

## Diets Don't Work: Food Fallacies That Have Been Making You Fat!

Have you ever eaten an entire chocolate cake or a whole pizza in one sitting? Do you feel that your eating habits are completely out of control? Is having a slim, sexy, and attractive body the most important thing in your life, even if you're no longer a spring chicken? Do you run to the comfort of food when you need to feel better about yourself or when someone's pushing your buttons? Are you terrified you'll never be able to stop dieting? If you answered, "yes" to any of these questions, then this chapter is for you.

Are you ready to make friends with goodies like french fries and pies and love your thighs at any size? It's a big step, I know and it's scary one but as long as you continue to diet, and restrict your food, watch your weight, avoid the foods you love, you'll never have what you want—peace. I'll show you how to make peace with food and friends with your body.

We all have times when we eat more than we think we will. Even people who are naturally slender overdo it sometimes. It's normal to occasionally be impulsive, grab the candy bar at the check out stand and add it to your groceries, or get carried away overeating in the heat of the moment when the food smells so good it's calling your name. The problem is that emotional eaters tend to beat up on themselves because we overeat much more often and because of that it makes us feel awful. Yet the thing that we often forget is that for every single time that we give into temptation, there are a thousand other instances when we don't. We go without, we deprive ourselves, keeping our vow that this time will be different.

That's because dieting reinforces negative thinking that keeps us looking at things as black or white, good or bad, all or nothing. With a belief system geared for perfectionism, food is more like a danger zone filled with traps, zingers and mine fields everywhere you look.

In this chapter, we'll explore some common myths that keep you in food fear. I'll explain why and how they've contributed to your negative feelings about your body and your dysfunctional relationship with food. Then I'll nail the dieting coffin shut and give you reasons why depriving yourself to slim down is a dead end, literally, guaranteed to keep you frustrated and fat and much worse! Let's get started.

## Dieting: The Kiss of Death for a Positive Body Image and Healthy Self Esteem

Have you ever wondered, why we women are so incredibly obsessed about how our bodies look and what we eat? It's pretty sad that for such strong accomplished, capable gals, our sense of self is ruled by the size and shape of our bodies. Good grief! Have we forgotten that we are so much more than a number on a clothing label? You have so much going for you but you've got a good case of amnesia because dieting has distracted you from looking beneath the surface.

You have so many wonderful qualities like intelligence, warmth, empathy, personality, creativity, a sense of humor, playfulness, sincerity, compassion, energy, ambition, plus a huge capacity to love and be loved. It's all there, but you don't really see it. Do you?

Two things to consider here, your body image and self esteem. Body image is the picture of the size and shape of your body that you see in your mind. It plays a huge part in how you think and feel about yourself as a person because your body is the first thing others see when they look at you. Since you only have one body, naturally we all want to do our best and take care of it, keep it in shape and be healthy, but it's easier said than done because our diet obsessed society has led you to think that there's something wrong with the body you have. Thanks to our beauty pluck and tuck, squeeze and tweeze image obsessed culture, your sense of self respect has been in the toilet. The casualty in this body war in the pursuit of thinness has been your self esteem.

Self esteem is your level of confidence and satisfaction based on how you think about yourself. If we believe that thin is in and curvy is out, and our bodies are ugly and misshapen, then we won't have a whole heck of a lot of confidence to go around.

When I was a kid, I used to love playing Bingo with my Grammie and Grandpa. We used to play for jelly beans. I love jelly beans. Don't you, especially the orange and yellow ones. Let's play a game for a moment and say that for each jelly bean you have, it represents a positive memory from your past that adds up and becomes your self esteem. If you had 100 jelly beans, you'd probably feel pretty good. Maybe you'd eat some, share a few, and you might even save some for later.

