

UNDERSTANDING KOPS NEEDS SKIT

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- NARRATOR:** Two KOPS are meeting for coffee after a meeting. Let's listen in on their conversation. Joanne has just reached 7 consecutive years as a KOPS after an 80 lb. loss.
- Betty Jane:** Joanne, I asked you to come out for coffee to celebrate with you your wonderful accomplishment. Not only have you taken off over 80 lbs., you have maintained that loss for 7 years. Not everyone understands how difficult that is.
- Joanne:** You are so right! Someone came up to me tonight and said, "You're so lucky. After all these years, it must be automatic to eat right."
- Betty Jane:** Oh my! That's what I thought when I was still a TOPS trying to lose weight! I thought that once my weight was off, that my habits would be changed and it would become so much easier than staying on a weight loss plan.
- Joanne:** That's part of what's so hard about being a KOPS! The shock you get when you find out that battle goes on and actually seems harder than losing!
- Betty Jane:** It is a shock isn't it! (Claire Enters) Hey – there's Claire!
- Joanne:** Hi Claire! Do you have time to join us.
- Claire:** I have a little time. I can sit for a few minutes rather than getting my coffee to go. What are you two doing here?
- Betty Jane:** We're having a celebratory cup of coffee to recognize Joanne's KOPS anniversary.
- Claire:** I noticed they didn't make a very big deal of it at the meeting tonight. I don't think TOPS members realize that it's still hard once you become a KOPS.
- Betty Jane:** We were just discussing that. When I was still a TOPS, I heard KOPS saying it was much harder once you were a KOPS. I'm sorry to say now that I really didn't believe it. I don't think it's possible to understand until you actually experience it. I lost my KOPS status twice. Now I'm in awe of KOPS who have kept their status for multiple years. Now I use them as role models when I'm in leeway and climbing. I have to keep reminding myself that if they did it, I can too.
- Claire:** Why do you think it's so much harder to be a KOPS?
- Joanne:** I've given that some thought and understand better now some of the reasons.
- Betty Jane:** Don't keep us in suspense – what have you come up with?
- Joanne:** Well, think about it for a minute. While you are taking off weight, people are telling you all the time how good you look. Your clothes are more comfortable. You can see results in the mirror!

Claire: AND – at meetings you get a lot of recognition, awards and a lot of member support.

Betty Jane: I found that every 10 pounds I went down a clothes size. And...I loved seeing the scale go down.

Joanne: Every 20 pounds I went down, my clothes got really loose and I had to replace them. I enjoyed having new things.

Betty Jane: Me too, but now, my clothes last much longer. They're no longer pulling at the seams. I find it hard to justify getting new things.

Claire: Why do we do that to ourselves. I think I'll begin rewarding myself every three months that I remain a KOPS. I'm going to get myself a piece of jewelry or a new piece of clothing. If I could find a way to afford it before, I can make a way to do it now.

Joanne: Great idea. If we were putting the weight back on, we'd be forced to get new clothes. So why not get them to celebrate keeping it off?

Betty Jane: When I was losing weight and was out shopping, I used to check myself out in all the store mirrors and my reflection in the window because there was such a drastic difference. I really enjoyed seeing the change. I haven't done that for a long time. Did you two ever do that?

Betty Jane & Claire nod yes.

Claire: This discussion is making me realize, that, not only do other people stop giving us recognition for our achievement, we stop giving ourselves affirmation as well.

Joanne: Now that we're talking about this, I'm seeing that we stop getting a lot of the other rewards too.

Betty Jane: What do you mean?

Joanne: This is what's on the top of my head, there may be more. We used to see a huge drop in the scale, now we fight to stay within a 10-lb. limit and really panic if we find ourselves out of leeway. We put ourselves under tension to stay enough below our goal that we don't need to worry about losing our status. We let go of enjoying our new physiques in the mirror – because after a few years of looking at them, we begin to see the results of aging like middle-age spread and wrinkles.

Claire: I see what you mean! We begin looking at the flaws instead of enjoying our accomplishment.

Joanne: And...I'm apt to put myself under added pressure because I imagine others are looking at me to be "an example of what TOPS can do....."

Claire: (groans!) Me too! I've got to stop doing that to myself!

Betty Jane: It's getting late. I need to get going – but I'm going to think about this and see what I can come up with to provide myself with more self-affirmation and rewards.

Claire: I wonder if there is something we could do to raise awareness at meetings and to help others to understand a little more about the continuing challenges of being a KOPS.

Joanne: If we do that, we need to be careful not to scare TOPS away from being KOPS!

Claire: We sure do. We've been talking about the difficulties – but haven't included all the benefits of having reached our weight-loss goal.

Betty Jane: Yes, the rewards are innumerable. Remember how many aches and pains we had from being overweight?

Claire: And how out of breath we got when trying to exercise?

