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[Soul Seeing](#)



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October 30, 2018

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In the past year, my relationship with Sugar has turned sour. Like most breakups, this one includes betrayal, sadness and regret.

Sugar and I had a compatible and mutually satisfying relationship since childhood. Mom's homemade, double-crust apple pie flavored with cinnamon accompanied by a large scoop of butter pecan ice cream was our favorite meeting place. But there were other dalliances that cemented our relationship, open-air delights with soda, cereal, Almond Joys, Cinnabuns, pineapple Danish, and double fudge brownies. Sugar and I were special friends.

It was only decades later, after I experienced some I-Thou relationships, that I became aware that my cherished Sugar and I had grown into an I-It relationship. It was so subtle, so pleasurable, reliable and persistent that there I was in my 70s, overweight but happy enough with my health, pouring Sugar into my coffee, and still delighting in the peach and blueberry flavors of pie, those mushy brownies and squirting eclairs, some with the added bonus of chocolate. Our affair deepened with each bite. Sugar even introduced me to its parent, Carbohydrate, and its evil twin, Starch. I liked them all but Sugar was my one and only.

Eventually, there were warning signs in our love affair, especially when my doctor said that I was prediabetic and should take metformin as a frontline protection. Faithful Sugar didn't seem to mind that I switched to artificial sweetener (the pink packet kind) and used the meds to hold off any unwanted diabetic consequences as long as the ice cream was still in the freezer. In fact, I was so confident in our I-It relationship that I talked to my doctor about making a slight change in my regimen.

"What do you think, Doc, if I cut back on the metformin, and take only one pill a day instead of two? I haven't had any issues for a few years and I would just like to take fewer meds."

He paused, then said, "Well, OK. Let's give it a six-month try and see where we are."

Sugar did a dance like Salome in my veins.

Six months later we had bona fide diabetes. I broke up with Sugar on the spot and ended our I-It relationship. Sugar burned.

It isn't easy for me either.

My doc increased my metformin again, with instructions to prick my finger two or three times a day (I choose two) for my current blood-sugar count, get more exercise, and "not to eat anything white." I am motivated because diabetes can be scary, losing weight is a perennial broken New Year's resolution, and my relationship with Sugar is shattered anyway. I've lost 25 pounds since we broke up and my biggest problem now is a need for a new wardrobe.

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Like everything related to the body, the soul tags along. The view from the soul gets down to brass tacks. Like all breakups, you experience loss and grief, even with an It. I enjoyed eating all those carbs and sugars for all those years and I do not give them up because I no longer like them. I give them up and struggle to find substitutes because my heart is convinced that they are bad for me. But the emotional loss remains and I ache for comfort and resolution. Why isn't this easier? It feels something like a death, even though I know it is not that bad.

Reshaping the loss of Sugar into a gain reminds me of the core spiritual process of death and resurrection. I am right in the middle of it at this point. It still feels daunting and sad. I trust there is resurrection into happy, healthy eating, but right now I am still in the tomb waiting for Easter morning.

An added problem with diabetes, and other similar illnesses, is that these are daily experiences. I have to eat every day so I have to find new ways to eat every day. I have to shop differently and prepare food differently. This change is right in my face all the time. Most other losses are due to an event, a death, a move, a new job. They are one-time events that I have to adjust to. Diabetes remains a daily recurring issue and I sense it is a process but I long for the happy ending that is sometime in the future.

And I can't cheat. I know because I have tried. Regardless of the circumstances, when I eat birthday cake, or a dinner out, or a candy bar, my pancreas and liver know all about it. And so does my soul. All the time. Everywhere. It is constant. Relentless. I cannot cheat or Sugar is right back in my life, sexy as a femme fatale, alluring me back into a deadly I-It relationship.

I am reminded of a song from my youth: "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do."

[Tom Smith is a frequent contributor to Soul Seeing. He and his wife, Fran, live in Shiloh, Illinois. You can read all of the Soul Seeing columns at NCRonline.org/blogs/soul-seeing.]

A version of this story appeared in the **Nov 2-15, 2018** print issue under the headline: Breaking up is hard to do.