But if you knew that your friend had 1000 jelly beans, all of a sudden you wouldn't feel quite so generous or willing to part with your precious beans. You'd compare what you have to what she has and you'd come up a few hundred jelly beans short. You wouldn't feel so good about yourself anymore. Would you? Why? Because you'd probably obsess about the fact that she has more than you. Who knows! Maybe she's more comfortable in whatever size body she has.

The truth is we're all different!. Some of us have wonderful lives with plenty of Norman Rockwell moments to draw upon, while others of us, have fewer of those examples, and have to make the most of what we have.

We can't all have the beans or the body of a Twiggy, Cher or Tyra. Yet because we're looking at our bodies and comparing them to every other woman out there, our perspective gets distorted and we lose sight of who we are beyond the box. Are you ready to step out of the diet box?

Speaking as a gal whose been an impulsive eater for more than 33 years, I've learned that diets are the enemy because we will always want what we believe we can't have. It was only when I made the decision to say goodbye to dieting that my appetite finally began to get under control and I was able to tune into my body and eat in line with my hunger, before that I wouldn't stop eating long enough to allow myself to get hungry. Now I

enjoy a good empty stomach and the wonderful meal that satisfies that hunger, but I still screw up now and again.

As I've mentioned before, I'm a work in progress, moving through my own recovery and dealing with my issues so I've still got a ways to go before I reach a place where I'm physically comfortable with my weight.

But it's so nice to know that now I can feel emotionally comfortable with my body. When I made the decision to stop letting food control me, that's when I started to come to grips with my hips and make friends with my curvy body. This is me now. My packaging may change, but I like the gal inside so much more than I ever did when I was dieting. Now that I'm making the most of all my jelly beans, I don't resent others for having theirs. I'm not waiting anymore for my life to begin. I'm sinking my teeth in and inviting you to join me to do the same.

Some things will probably never change. Believe me. I'll still be the gal in the bakery parking lot, taking full advantage of the warm bread or pastry, but the more mundane impulses that I used to always give into when I was dieting are meaningless to me, because the novelty has long worn off. It's no biggie to have chocolate, snack cakes, ice cream, Swedish fish, or home made pie in the house, because I often do. And since I have all these things around, I don't really want them as much as I used to, and they'll often go uneaten and I'll end up tossing them to the birds. I never thought that I could feel this way around food, but I do, and I want to shout it from the rooftops, because you deserve to enjoy this same type of peace and calm. Imagine how wonderful you will feel when the cries and shrieks of food will stop! How would your life change if you could feel safe around what you now consider temptation and just simply eat what you want?

In the next chapter, entitled, "Self Acceptance Begins with Making Peace with Food," you'll start learning how to play the game. I'll teach you the basic principles of learning how to be an intuitive eater, so that you can start to cue into your body's natural hunger signals and eat and really enjoy the foods you love, without fear.

Say Hallelujah! You don't have to do desperate things like spraying windex on leftovers, pouring soap on the rest of the brownies or emptying out cigarette ashes on your plate to discourage you from continuing to eat, because you and food are about to become friends.

### Dead End Dieting

Diets keep you thinking like a fat person, and it's so important to keep in mind that it's not possible to think fat if you want to be thin. As far as I'm concerned, diets are the kiss of death.

They only focus on what you can see, weighing, measuring, buying certain foods, and sticking to the program. You've probably been taught that if you want to lose weight, you have to follow other people's plans, and do what the diet tells you to do. In our weight

obsessed society, that means that you've got to eat less food or consume gruesome grub that grosses you out, choosing foods for its nutrition content and spurning the goodies you crave. I'm sure you'll agree there's nothing enticing about a diet other than the promise of quick weight loss.

And we all know that's a whole lot of hooey. You've probably proven time and time again that there's nothing quick about losing weight on a diet because, when the chips are down, no pun intended; it's nearly impossible to keep your nose to the grind stone and your hands off.

