

Spelling It Out:

DIET

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I have a "four-letter word" to offer you that has been my mainstay since I was graduated to KOPS. That word is "diet." I can hear the thought in your mind right now: "If I have to stay on a diet for the rest of my life to keep my weight off, I don't know if I can do it. It isn't worth it."

Now really, isn't it? Think back to the first time someone noticed you had lost weight. How did you feel hearing their compliments? Right. Down deep it made you feel good even though you knew you had so much farther to go. And then, when you got in sight of the finish line, your goal, you could walk into any store and find so many clothes to choose from instead of just three or four in large sizes.

But let's go back to this diet of mine, and remember that it isn't the usual kind of diet. Let's look at each letter in "my" diet.

"D" stands for desire and determination to keep your weight off. I couldn't decide which word was stronger, so I made up a new word — desire-determination. So "D" stands for desire-determination.

Now on to the nice, slim letter "I". This letter stands for intelligence and for I, me. Did you know that our TOPS pledge is full of the letter "I"? In fact, there are 13 "I's", "me's" or "my's" in the pledge. So, you see, this letter is an important one in the diet I've been talking about. "I" stands for intelligence — I, me, my intelligence.

Next is the letter "E". "E" stands for effort. Put forth an effort every day to keep your weight under control. Not tomorrow but today. You had to reeducate your eating habits as you went along that hard course to goal, so don't throw away what you have learned. Don't let yourself get lax any one day. Keep putting forth that effort.

Now to the letter "T". It is the last letter of the word, but it is not the end of "my" diet. I picture the letter "T" standing tall and broad with two open arms. What can "T" stand for? Actually, it stands for the worst thing of all — temptation. "T" is for temptation, so control yourself. Don't knowingly go to places where you know food will be served unless you have complete control of the outstretched arms of Temptation.

This is "my" diet. You may have noticed that I haven't said one word about what you can or cannot eat on this diet. That is because I truly believe you can have some of anything you want to eat if, and this is a very big "if," you can stay on the diet which I have passed along to you today.

Remember, to stay a KOPS for life — diet.

Editor's Note: The above was edited from the KOPS graduation speech Robbie delivered at 1976 Mississippi SRD. Robbie has been KOPS for almost six years and was Mississippi's 1971 state queen.