

KARREN BRADY

OUR BRILLIANT COLUMNIST WRITES EXCLUSIVELY FOR W&H EACH MONTH

In business, I have willpower, but when it comes to sticky toffee pudding...

Friends often say I have a great deal of self-control, a large dose of willpower, the trait of being doggedly in control of my life.

I like to think they are right.

And then I remember the day I decided to go on the Atkins diet. After all, a piece of fruit had not passed my lips for many years, and I love cheese, so how hard could it be? However, on the day I started this diet, at breakfast time I fancied a banana smoothie. By lunch, a fruit salad, and by dinner, well, by dinner, I was thoroughly fed up and cheered myself up with a kebab and chips!

Something goes astray when my willpower isn't connected to my career. When it's business related, I have it in spades, but when it's personal, my willpower hides behind the sofa.

When it comes to a battle of minds, a business problem that requires sophistication and a hard-fought solution, I'm there, leading from the front. I know how to win, I know not to take "no", ever, as the final position. I dig deep, fight clean and battle hard.

However, when it comes to saying no to sticky toffee pudding, I'm the marshmallow in the corner. I'll try to decline, then say, "Oh all right, just a tiny bit," and before I know it, not only have I eaten my portion, but my husband's as well. Then I think, well, if I'm going to have the pudding, I might as well have the custard. And so it goes on. And on...

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It's the same when I think about going to the gym. I know it would be good for me and that I'm going to feel great afterwards, but frankly, I can't be bothered.

I prefer sitting in the armchair while watching TV. Not as good for me, I know, but far more enjoyable.

Why can I control one side of my life and not the other? At work, I can do the things that need to be done, when they need to be done, whether I am in the mood or not. But in a restaurant, when I'm thinking I should have a salad, I hear myself ordering the spaghetti Bolognese.

People with willpower know that not giving in to the TV remote or not giving in to the sticky toffee pudding requires a little effort and a little bit of hardship. The hardship of making the right decision and

denying yourself something you know to be bad for you.

I guess the truth is that there is only so much willpower to go around. And the more you use it, the less you have to worry about food. I guess I am a "yes and no" girl! Yes, I work hard; no, I don't control everything I eat and do, or in my case, don't do!

So if you, like me, are looking to lose a few pounds this New Year, get into those skinny jeans or, God forbid, a bikini this summer, the answer has to be this: practise controlling yourself a little every day and don't beat yourself up when you fail. Well, I'm going to try it. I should be very good at not beating myself up by the end of the month! **w&h**