In the old diet mentality, you've been accustomed to thinking of food in a certain way. If you're like me when I first made the decision to stop dieting, you're probably absolutely terrified of the prospect of eating real food, fattening goodies, flinging your doors and pantries wide open, keeping these foods in your house all the time. You're probably thinking the temptation would be too great. Perhaps you think you'd never stop eating and in order to have any sense of order in your life, you would have to stick to a diet. Right?

We've all been taught about the importance of eating in moderation and increasing daily activity. But it's so hard to put it into practice, especially if you've been out of shape for a long time, isn't it?

The problem has never been that you don't know what to do to lose weight. We all know the what, it's the how that we're stuck on. We've never been taught how. We don't know how to relate to food differently, in a healthy way. We've been caught in a web of shame and doubt spun by the media and the diet organizations, implying that if we haven't lost weight by now, then something must be wrong with us.

Well hold on to your hat because you're about to be blown away. Contrary to what you've probably believed, it's not your fault that you haven't been able to stick to a diet or that you are overweight.

Probably like so many of us gals, you've spent too much time bouncing from pillar to post, hopping from one diet to another, dedicating yourself time and time again to the goal of losing weight. With each new progressive diet, you diligently learned all the rules, made note of all the restrictions and noticed yourself becoming more and more frustrated as the years passed. And, with all of the conflicting advice out there about what you should and shouldn't eat, you don't know what to believe anymore.

If you're like most people, you're probably heavier now than when you first began to diet.

Let's face it. Even though you may have felt successful during a period of dieting in the distant past, and feel that if you could just get that same motivation back you could do it again, wouldn't it be fair to say that diets haven't worked for you over the long haul? Do you want to know why?

## Diets Don't Lead to Sustained Weight Loss...

According to the latest results of a composite study done at UCLA in April of 2008, Traci Mann, Associate Professor of Psychology at UCLA and lead author of the study said, "We found that the majority of people regained the weight, plus more. Sustained weight loss was found only in a small minority of participants while complete weight regain was found in the majority. Diets do not lead to sustained weight loss or health benefits for the majority of people."

These findings are the results of 31 different long term studies, analyzing people who lost weight on diets and opted to have their progress tracked by this study for between 2-5 years.

When asked what alternative is best to consider in lieu of dieting, the author of the study, Mann said, "Eating in moderation is a good idea for everybody, and so is regular exercise."

Good Grief! It makes you want to hide under the covers and cry, doesn't it? Now we actually have scientific proof that very few people on diets will be able to keep their weight off without regaining it back. Pretty depressing, huh? It's enough to make you want to throw in the towel.

After all, as intelligent women, how did we ever get ourselves into this mess? Let's take a look and see. How many of the following common myths ring a bell, or strike a chord?

### Myths & Fallacies Keeping You Fat!

*Eating On a Schedule - It's 12:00, Lunchtime, I Must Be Hungry...*

Myth #1 – Eat three meals a day plus healthy snacks – Who hasn't heard of this myth. We've all been raised to buy into it. It's common knowledge that everybody needs 3 full squares a day. Right?

As a kid, I used to love spending time with my mom's parents, my grammie and grandpa. When I would go out shopping with them, just around lunchtime, grandpa would take a look at his watch and say, "Oh boy, it's 12:00. We should be eating now."

Does that sound familiar to you? Have you been eating by the clock? Don't worry. You're not alone. This is one of the biggest reasons why diets don't work.

This is entirely too much emphasis on food and eating. In order to truly become free of food's psychological hold on you, you need to tune back into your body's feelings and sensations of hunger. I know that you probably don't know what that is and how it feels, especially if you've been dieting for awhile. That's because diets encourage people to

stay far away from hunger, and to avoid it at all costs. The implied message is that you just can't be trusted around food because you have a feast beast lurking inside of you, just waiting to pounce and eat everything in sight. That's a lot of hooley!

Your body has it's own clock and way of telling you when it wants to eat. Most likely through years of dieting that sensitivity has been dulled down and anesthetized. I'm sure you're familiar with the old saying, "Never allow yourself to get too hungry."

