

Leslie Rasmussen , Contributor

Bullied By My Bathroom Scale

09/19/2013 03:11 pm ET Updated Nov 19, 2013

I know very few women who are truly happy with the number they see on their scale in the morning. For the most part, we eat healthy and exercise as much as we can, yet, in the morning when we get on the scale, something happens. By innocently flashing a number, the scale takes on a voice in our head that seems to tell us we aren't good enough. The sheer number taunts us, suggesting that maybe we aren't eating well enough, we aren't exercising enough and we don't weigh what we're supposed to weigh. I hate that voice.

When I hit my mid-forties, I realized that my body had decided what weight it wanted to be. I could argue with it, I could go on some stupid juice cleanse, I could exercise until I dropped, but my body was in charge. No matter what I did, the scale would remain at that same number. I've always been pretty thin and in all the years I've been weighing myself, I've probably gained or lost no more than five pounds. My clothes still fit (though how they look can fluctuate), but I never really had to buy new clothes. The problem was I had a certain number in my head and my scale rarely matched that number. And when I didn't see my magical, ethereal number, it would ruin my whole day. I would be slightly depressed, slightly grouchy and slightly defeated. I felt like that little square box was yelling at me that it was doing its job, but I wasn't keeping up my part of the bargain.

Did that scale know something that I didn't know? Did it really have the

ability to tell me I was happy or successful? Could it determine how many friends I had, or how loved I was? I had just as many good things happen to me on the days that my scale gave me that magic number as days when it didn't and I also had just as many bad days when my scale said I'd gained a pound or two.

I wondered why, as women, we judge ourselves so harshly by that number we see in the morning. The majority of men seem to weigh themselves with that "Oh, well," attitude, meaning, "Oh, well, I guess I over-ate." They don't seem to hear a woman's voice screaming at them from their scale. Then again, maybe they just tune her out, as if she is their wife asking them for the hundredth time to put their dirty clothes in the hamper. It seems that men are more able to go about their day and forget about whatever their scale displayed.

My scale had become that schoolyard bully, taunting, mocking and just plain harassing me, and I felt powerless to stop it. My scale displayed a number I didn't want to see, making me feel inadequate. To me, it was calling me names, giving me dirty looks and shaming me because I didn't weigh what I thought I should weigh. Suddenly, I realized the names, the dirty looks and the voice were all coming from me. I was my own bully.

I've had talks with my kids about what to do if someone were to bully them. First, I encouraged them to just ignore the bully, but if they had to stand up for themselves, to use a strong, clear voice to get their point across. If that didn't work, I told them to try some snappy comeback. I also suggested they stay away from places where the bullying might happen.

All of these tactics seemed to make sense, but being my own bully

made it that much harder, and I didn't think calling myself a scrawny little toadstool would do the trick. So, first I tried ignoring the voice, but that only made it louder. Staying away from places where the bullying might happen didn't seem feasible when the scale was in my bathroom. So, I chose to use a strong, clear voice and to stand up for myself.

The next time I went to weigh myself, before getting on the scale, I loudly pronounced that I didn't care what the number was. If my body was telling me that this was a healthy weight for me, I was going to accept that. Maybe it knew something I didn't know. I'm healthy, I feel good and that's what's important, not some arbitrary number. I tried this every day for a week. I can't say that voice went away quickly, but with each day it was a little quieter, and definitely not as harsh. I began to walk away feeling slightly more powerful. I knew if I kept this up the voice might go away completely, but I also knew that at some point, I might feel insecure and the voice could get louder again.

I had stood up to my bully, but my bully's co-conspirator, my scale, needed to be quieted also. So, one day I went into the bathroom, picked up the scale and put it in a closet.

I'm more than just a physical shape I see in the mirror. I may struggle at times with this, but my husband doesn't care about the number on the scale, it means nothing to my kids and I am healthy, and that's the way I want to continue to see myself.

