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Where have all my old friends gone? Day 20

Friday, May 27, 2016

"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times."
For Sparkers either can be true. Sometimes sequentially and occasionally at the same time.
Congrats to Watermellen who identified my last literary reference.

Along with the basics stats, I'm taking the time to read about each of my old friends, especially the last posts of those no longer active. Aside from reconnecting, my goal here is to get some sense of why people leave or give up and the events leading up to the decision.

One is seeking answers to long term medical problems that are still undiagnosed, but also maintaining a spark presence. That's perseverance.

Two are technically active but with a flickering spark in the last few months. Ironically their drifting away followed their receiving "motivator" awards. Perhaps for some people the recognition causes pressure to achieve instead of the intended effect? I don't know.

However, I did read a comment somewhere that when perusing a link to "spark motivators" so many are no longer active. I haven't checked that myself. I don't even know where that link is. Perhaps they've gone on to bigger and better things? Perhaps being spotlighted as a success causes one to retreat to anonymity if no longer being successful? That regain statistic haunts me too.

Then there was this status from a returning sparker.

"I thought I could do this alone, but I couldn't"

In spite of the hopeful determination she went on to describe, she went missing after that. Starting over can be disheartening, but staying on the wrong path is worse. I hope she found support elsewhere.

Today's data:
15 Active & 5 Inactive/Missing - 75% still here

Summary so far:
204 out of 370 are still active - 55% still sparking.

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SWEDE_SU

your analysis is fascinating (i started at the very beginning in a jet lagged daze). how interesting that people left soon after being named motivators. thank you for doing this - your blogs are wonderful!
1841 days ago



LIVEDAILY

"I think I can, I think I can, I think I can....!!"
1841 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM

OK, deep breath... digging back into the recesses of past regains / "failures"... changing programs because I just couldn't face going back to what worked before and admitting I'd backslid... isolating, going "dark" from social connections to bury myself in my addiction...

I would expect to find a range of these things in the regaining folks. Oh, and yes, being recognized as a "success" or a "motivator" could (and did more than once) throw me off my game, especially if I wasn't as perfect as the label told me I ought to be (in my mind).

The difference this time, the gradual coming to accept that it's OK to be human, imperfect, and to imperfectly maintain... catching slip-ups, back-sliding sooner... and NOT hiding the bad and the ugly parts from myself or my Spark friends... all of this is part of what's working for me NOW. The gradual acceptance of myself as a role model... that's been a real eye-opener, and I was reluctant to take that step based on the past regains! But it becomes more comfortable with each passing year.

Compulsions and addictions, which many of us who have had loss/regain cycles or who work ourselves steadily into morbid obesity deal with... are diseases of isolation. We might feel that food is our only friend! It's hard for someone who does NOT live inside this kind of psyche to understand why the backsliding when on the outside someone LOOKS like they have it all in hand. Often the person on the inside doesn't "get it" either.

I pray for my fellow compulsive eaters... and for myself, for I am well aware that every day, I'm living one bite away from a binge. Thank goodness for the Spark community, where I can lurk even when struggling, and get my Spark back when it flickers. That's been key, key, key for me.



Spark on, the 55% who are still with us! I'm rooting for ALL of us.
1841 days ago



DOVESEYES


1841 days ago



CD4114015

Another awesome rendition of what is happening with people. Thanks for doing such a thorough study!
1841 days ago



WATERMELLEN

I'm so surprised that there are many MIA Spark Motivators . . . hadn't realized that.

All of us, I think, are haunted by the regain statistic! (Not unlike fear of recurrence for cancer survivors . . .)

If you could figure out why people go, you might also be able to infer strategies to encourage people to stay . . . ??? Love your analytical mind!