I can't tell you how many times I've heard my Weight Watchers leaders say that to our group. Hearing that so often led me to believe that I should always protect myself from getting too hungry. That meant that I always ate something before I was going out so that I wouldn't arrive ravenous. I actually ate a meal before I went to eat a meal. Ridiculous!

I was actually afraid of getting hungry, even though I was over 60 pounds overweight. Consequently I carried food with me all the time, I seized on every opportunity to eat even if I didn't like the food, all because I had this pervasive fear that I never knew when I was going to eat next.

Missing a meal was unheard of in my family. How about you? What was it like in your home? Pause for just a moment and think back to your childhood. What do you remember about being told about missing a meal or eating on time?

The truth is that by focusing on sticking to a rigid eating schedule and eating at certain times of day, you are actually messing around with your body's delicate metabolic balance. This will throw off your ability to know when you are actually physically hungry, because you'll be walking around semi stuffed. Think about it. If you've eaten your lunch and throughout the afternoon, you've been snacking on jelly beans and ice cream, cake and cookies, by the time dinner rolls around you won't know when to stop eating, because you began eating the meal when you were already full. In order for your internal satisfaction switch to trigger, it has to first recognize the sensation of hunger. It works on the basis of sensation and feeling for contrast. We'll talk more extensively about this in the next chapter.

### Try It! Hi Body, It's Me Exercise

Most of the time we're unaware of the many sensations that we have throughout our body and we only become attuned to them when we are reminded to pay attention. You may not be aware of the feelings in your knee until I ask you to focus and pay attention to your knees. This is a simple awareness activity that you can use anytime you like to maintain a friendly connection between you and your body. Similar to placing your hand over your heart in the previous chapter, this is another way of accessing your intuition.

Find a quiet spot where you can sit silently for a few moments. Place your hand over your stomach and close your eyes, tilting them down toward your stomach. Your stomach is located in the upper portion of your belly beneath your rib cage. Notice how your stomach feels.

Have you just eaten recently? Is your last meal sloshing around in there? Does your tummy feel peaceful or are you in pain? If your body could talk, what would it say?

On a piece of paper with your right hand, write down the question, “What am I feeling?” Now switch the pen/pencil to your left hand and write the answer to that question. Without censoring yourself, write down whatever comes up for you. This is a method of connecting with your inner guidance or your intuition. It will also give you valuable information. Your intuition resides in the right hemisphere of your brain and it gets activated when you use the left side of your body.

In order to eat in response to your body’s natural signals of hunger, you have to learn to become aware of how your body feels. In dieting you are taught to eat at certain times, ignoring how you feel. If your emotions were a hot pot on the stove, they would boil over. That can translate to overeating and beating up on yourself.

Through teaching you how to communicate with your intuition, I’ll guide you to become aware of new ways of thinking about yourself. Consider that your intuition is like a caring nurturing friend, just waiting to be asked for help. It wants to guide you to be more happy and healthy and steer you clear of pain and misery.

I want you to learn to trust your body, because it knows best. It knows how to heal a wound or knit together broken bones without your assistance and if you let it, it can even control your body’s weight. That’s what I’m offering to teach you. However, you have to give up the control that you think that you have over food in order to get it back.

You don’t have to tell your digestive system to do its job or ... you would never ever think to allow anyone to tell you when to go to the bathroom. That’s totally absurd, right? Yet we fall into the habit of letting other people dictate how much and when we ought to eat.

Your hunger is a completely natural and physiological phenomenon. It is entirely dependent upon when, how much and what you ate last. It takes the body an average of 6-9 hours to run down its reserves of energy. Food stays in the stomach for that length of time. Here’s an example that you can probably relate to:

If you’ve ever gone to the doctor to have blood work done or been under a general anesthetic, then you know that in order to empty your stomach fully, the doctor recommends fasting for at least 8 hours. This is the approximate length of time that is required for food to metabolize in the body.

