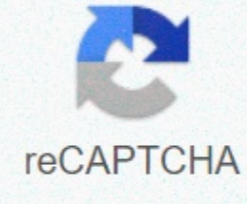




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Be obsessed or be average

Sharing on PinterestAmmotiation, in many ways, is baggage. Tiny suitcases filled with memories and mementos of our lives that are emptied every year and transported in larger cases. Sacred objects that we have deemed necessary, but are not completely touchable. Pieces from us, and from others, are scraped together in a growing collection that heaps onto our backs, adjusting to withstand the ever-pressing weight as needed. At first it seems necessary, and then almost too heavy to bear, but shrugging it off our shoulders is never presented as an option. In typical OK, Boomer fashion, my mom really made a number for me by prenatally teaching sentimentality. The story of my birth, how Blondie was playing on the radio, how it was Friday the 13th, how it popped out at noon and was covered in brown hair like coconut - how I didn't cry until the doctor smacked my butt. Just as she passed down the obligatory decorative seasonal towels in the kitchen, and the strict importance of sending instant thank you cards, my mom gave these details mythical weight and presented them to me as details to memorize and care about. Every memory of her own life, and every memory she helped me create, to put pins on the map of my life. Every pin had a talisman hanging from it. A matter of great importance that I would forever be accused of taking care of. I'll have this cake mix for the rest of my life. It's almost like he knew he was going to die young, and that my father would do it as well. And since I was an only child, I've had to go through the exercises of learning the details and stories of our family's treasures, how important they were or else they would all go to the crematorium with them. If I hadn't learned to appreciate, then love, then box, and move on, and dust our most fancy Christmas wreath, then who would? No one? And you can't just throw it away. God. Even I just imagine myself throwing out my mom's old, crumpled and crumpled Christmas wreath with the too long bow that can never be arranged just right; the wreath he had pulled from his own special box and hung prominently somewhere, in every house we lived in as a family, and then while we took silent shifts collecting the faded red beads that would fall from it periodically. It's enough to make me want to die. And that's just a wreath. That's just one thing. When my mom died in 2013, and after my dad followed her into the dark in 2017, I was left alone to collect what was left behind. I searched their house like it was on fire, like I only had a few minutes. I'm going to grab everything I could. In fact, I had all the time in the world to stay there and get through things, boxing what could be donated, kept, or thrown away. But when everything I looked at and touched reminded me of it. He smelled like them. Everything was very important to So I kept the one that hit me hardest. My father's underwear he wears in most of the causal photos. My mom's glasses. All the pictures. My father's watch. The baseball bat. The little computer he always had in his office. Their wedding bands. The Christmas wreath. Everything else went, and I didn't care where. I could only carry so much. I could only do so many of them of my own when I already had so many of them in me. I wasn't alive anymore. I was obsessed. I took these things from their house and folded them into mine. I took yellowed, square photos of them when they were young, the cool kind with the combed edges. I bought special frames for them and hung one of my father from the light switch near the front door, to honor him, to keep him as the man of the house, and to remind me that without his life insurance, I wouldn't even have this house. I put one of my mom's, holding a kitten from her youth, on my shelf to remind me to keep sharp as it was, and to always remember that she taught me how to love books. I put another one from my father over my nightstand. I put the baseball bat next to the nightstand to still protect me. I built a shrine of sorts in my office closet and put a framed photo from when they were coming out, my mom's nursing school pin, a Betty Crocker cake mix that I took from their kitchen cupboard because when I saw it, I knew that my mom had bought it to make for my dad's birthday. He died before he could do it. I'll have this cake mix for the rest of my life. In the center of this sanctuary, a small white plastic container with some of my father's ashes. I live with these things in this house, and I will live with them in any other house I am. They are beautiful reminders of the fact that everyone is born to parents, that I had two of them, and now I don't. They're beautiful objects. Beautiful things. And no matter how much space they occupy, they are, everyone and each one, extremely heavy. The thing about sentimentality is that he can take you on. It takes a little balance. There's a fine line between having family heirlooms in your house that you take care of, and becoming so wrapped up in them, and the stories behind them, that suddenly you're that girl in the bar wearing her dead mom's sweatshirt, her dead dad's watch, swinging their wedding rings around your neck, paying for drinks with the money pulled from your dead dad's wallet. . and only ever talk about dead people. It's getting to you. At one point it became a joke to me that after two or three glasses of wine a valve would open and ghosts would fly out of me. I'm starting to feel like the girl of death. It was starting to feel unhealthy. I was going to wear it every day, but when it arrived, I thought it was very special. The worst part was one night when my wife was at work, and I. I. Getting into the wine and making things. I looked at all the pictures, smelling my parents' clothes that I mixed with mine in the closet. And then, I took out this ghost detector I'd been given as stuffed socks a year ago and was playing my