

# The Forgotten Member

Well, here I am, 250 pounds of pure happiness. Listen, I have had so much fun at this IRD, honey -- the food has been fantastic! Of course, I could have had a lot more fun if I hadn't had to attend all these sessions. They're all right, I guess, but I've seen it all so many times before.

Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. But I'm sure you all know me. I've been in your chapter 4 or 5 years. They really should give me an award; I've lost enough weight to have a twin sister here beside me. I may weight 10 pounds more than when I joined but I've certainly enjoyed myself. You know how it is -- sometime I think the food just jumps on me. As the old saying goes: there's more of me to love. And those silly calorie charts we're supposed to keep -- I'm just too busy for that. Most of the time I fake it and fill them out at the end of the week.

My husband can't understand why I don't lose. He tells everyone I eat like a bird. Boy, can I give you some tips! You see, I eat very small meals, and then I sneak into the kitchen later and have a few snacks. The trick is to eat only quite foods like marshmallows, bread and peanut butter. I keep some goodies under the bed, too. Remember, though, potato chips or crackers won't work -- too noisy. My way, nobody will ever know.

We do have a ball in TOPS, though, don't we? Oh, I know I don't get to all the meetings, but you understand how busy life is. And I do have to leave right after weigh-in a lot of the times to get to a banquet or party, but that's because of my husband's business. And then there are the holidays. Well, the reason I don't come to meetings after those is that I'm just too tired from all my company! Hey, remember that time I said I gained because I had company and one of your said, "What did you do, eat them?" That was so funny, I cried myself to sleep that night -- but I don't want to think about that.

But seriously, folks, I'd be a better member if I weren't so busy. I'm really very lucky. I have a beautiful home, a terrifically understanding husband and four wonderful children. My husband is so good to me. Anything I wan to do is all right with him. In fact, he never even asks where I go or what I do. We go out fairly often. Of course, it's usually for business dinners or trips, but that's fine. You see, most of the time he has to work late, quite late -- I'm sure he *is* working. No matter, though; I spend a lot of my spare time at church luncheons and bridge clubs.

I'd kind of like to do some sort of meaningful work outside my home. I thought maybe I'd join the PTA or become a room mother or maybe even a Girl Scout leader. But the children say the school has more volunteers than it needs now. So I can just relax while all my friends are rushing around helping with school projects. Wonder why their children don't tell them it's unnecessary? I'm so proud my children are independent. I used to drive them to school and pick them up every day. But now they tell me they'd rather walk because it's healthier. My son doesn't even want me to bother going to his ball games. He says I need that time to rest. He's so considerate. Sometimes, when I'm along, I wonder if the children are just pushing me away because they're ashamed of me. But then I just sit down with some cake and coffee and tell myself that's ridiculous.

You want to hear the sad truth? Deep down inside I want to die. I'm so ashamed of my weakness that I not only kid myself, but I shut out the people who could help me -- you! I know you're all fed up with me, and I don't blame you. I've never really become a part of TOPS. To me it's still your chapter, not mine. Don't you think I know what you're saying about me? How I ought to quit and make room for someone who will really try. How I stay home when I've gained and only come to meetings when I lose. How I never go out of my way to work on projects or help someone else. And when there's a party or convention, I'm always the first to sign up.

Everything you've ever said about me, I've said to myself a million times. Finally it comes down to one thing: fear. I am so afraid to really commit myself to losing weight, because once I do, it will be up to me to get the job done. And I'm afraid I'm not enough of a person to handle it. I'm terrified of failure.

Dear people, please don't give up on me. I need you more than you'll ever know. You're all that stands between me and complete destruction. If I don't volunteer for jobs, appoint me. If I don't call you during the week, call me. Pick me up for meetings to make sure I go. And above all, don't let me use all those silly excuses. Make me face the truth; don't humor me. I realize I'm a burden to you and I'm asking for so much in return for my laziness. But maybe knowing you have faith in me will give me the strength I need.

I'll never be honest enough to ask you directly for help. But I'm begging you to see the despair in my eyes. Force me to be the kind of person I can be. If you let me slip away, I'm lost.

More than anything on earth I want to stand on stage next year in white, receiving my diploma. I want my husband's admiration and my children's respect. I may never again have the nerve to tell you what is in my heart. Please save me before it's too late!