If you’re eating all fat free and low fat foods, you’re walking around always feeling like there’s a hole in your stomach, verging on constant hunger, feeling perpetually unsatisfied. As a result of that, you’re probably eating too often, because you’re eating food that tastes terrible. When is the last time that you asked yourself, “What do I want to eat?” Usually we eat what we think we should eat, and do our best to avoid the foods we

really want, but oftentimes those cravings are so strong, that we end up overeating and giving in anyway.

*Mmmmm, Breakfast, I'm starving...*

*Myth #2 – Eat a good breakfast* – Most of us were taught that we need a good rib sticking breakfast to start our day in order to give us the energy we need to get our engine started. In my experience, I've learned that if you're not hungry at breakfast time or any other meal, you shouldn't be eating. Your body is still working on digesting the previous meal, especially if you indulged in a late night snack.

I used to love big breakfasts. I remember when I was a kid. I would visit my grammie and grandpa for the weekend. They lived in River Edge, New Jersey. Every Saturday morning, grammie would prepare a breakfast that could have choked a horse.

First it began with a glass of juice, either orange or grapefruit, maybe apple. Then grandpa would have his cup of coffee. We each had a donut or some other pastry and washed that down with our juice. Cereal and a banana was the next course, and naturally since I was a growing girl, I had an extra glass of milk on top of it. After we got down to the bottom of our cereal bowls, grammie made grandpa and I a big plate of eggs and bacon which we topped off with a couple slices of buttered toast and jelly. Good Grief! It was a miracle of God that I could move and get up from the table.

The truth is, unless you're a farm worker, like my dear friend Sandy who used to own a dairy farm in upstate New York, you don't have to have a big breakfast in the morning because your body doesn't require those heavy duty energy reserves.

After all, you haven't been running a marathon in your sleep. When your body settles down to slumber, all your body processes slow down get a nice peaceful rest and very little energy gets expended. So you don't have to eat a lumber jack's breakfast before you head out the door for the day.

However you are the ultimate authority in choosing what, when and how much you eat. I am only offering guidelines. As you progress along, you will discover that you will acquire strong preferences for certain foods and ways of doing things.

That is different from living by the rules and the myths that we are exposing to doubt. Remember you are in control, no one else. I will promise you that you will be surprised many times over by your body's responses to this new level of freedom. It's truly amazing what happens when you strip off the blanket of restriction.

Many of my clients have discovered that as they get further into this program, they choose to eat a very small breakfast, perhaps some juice and coffee around 7:00 in the morning and then they don't get hungry again until about 1:30.

Here's a quick post that I shared with my members of my Juicy Woman Forum:

## Are You Eating to Fill A Corner or A Cavern?

One morning as I was sitting down to breakfast at about 7:30 a.m., ready to enjoy 1/2 of a cinnamon raisin bagel with margarine along with a nice hot steamy mug of peppermint tea with sugar and lemon, I thought of something that I learned many years ago.

When I lived in an apartment building, I used to be neighbors with a woman named, "Princess." She was my next door neighbor. Princess and I would often spend time together. One day she made a lovely roast duck dinner with wild rice stuffing and apricot glaze. She invited me over to enjoy it.

At the time I was a big fan of duck, and I ate a tremendous portion and I was overstuffed by the time I finished eating. I watched her curiously as she picked at her food and ate small bits and seemed to concentrate on what she was eating. I asked her what she was doing.

She told me that since she often makes this meal, she only wanted to eat enough to fill a small corner of her tummy. When we got up from the meal, I was groggy and feeling pretty awful, and excused myself to leave to take a nap in my apartment. She on the other hand was excited to finish a piece of art work that she was painting. After thanking her for the lovely meal, we bid our goodbyes and went our separate ways.

This morning as I looked down at my bagel, I noticed that there was one lonely little raisin in what was supposed to be a cinnamon raisin bagel, which had absolutely no flavor of cinnamon whatsoever.