1841 days ago



PRNCSCUP1-2FULL

A few friends I've had and still have left SP simply because 1 person said something to them they didn't like or it hurt their feelings. In this vast land of Sparkers there are a few I guess who remain judgmental and unkind. Plus, it is not what a person says to you that matters so much as what you hear. So many want to hide if they fall into that regain category. I've gotten so behind on your posts and hope to catch up! Do we let you know we recognize the reference? Tale of 2 Cities...

1841 days ago



HOLLYM48

Interesting recap once again. Thanks for sharing and let's hope those that left have found something that works for them!
1841 days ago



PHEBESS

It's hard, both changing one's eating and exercising habits, as well as keeping that up forever.





Especially when one is working, and/or taking care of family.

I'd guess that all of the people who continue here at SP are the exception and not the rule.

(Dickens, "Tale of Two Cities" I believe)
1841 days ago



MJZHERE

Some of my friends got the award for their post (can't remember name right now), and they left soon after. One told me she felt pressure from the recognition - I think she was referring to people knowing her and her past large weight loss success. I often wonder about those who have left - how they are, what is going on, etc.

1842 days ago



PHOENIX1949



1842 days ago



LOVENHWOODS

Can't thank you enough for doing all this research and posting your blogs! Fascinating information and statistics! Eager to read tomorrow's!

1842 days ago



ANNIEONLI

And reading spark motivator pages that are not active are disheartening. I expressed this to Spark last year when I had a face to face opportunity with one of the staff.

1842 days ago



KRISSY82

:) "Staying on the wrong path is worse"---Well said! I couldn't agree more.

1842 days ago



TCANNO

I this this is a problem for most teams. Take a look and see who has been active over the last 30 days and it will open your eyes.

For me it is the friends that keep me going and not wanting to give up. It took a while to reach my goal and I (for one) don't want to go back.

It maybe the stress of always having to record and track. I don't know the answer I wish I did

Trev
1842 days ago



JEANKNEE

Interestingly enough, feel I've been living through a year of sequential "best of times, worst of times." The best being my body settling into its happy weight zone and the worst, operating under severe activity restrictions on account of a pelvic fracture. The situation necessitated increased attention on my food choices, also a wonderful life lesson.

1842 days ago



NELLJONES

Weight loss journeys typically end with people going out on their own, there isn't much support for After Goal. I'm sure some are just fine on their own, at least I hope so.

1842 days ago



MILLEGE2

I am very interested in both your data and your thoughtful analysis as you pursue this question. My own stutter-start about even signing in to Spark daily happened five years ago, about five months after enthusiastically launching my membership. It revolved around a major upheaval (local tornado destruction and relocation, in my case), followed by feeling too out of control to eat responsibly or exercise (probably/possibly excusable under the circumstances), followed by [and this is the point!] a period when I simply didn't want to be honest with myself about eating too much and making excuses not to exercise. I didn't want to admit to others I had "failed".

At that time, being active on Spark was more about what other sparkers thought and how they responded to my posts than it was about using this site to hold myself to my own standards/hopes/goals. Refocusing brought me back, allowing me to use whatever resources here I need, without feeling I had to be post or be perfect or a role model. And, of course, I've been living a healthier life ever since!

So I think you might be on to something that, at least for some, being called out as a Motivator may have made then embarrassed if there were normal human lapses. THIS IS ONE REASON I

SO ENJOY READING YOUR BLOGS.
1842 days ago

THANK YOU!



50YEARSWIFE

Enjoy reading this and your other blogs about other Sparkers.
1842 days ago



CARBMONSTERII

I think lots of people start off with a huge amount of enthusiasm: they join teams, make friends, and post frequently. Over time, the enthusiasm wanes, in parallel to their weight control/health goal efforts. Like lots of self improvement efforts it takes most of us several failed attempts before we see success. All of us just don't have the gumption to keep on trying. There is such a huge emotional aspect to body image, weight and health. Others just have "life get in the way", and simply don't prioritize their time on SP higher than other demands on their time, attention & energy. I suspect the first, discouraged group is much, much larger than the second.
1842 days ago



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Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.