



You Deserve a Ribbon

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The surprised lady in front of me looked at me in total disbelief: “I’m sorry??”

“Yes, I believe you deserve a ribbon; It’s quite something what you’ve pulled off: you lost almost 100 pounds.!”

She agreed, but at the same time, she felt uncomfortable with the compliment I just gave her. After so many years of being overweight, she got accustomed to being shouted at and being ridiculed and was not familiar with receiving compliments anymore. She immediately tried to attenuate my compliment: “Thank you, but that’s due to the surgeon.” “And thanks to you and the whole team,” she quickly added. It took me a lot of persuasion to highlight her share in this: “Absolutely, a fine job from the surgeon, you can leave that up to him, since he studied on this subject for many years. Obviously, the rest of the team is awfully competent as well, but you are the one who has done the job, by carrying on, even in times when you were struggling. And as far as I’m concerned, you deserve a ribbon for that.” The disbelief on her face was slowly replaced by a gentle expression of pride, and she actually started to gloat a little.

Rightly so, because let us face it, people with overweight, no matter to what size or degree or whatsoever, have been

fighting gravity (in several ways) for many years. Partly because of their “big bad luck,” they were more susceptible to gaining weight and were struggling more to lose it afterwards compared to the most of us. Therefore, it is really not all their own fault. Especially the heavyweights, who have to eat very little to lose 80, 100, or 120 lb or even more, are struggling. Sometimes, help is needed and bariatric surgery still appears to be the best tool for losing weight. Because this “internal renovation” is only functioning as a tool and not the solution, the patients will have to do the most themselves, especially after the so-called honeymoon period, which unfortunately loses some of its power after one year or so.

For everyone, thick or thin, who wants to show awareness for obesity and wants to hearten obese people, I wanted to create a visible sign, based on the so-called awareness ribbons (of which the pink ribbon is obviously the most famous one).

This ribbon is not only for those who are losing weight, but for everyone struggling with obesity. In my head, the awareness ribbon and the measuring tape for the waist line merged into a true Obesity Awareness Ribbon.

I hope you will wear it with pride, compassion, and mildness.

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