I cut about 1/3 of the bagel out of the 1/2 and proceeding to spread it with margarine. I took a bite and noticed that it had nearly no flavor. Then I took another bite and noticed that my observation was the same, no flavor. So I left the rest of the bagel 1/2 on the counter and I made a mental note to toss it to the birds later. I decided to take my peppermint tea upstairs and share my observations with you.

I'm starting to understand what Princess meant by eating to fill a corner. Just those couple of bites were enough to take the edge off of my hunger, which was strong enough that it prevented me from focusing on what I was writing. So I knew I was hungry, but unlike that night where I became one with the duck, I didn't want to feel that sensation of being overstuffed and unproductive. Next when I get hungry, whenever that is, I'll probably make myself a couple of lightly scrambled eggs, because I know that I don't have to limit myself to 3 squares a day. I can eat anything and anytime I want.

How about you? Are you eating to fill a corner or a cavern? Do you know beforehand how much you want to eat, and if you do, what helps you to decide?

It's so important to learn how to pay attention to how your body feels and what you need/want. By doing that, you'll feel so good and be able to eat whatever you want. Even on weekend mornings, I don't tend to eat a big breakfast. If on the rare occasion I do,

then I won't eat until dinner time. Don't listen to me. Let your body tell you what's right for you.

*Myth #3 – Eat only lowfat or diet foods*

I wonder if you were never on a diet and had to eat these foods for the sake of conserving calories, would you actually choose to consume them?

I used to swear up and down that I loved the taste of Diet Coke and fat free salad dressing, lite ice cream and every other diet or lowfat mass produced food on the market. Who was I kidding? When I started to eat real food, that was probably the first time that I really became aware of how artificial tasting, bitter, chemically, and just plain nasty those foods are!

For the most part all mass produced foods are filled with additives and chemicals to make them taste good, or to fool us into believing that they taste good. This is because the companies have spent billions of your dollars trying to mimic the taste of their higher fat original versions, the good stuff. Have you ever compared a slice of real cheesecake to a diet version? There's no comparison. The diet cheesecake is plugged full of artificial sweeteners like Aspartame, best known as Equal or Nutrasweet. I've heard tell that at room temperature this chemical turns into the same substance that is in formaldehyde. Do you really want the inside of your body to petrify?

It's up to you. Lot of people really like them. Who knows! Maybe you do, maybe you don't. Maybe like me, you've only fooled yourself into thinking that you like them. Only time will tell.

Consider this. Until recently, artificial sweeteners were not even allowed to be sold under the counter in France. For years they were prohibited and only accessible by with a prescription by a pharmacist. Unlike Americans, the French believed that only sick people had to eat artificial sweeteners in place of real sugar.

Yet as dieters, we're encouraged to eat them. And...what often happens is we overeat them. I'm sure that like me, you've figured if you could eat a substitute of something that tasted pretty good, and it was significantly lower in calories and fat than the original, then you could naturally eat more of it. Would that be a fair assumption?

Without even knowing it, you've been practicing non fat gluttony. The diet food industries encourage you to pig out and lose your mind because then you'll buy more of their product. That's why most diet organizations now have gotten hip to selling food under their own label.

When you begin to eat the real food that you crave as opposed to the sugar or fat free substitute that you've come to know so well, you will experience a new level of satisfaction in your eating. Fat by its very nature satisfies the body longer. It takes a longer time to metabolize and it stays with you.

One of the toughest transitions for me was using real salad dressing with oil or mayonnaise on my salads. I had become so used to eating salads with diet dressing that it was unthinkable for me to consider wasting valuable calories on such a frivolous food. Fat! Are you kidding! It wasn't even a food.

But once I began eat more for pleasure, I noticed that when I had a salad for lunch with some Olive oil or Caesar dressing on it, I would be satisfied for hours after that. It still amazes me how much more satisfying food is when I prepare it with olive oil, butter, or margarine. I would highly encourage you to experiment and see what works for you as far as breaking the mold of fearful thinking around eating more fats.

