

# STAYING ENGAGED WITH BARIATRIC LIFE

Jason Smith  
BariNation Co-Founder





# ABOUT ME

## **Bariatric Patient**

I had Vertical Sleeve Gastrectomy on 3/11/20 at 44 years old and have since lost 191lbs. I continue to follow the program that aligns to my goal of living life at a happy healthy weight.

## **Why I am Passionate About Supporting the Bariatric Community**

After my procedure I struggled to find support. I founded BariNation with April to create an inclusive environment where all members of the bariatric community feel welcome and supported through every stage of this journey, A place where bariatric patients can grow, flourish, and connect with other patients from around the world. I am passionate about making sure that others feel supported and valued throughout every step of the way.

# WHAT IS BARIATRIC LIFE?

- Following our surgeons guidelines.
- Meeting our bariatric goals daily, weekly, and monthly. (The 3 M's)
- Acknowledging our relationship with food.
- Doing the mindset and headwork necessary to unpack why we use food in the way that we do.
- Involving ourselves in a community that supports our bariatric life.

# WHY WE DISENGAGE

## WLS Fears

### **Stalls**

When the scale stops moving, we think we have done something wrong.

### **Setbacks**

When we think we have overcome something, but continue to struggle.

### **Stumbles**

When we do things that do not align with our bariatric life.

# BARI EXHAUSTION

**The WORK of WLS is exhausting**

The work is never ending.

The work always seems to be shifting.

The easy days lull us into a false reality.

Your brain is hardwired to win.

# ALL OR NOTHING MINDSET



**This mindset allows us to believe that perfection is attainable.**

Perfection is an illusion that helps us build in our "out" when things get tough.



**It allows us to believe that if we don't do it all, none of it is worth doing.**

This gives us permission to make no progress instead of some progress.



**It gives us an "escape hatch" when things get hard.**

Knowing that we have an "out" before we even start set's us up to stop trying as soon as things are more difficult than we anticipated.



**The fear of continued failure pulls us to disengage.**

**50%**

**We have a 50% chance of regain in the first two years after bariatric surgery.**

Our first bump in the road offers "evidence" that surgery will be one more thing that did not work for us.

We are so desperate to "get it right" that we cannot stand the thought of getting it wrong.

# WE ARE WIRED TO WIN



Even if that win is a technical loss, our brain is wired to interpret that **loss as a win.**

By "failing", we are proving our story correct.



It is where we are most **comfortable.**

We know what disengagement and failure feels like because we have done this before! Our brains are wired for comfort.



It feels **safe** because we have **been here before.**

Even if it was a place we really don't like, it is familiar and our brains crave that certainty.

IF WE DISENGAGE,  
WE CHOOSE OUR  
PAST OVER OUR  
PRESENT AND  
FUTURE.

The question we have to ask and answer is will we commit to our bariatric life or continue to live our old life, after surgery?

# ENGAGEMENT TOOL: ACT

**Acknowledge- Community- Triage**

**A**

Acknowledge what you are doing and why you are doing it.

**C**

Turn to the community for support, empathy, and guidance.

**T**

Pick ONE thing you will focus on and do that one thing consistently.

# ACKNOWLEDGE

Putting a name to a feeling or emotion is the first step!

- Why are you feeling the way you are?
- What are you winning by losing?
- What are you resistant to?
- Is this familiar or old behavior?
- Know that the work of WLS is monumental, tectonic, soul- altering work.

# COMMUNITY

Find and participate in a community that is meaningful to you.

[www.barination.com](http://www.barination.com)

- Who is in your corner?
- Do you have a safe place to vent and share?
- What support do you need from a community?
- Communities work when you work them.
- Know that just by **observing** from the shadows means you are participating.

# TRIAGE

Take inventory of all the things that are not going well. Pick the biggest bang for your buck and start **THERE**.

- Take the time to assess.
- List what is driving you to disengage.
- What supports do you need from a community?
- Communities work when you work them.
- Know that just by **observing** from the shadows means you are participating.

**When we discount our  
own story, we discount  
everyones story.**

April Williams  
BariNation Co-founder

**If the old you does not  
show up, the new you will.**

Natalie Tierney  
BariNation Cofounder

**We have to get it wrong  
to get it right.**

Jason Smith  
BariNation Cofounder

# LONG STORY SHORT:

When you feel like disengaging,  
know that that is the very  
moment you need to **ACT**.

Obesity is a chronic disease that  
will require lifelong treatment.

**Community is treatment.**

# THANK YOU FOR JOINING!

We hope you found the support you were looking for today!

## **Stay in Touch!**

- Instagram: @bari.nation
- Instagram: @tha\_smithsonian\_
- Podcast: [www.anchor.fm/barination](http://www.anchor.fm/barination)
- Email: [jason@barination.com](mailto:jason@barination.com)
- Website: [www.barination.com](http://www.barination.com)

