

A Twit Bit for Positive Change

The Twitter Diet—to me, it sounds like another in a long line of trendoid, hipster, going-to-last-in-popularity-as-long-as-it-takes-to-flip-the-page-of-the-magazine-it’s-written-about-in, fad diets—its hook being maybe that every time you have a gluttonous thought about food, you’re supposed to distract yourself by tweeting something...ANYthing...as long as it’s unrelated to anything culinary. I was imagining a whole legion of women whose number of twitter followers drop off to no one but maybe their mothers and husbands because they start flooding the twit feed with things like, “I have fingernails!” or “I like to blink. Blinking is fun”, as they try to follow the guidelines of The Twitter Diet.

I was relieved then, to read that it's actually just the moniker for what is essentially the modern-day evolution of a dieter support group. That is to say, the University of South Carolina’s Arnold School of Public Health studied 96 overweight people engaged in a weight-loss program. Some were fed (no pun intended) weight loss information and resources via their mobile devices, while others received this material and were told to actively engage in posting to Twitter (it is presumed in the article about this topic on www.foxnews.com, that they are posting about what is going on with their weight loss: successes, failures, etc. <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2013/01/15/twitter-diet-social-media-may-aid-weight-loss/>), and therefore they were also consistently receiving feedback from fellow participants and a weight-loss counselor in real time.

The participants who had this active dialogue and accountability ended up losing more weight than those who were just gathering weight loss information to help inform their choices about diet and exercise. While this is not surprising to me, I love this about the modern age. People can use their connectivity to make positive strides to a healthier lifestyle, in lieu of using their constant connectivity to sack out with streaming *Mike and Molly* episodes. This is a result of people being made to feel accountable to someone other than themselves, and of people having a forum on which to brag a little about their successes without necessarily having to wait for the proper context to do so. The combination can be a force for positive change, much in the way that good old fashioned weight loss groups are--except it's instant and can be tapped into between errands and work and kid time, and...and...and..., thus eliminating the need for a committed chunk of time written out of your planner's available space. How do you stay accountable for the choices you make?