#### *Myth #4 – Don't eat beyond a certain hour*

Now honestly do you really think that your body blows the whistle and shuts down all the works after let's say 6:00 in the evening? No way. Again it's all according to your own personal schedule and what you've eaten throughout the day. Right now for me, it's 12:10 a.m., I haven't eaten since 6:00. I'm hungry and since I took a nap earlier, I anticipate writing for several more hours. So I'm heading downstairs to have a glass of apple juice with some toast, mustard and a slice of cheese and a tomato. Even though my daughter, Cara made fresh chocolate chip cookies this evening, they don't capture my attention now. I'm waiting to eat them when I really want them and then I know that I'll really enjoy them.

Again its' all up to you and what you feel is appropriate. When I began this process almost two years ago, if I would get hungry at this time, I would probably have devoured all the cookies, or at least something that would have seemed more forbidden, like ice cream or cake. Now, although it's often here in the house, it doesn't turn me on the way that it used to and I don't eat it the same way because I'm aware of how it makes me feel.

Since my daughter often enjoys baking home made goodies, like pies and cakes, and muffins, I may take a forkful of cake, a spoonful of pie or tear off a piece from the muffin top sitting under the cake plate resting on the kitchen counter. Usually that's enough for me, because it's frequently too sweet for my taste.

For the most part, the allure is gone. Now I tend to gravitate toward foods that really satisfy me, instead of just wanting to eat the foods that I felt that I shouldn't be eating. You'll also get to this point. For now, just keep in mind that your body is always working for you and if you are feeling hungry, and your body signals that it wants food, then you better eat.

### *Myth #5 When you overeat, you have failed*

As emotional eaters, we get comfort from food. That means that whenever you feel the need for security or safety, you will run for the Fritos or grab a slice of pizza, shovel down M&Ms or whatever is your chosen poison.

If food has become your best friend and failsafe, to rip it out of your hands as dieting attempts to do, would be to throw you into a state of overwhelm, which will only trigger you to binge and want food more, so you'll eat more because you'll fear that you won't get to eat again.

When you overeat, it is an indicator that you are overwhelmed and unable to handle whatever stress is affecting you. Your body is doing its best to tune out that upset and anesthetize you from the pain of overwhelm. When your body's in this state, it's trying to alert you to trouble. There's a yellow alert going on in your brain which is saying that you are under stress. In the absence of having other coping strategies besides food, you will eat.

Years of dieting has conditioned you to think of these events as mistakes and you've probably been led to feel guilty for your poor judgment, and make it up by doing penance. This may include not eating, doing strenuous exercise, or eating foods that are low in calories and taste like cardboard.

If you felt that you cheated on your diet, you probably got tougher on yourself because you were told that you probably just needed more willpower. I've learned that perfectionism sets us up for disaster. With dieting, perfection is represented by the all or nothing mentality. If you eat one cookie, you blew it! You may as well eat the entire box. That creates so much fear and self loathing that all you'll get in return is feeling awful about yourself and your body.

Like a baby learning how to walk, it's so important to expect that you'll fall and make mistakes as you learn along the way. In fact all progress involves set backs. Here's a useful way of looking at this. In one of Dana Carvey's comedy specials, he referred to failure as "deferred success." That's a pretty cool reframe. Isn't it?

### Why Do We Fall Down?

One of my favorite quotes is from the film, "Batman Begins" In a scene from the movie, an 8 year old Bruce Wayne played by child actor, Gus Lewis, falls into a well and breaks his leg. Later after he is rescued, his father attempts to comfort him by asking him the question:

Father: Bruce, why do we fall down?

Bruce: I don't know.

Father: "So we can learn how to pick ourselves up again."

