favorite.) Being a child who was never quite comfortable in her own skin, I ate over many emotions, the first emotion being fear.

 When I was three years old, whenever my mother took me to work, she would stick me in the grain barrel, the safest place in the barn. She was afraid I would get trampled, so there I was, sitting in the molasses covered grain, stuffing my face with fistfuls at a time. I never felt safer and happier. It might sound corny, but that grain was a delight! I guess today, it would be on my list of binge foods.

 I was a very active child and always very thin, but after hitting ten my eyes were broken. I saw myself as fat, rather than the reality. Some of my obsession might have been learned behavior; my father was obsessed with his weight and appearance. And still is today, might I add. He was always altering his diet and exercising in hopes to be a fat burning machine.

 My mother number two, would take to hiding the sweets, in fear he would consume the whole bag in one sitting. And he would, if given the opportunity. One was never enough and the whole bag was a remorseful too many. In conclusion, the jury’s out whether I learned or inherited my insatiable sweet tooth and my broken eyes in regards to body image.

 While my body was thin, the Itty Bitty Shitty Committee was getting bigger everyday. It told me I was fat constantly, and I reacted by sucking in my stomach, changing outfits a hundred times, looking in the mirror way to often. What I didn’t realize was that this Itty Bitty Shitty Committee was linked to food. I ate when I wanted, what I wanted, and the results only showed up in my mind.

 My dieting began in High School, to a small degree. I began by limiting myself certain food items, but the resolutions I made would not last more than a day or two. Now I see how those failed resolutions can hurt one’s self esteem. With self-esteem in the toilet, the void (the need to fill up) grew larger and larger and larger. Now as I see it, it’s clear that I sought out food and attention to fill it.

 By my eighteenth year I was paying a personal trainer to work off ten pounds. I worked out to the point of exhaustion, and then a fast and or diet. Although the fasting and dieting didn’t stop until two years ago, the working out did. I always felt powerful when I could fast for six to ten days, only on liquid.

 Always being fascinated with health and nutrition, I took many college courses along the way. A quest for healthy living and a great body ensued. But nothing worked; nothing was ever good enough. I was never thin enough; my discipline was never as good as I wanted, not enough willpower, and not enough strength. So when the Never Enough Void envelops you, you can see it’s very easy to fill it with food.

 In my twenties I kept my weight down, but was not as thin as I am now and never maintaining one weight for any length of time like I do now. I did the famous Yoyo dieting, among the diets I tried there is Weight Watchers, Atkins, South Beach, going vegetarian, and Body For Life.

So my life went like a hamster wheel, binging crazily, consuming buckets worth of alcohol, no exercise, hating myself. I was not living up to my values of healthy living and spirituality, by any means. Then the other side of wheel, fasting and dieting, major exercise, restricting everything I could, feeling better, and gaining hope. All to be dashed by taking a bite or a drink, and then it turned again. Round and round I went, in no control of what I was doing, leaving me with no belief in myself to stick to anything.

 This tale of distress could go on but a spider bit me in the ass, really! The next day I went to the doctors for a bite on my left buttocks cheek. I left the office with instructions to lose twenty pounds minimum and get off the sugar. I was well on my way to diabetes and obesity. It turns out; I had much more than twenty pounds to lose before I was at my goal weight. I’ll never know what weighed more, the fat I shed or the Itty Bitty Shitty Committee.

 Let’s backtrack before I tell you why I’m writing this. I left the office pissed. I was queen of denial; I thought I had finally accepted being fat. I had come terms –or so I thought- with eating what I wanted and wearing it on my body till the end of my days. Truth be told, I was bottling the misery inside. I was hiding chocolate cakes; in fear my kids would want a bite, stuffing my face before seeing my clients just so I could relax. I was sucking in my stomach during sex with the lights off and suicide seemed friendlier than the next day. I really didn’t know what to do, I felt I had tried –and failed- everything.

 This story of mine, brings my inspiration of sharing with you my experience, strength, hope, and self care life plan, in hopes that you can have success and freedom sooner than I. Avoiding the pain of finding it on your own, through trial and tribulation.

 I, as I have repeatedly told you, tried and failed every diet out there. What I didn’t know is that ninety-five percent of all people that try diets, fail. Just look up any website with statistics of diet failure, like I did. Let your jaw drop, yours eyes widen in disbelief as you stare at the failures of your fellow dieters. I have to admit; I was shocked myself, as I thought I was the only failure.

It is significantly important to establish a new way of thinking, if this self-care life plan is going to work for you. You’ve got to clear your mind of the belief that you’ll do this life plan as a diet until you get to your goal weight and then eat “NORMAL” again. It’s a big, fat lie (courtesy of the Itty Bitty Shitty Committee.) This will be your new normal. And let me ask you, in truth, have you ever really hit your goal weight before going back to eating “NORMAL”? And if you have, you lucky bastard, then why are you reading this? But please, continue. If you have, did you maintain it for very long? I could go on and on and on and on, but you get the idea. Dieting and then “NORMAL” don’t work.

 So the problem my friends, is lack of acceptance. You want to be healthy and thin but you don’t want to give up eating what you want, when you want. The first choice, that gives you freedom, is the choice of eating how you are currently eating or embracing a new commitment and self-care lifestyle.

 I know the word commitment sparks many new thoughts, right? Take marriage for instance. When you chose to marry and find a spouse, you’re choosing a particular lifestyle. If you were to go into this commitment, this marriage, in conflict, thinking you want to spend your life with said spouse, but you don’t want to give up George, Linda, Amy, Tom, Susan, and Dick, you would never be happy because of lack of acceptance. So in entering this commitment, this marriage, it’s best to enter it whole-heartedly, desiring the particular lifestyle.

So, basically, it’s up to you. What will you choose? A life of yoyo dieting, a body you’re unsatisfied with (and a slew of oncoming health issues in your future) for a few sinful, delicious pleasures of the tongue or, as my thirteen year old daughter would say, a lifetime of health and beauty. It’s your choice my friends. So whatever you choose, do it with acceptance and excitement.