Joanne: And I had a constant fear of developing diabetes, having a heart attack or stroke and knew I was much more likely to develop many kinds of cancer.

Claire: And...I hate to admit it, but I was always looking around at gatherings to see if I was the largest person in the room. True or not, I felt like people were judging me by my size and wondering why I didn't do something about my weight. I don't have to do that any more!

Joanne: And...I go to my closet and know all my clothes will fit. No more trying on multiple outfits to try to find something I look decent in!

Betty Jane: This has been interesting. Let's all give it further thought. I had a fleeting idea that maybe we could include a 5-minute "Spotlight on KOPS" at our meetings. Would you be willing to work on some ideas for short, little clips that would help us to find the support and encouragement we need each week?

Let's all think about it and get together again.

HUGS ALL AROUND AS THEY LEAVE.

AN ALTERNATE PROGRAM OR FOR DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE SKIT:

I'd probably use a whiteboard or whatever else is available and start off asking for a vote of who thinks it's easier to be a TOPS trying to take off weight, and who thinks it's easier to Keep it off?

From there, I'd ask for feedback from the voters and begin to categorize their answers and at the very end, add anything on my list that wasn't already talked about.

Then I think I'd move into feedback from both sides as to what that's being done at that particular meeting that is most helpful – and also make it a visual. Then I'd go on to ask what types of things are missing in order to help people be successful and ask them to get very specific about what kind of support could be added to meetings to increase their success.

If there was still time, I think I'd ask if anyone was surprised by anything that was brought up about being a KOPS. I'd close by listing all the rewards one receives by reaching their goal and maintaining it. It would depend on the size of the meeting, the number of KOPS, etc.

If there was time at the meeting, I would ask the KOPS to tell about their personal weight loss and weight maintenance journey. If there were a lot of KOPS, I'd make it a 2-week program and ask the KOPS to give their stories the following week.

There's many directions to go with this.

IDEA: Incorporate a "Five Minute Focus on Kops" at meetings at least monthly – preferably weekly.

Why harder to be KOPS than TOPS

When I was a TOPS trying to take off weight, once I got in the groove and took off enough for people to notice -

I GOT COMMENTS EVERYWHERE I WENT:

From Friends and Family:

"Boy, do you look good – what are you doing to take off the weight?"

At Meetings:

"Wow, you've been consistently going down! It's so hard, how are you staying on track?"

"What got you started, I need to do what you're doing."

"Which plan are you using?"

And...at most meetings....awards of some kind regularly. Some places the biggest loser is recognized every week.

CLOTHES

At first – Clothes more comfortable

Then – NEW CLOTHES! Yay!

Every 15- 20 lbs. – More new clothes!

SCALES & MEASUREMENTS

Consistent proof that you're making progress.

REFLECTIONS

Mirrors showed a trimmer body

Even large windows I passed reflected a slimmer me.

MOVEMENT

For every 5-10 pounds

More Energy – Less pain – Less breathlessness

PERSONALITY

Found myself changing into a more vibrant, energetic personality. More self-confidence as I felt less judged by my size. No longer looked around at every gathering to see if I was the largest person.

KOPS KEEPING OFF WEIGHT

COMMENTS

From friends and family:

Positive ones few and far between the longer weight stays consistent it doesn't seem like a big deal to anyone who doesn't find food a challenge

If a gain: "Hey, are beginning to put on a little weight?"

At Meetings:

Unless there other KOPS to share with everyone seems to think that since you've hit goal, that it's downhill from there. (Isn't that what we used to think too? So we have the added shock that it's hard. We never expected it to be a continuous battle. We even sometimes thought that after the rewards of weight loss, we'd never be tempted to go back again. Who knew food would still be so powerful?

Also, we feel responsible to be an "EXAMPLE OF WHAT TOPS CAN DO AS I KEEP OFF POUNDS....."

TOPS find it hard to understand why we get so worried about putting on a pound unless we're at the top of our leeway.

Rewards and recognition are different because others assume it is easy to stay within goal.

Contests and programs – usually more geared to losing weight than keeping it off.

CLOTHES

Boy they last a long time when you're not straining the seams!

Do any of us feel we shouldn't spend the money on ourselves? Why could we justify that amount of money when we were losing?

Would it be good to reward ourselves with something new every 3 months that we remain a KOPS?

SCALES AND MEASUREMENTS

We stay the same – except for middle-age spread etc.

REFLECTIONS

We begin to forget how we used to look and start seeing the new wrinkles and signs of aging!

Should we keep a “before” picture beside our mirrors?

Take the reflections in store windows for granted and don't pay much attention after awhile.

MOVEMENT

It doesn't take long to forget that we used to huff and puff, have sore knees or feet and moved much slower. And, as we age, we get new surprises!

PERSONALITY

Hopefully we've held on to the vitality and energy and feel better in groups of people. If not, we have more work to do there too!