Introduction
Some days, sticking to our weight-loss plan is like sailing the calm, blue seas. We’re gliding along, making good choices, eating well and exercising regularly. The wind is in our sails, with each healthy choice billowing us closer to our goal. Seeing a loss at chapter feels like the sun shining on our faces, and everything is perfect. Then, a storm hits.

Shipwreck!
Things get busy at work. The grandkids need babysitting. Heaven forbid, a relative gets sick. You’re struggling just to stay afloat, and you haven’t hit your step goal in over a month now. All of a sudden, memories of all the times you started and stopped an exercise program come flooding back. You feel your lifeboat tossing to and fro in the choppy waves.

In times of struggle, it can be difficult to avoid sinking into old habits. You don’t have time to sit down for a healthy dinner, so you hit the drive-thru. An argument with a friend leaves you upset, so you console yourself with sweets. Pretty soon, you’ve given up, because, who cares? You’ve blown it, and you’ll never lose weight.

When the thunder claps and the rain starts to fall, do you find your lifeboat starting to buckle under the weight of old, familiar habits?

(Allow members a few minutes to discuss their weight-loss challenges. Invite them to share if they would like.)

Let’s talk about the baggage we take with us into our weight-loss lifeboats. Oftentimes, to deal with stress, we revert back to what’s easiest for us—whatever has helped us make it
through to the other side in the past. For some of us, that could be behaviors we know don’t serve us well, but that we continue to do because they’re comfortable. For others, it could be beliefs that we’ve held for many years about our self-worth or ability to change. Do any of these examples sound familiar to you?

“I blew my diet yesterday and today. Might as well just start over next Monday.”

“My whole family is heavy. I’m just destined to be overweight, too.”

“I missed going to the gym tonight. I can’t get a workout in at all now.”

“I’ve been trying to lose the same 10/20/100 pounds for the past decade now. I’ll probably never get to my goal.”

“The only thing that calms me down when I’m stressed is food.”

“If I can’t do it perfectly, well, I won’t do it at all.”

“I’ve always been fat, and that’s all I ever will be.”

“If I lose weight, will I still be the same person my family and friends love?”

Can you think of any other baggage you might be carrying?

(Allow members a few minutes to discuss. Invite them to write a few words about their baggage on each suitcase to the right. Some sample wording has been provided to get them started.)

What Floats Your Boat?

If old beliefs and behaviors are sinking your weight-loss lifeboat, give ’em the heave-ho! We have many lifesavers in the form of our TOPS friends, and they are always there if we need a buoy. But to achieve our goals and keep ourselves from sinking, we need to climb into a lifeboat ourselves. And, for a lifeboat to stay afloat, it can’t have much in it besides us. So, take your baggage and toss it overboard! And then, we’ll see you lighter.