parents' songs, clapping and crying and cringing up the music, while the ghost detector - and I'm not making it up - went full tilt wild. I wasn't alive anymore. I was obsessed. Fitting, and dusting, and memorializing the souvenirs of life as it had come and gone pressed down on me in a growing fashion. I was obsessed with taking care of the dead, that my own life was beginning to suffer. Either I had to shift some of the focus back, or face the long-term consequences that, frankly, probably would have ended up 51/50ing myself. For the fifth anniversary of my mom's death, I commissioned Margaret Cross to make me a memorial ring. Something I could wear on my skin that allowed me to take my mom with me wherever I went. Like I wasn't doing well enough already, just staying alive. The ring is white gold, with two rubies (my mom's birthstone) framing a lock of her hair enclosed in the crystal. I was going to wear it every day, but when it arrived, I thought it was very special. Now I wear it on special occasions, or while I'm doing things I need her there for, a little more than usual. When not worn, it lives in a small box on my bedside table, where I have my own wedding ring and engagement ring. It has a tangible feel to it and can put a charge on a room. Like my mother when she was alive. Taking this ring, and how I felt a little over the top to now carry around not only mementos of my loved ones, but their pieces, was the first step to letting go a little. It doesn't let go of the memories, of sentimentality on its own, but of the overall weight of it all. I'm not going to put my own coffin in. I'm not one of the three ghosts. I'm alive. And with life, it comes learning to live well, which often means letting go of things that, well intended or not, hold you back. I'm still here to maintain. But my grip is a little looser now. It had to be. I had to allow my own artifacts to accumulate. I had to let some air in. No one can thrive in a grave. Kelly McClure is a writer who has written for NY magazine, GQ, The Hairpin, Rolling Stone, and more. Get another job here. Who are picky adults? Learn more about ARFID and whether selective eating in adults is a disorder in this HowStuffWorks Now article. ANANT. Statistics on eating disorder. Association of Anorexia Nervous and Related Disorders, Inc. (December 26, 2011) Jason. Are you obsessed with your weight? (26 December 2011) 2011) Karen. Obsessed with weight and still overweight. MSNBC. November 6, 2011. (26 December 2011) . Types of eating disorders. (26 December 2011) Laurent. Are you obsessed with food? Prevent. (December 26, 2011) Kathy. Building healthy body appreciation in a body toxic world. (26 December 2011) . Compulsive exercise. (26 December 2011) staff of the Clinic. Binge eating disorder: Complications. (29 December 2011) complicationsMayo staff of the Clinic. Body dysmorphic disorder. Mayo Clinic. (26 December 2011) symptomsMndaily.com. America's weight obsession. April 11, 2007. (December 26, 2011) Rick. Weight obsession more than eating disorder? Aikenk. January 11th, 2007. (26 December 2011) . Estimated calorie requirements. December 26, 2011 Karen. Big Fat Disconnect: 90% of us believe our diets are healthy. Live Science. January 4, 2011. (December 26, 2011) Karen. Me, fat guy? American in denial about weight, survey finds. January 4, 2011. (26 December 2011) . Body image. (26 December 2011) Page 2 Eating Disorders Event 1. Eating disorders strike over 7 million American women each year, and 1,000 of them will die from complications of anorexia. Up to 80 percent of female college students have reported binge eating, a predecessor of bulimia. Ninety percent of those suffering from eating disorders are women. Contents Eating disorders begin early - usually during puberty - and can develop as early as the age of 12. Age 17 is the average age they develop. Between five and 10 percent of young women suffer from an eating disorder. Advertising Women with Anorexia. Though Often Well and admired for their ability, constantly trying to seek approval, and in fact have very low self-esteem and feel inadequate. They use food and diet as ways to deal with life's stress. Advertising An Eating Disorder Disorder not to leave without treatment. Eating disorders are mental illnesses that can be fatal if not treated and are difficult to recover from; However, many women have successfully recovered and gone on to live full and fulfilling lives. Advertising Therapy for Eating Disorders includes a mix of strategies, including psychological counseling, nutritional counseling, family therapy and, in some cases, antidepressant medications. Advertising There is a high incidence of depression among women suffering from bulimia, so the effectiveness of antidepressants can be demonstrated in the treatment of the disorder. But antidepressants alone, without cognitive-behavioral therapy, have only an 18 percent success rate. Advertising Self-hunger of anorexia can cause anemia; shrunken organs. low blood pressure. slowed metabolism and reflexes. bone loss, which can lead to osteoporosis; irregular heartbeat, which can lead to cardiac arrest. Advertising The swelling and clearing of bulimia can lead to damage to the liver, kidneys and intestine; tooth erosion; rupture of the esophagus. and electrolytic imbalance that can lead to irregular heartbeat, which can lead to cardiac arrest. Advertising Overeating, or bingeing, of bulimia can lead to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, gallbladder disease, diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer. Advertising Should you know how you think about all the ingredients that make up the image of yourself? if your self-image becomes too dependent on the thin appearance, you should consider how this may lay the groundwork for an eating disorder. Consider your own posture for your body, and make sure it's one of healthy acceptance. Copyright 2003 National Women's Health Resource Center, Inc. (NWHRC) Advertising Advertising