Your set backs give you an opportunity to dust yourself off and get back in the game. Star Jones is a woman who's no stranger to controversy. As a powerful American lawyer, television personality, Star is best known for her role as a former co-host of 9 years on ABC's, weekday morning talk show, "The View" In an interview special that she gave on E Entertainment TV, she had this to say about setbacks:

"The setback is only the set up for the comeback."

As long as you keep on picking yourself up and view your body in a positive, loving, compassionate light, a setback won't have to set you back too far. This is called Process thinking, vs. the rigid rules of dieting which is Formula thinking. When you see this new learning from the perspective of being a process, it is much easier to understand how each mistake leads to the next Aha. However if you tend to think or believe that there is an actual formula for success and there is no room for mistakes, you will make yourself miserable.

Keep in mind that our brains and bodies are always communicating with one another, and what's most important when you have a set back is to reduce your stress load. Stress is one of the culprits that can sabotage your success. So when you have a set back, what's most important is how you handle it, emotionally. It's your attitude that really counts, because it will determine what you will do next. If you can see it as a great learning experience, you'll do fine. Remember we all make mistakes. That's why pencils have erasers and computers have delete keys.

One of the most important things I've discovered over the past several months in writing this book, is that when we fall into a trap of comparing ourselves, our bodies, our abilities, or anything else of ours with someone else, we will always end up grabbing the shorter end of the stick. Oftentimes when you play the competition game, you'll get knocked out of the box, lose track of what's important to you and drop into despair, feeling sorry for yourself. Falling down is inevitable, getting up is the kicker!

View each mistake as a learning experience. Be kind and charitable toward yourself. Make the goal to eat only when you're physically hungry. Be curious to find out what that feels like in your body. During the times when you overeat and you slip and find that you're eating when you're not really hungry, it's no problem. It's actually a good thing, because you were aware of the pattern. That means that the next time you'll know what that feels like when you overeat before you actually do and you can choose what you want to do. Learn from that experience and be curious to find out what drove that hunger.

It's your job to mother yourself and make sure that you don't make your mistake bigger by beating up on yourself for overeating. Being down on yourself and feeling guilty only compounds your feelings of frustration and adds to your stress. Remember stress can lead to fat production, so relax and be kind to yourself.

A more useful way of seeing this overeating or urge to eat is to recognize that there is something that you need that is not being addressed. It's a message for you. Something in your life is causing you enough stress to freak out and reach for the candy bars when you're not hungry or snack all day long from morning to night or stuff yourself at every meal.

If you're in the habit of beating yourself up and cursing your weakness at this time, you're doing double harm to yourself. Here's why:

The latest research in the field of body/mind science shows us that there is a definite connection between our fearful/stressful thoughts and our bodies. Paul Ernsberger, a Ph.D. at Northwestern University showed that this "aggravated stress build up in the body affects you in a way that " it triggers your brain to produce stress hormones in response to the stress felt in your body. This hormone is called acetylcholine.

According to Dr. Ernsberger, it's pumped out from your brain whenever your body is under stress. When you are slamming yourself with negative self talk, it's flowing through you like crazy. Then it turns around and triggers insulin to be produced in your body. Insulin is a chemical that converts nutrients to fat. You're basically fueling the fire feeding your fat cells whenever you think those nasty thoughts.

What has being hard on yourself gotten you? How has it worked out for you so far? I'll teach you how to do an about face and treat yourself with love and respect the same way you would treat a dear friend.

On this program, food is not your enemy. That means that you don't have to prove to yourself that you can have it by overeating it. I'm sure you're familiar with the last supper type of eating that most people do before they begin a new diet.

You know what I mean. The night before you start the diet, you eat anything and everything that isn't nailed down. You eat until you get sick and can't eat anymore. Your body becomes so bloated and your stomach gets distended. It's such an uncomfortable feeling. Don't you wonder what makes you eat like that?

It's panic, sheer panic, a fear so strong that you'll never be able to eat the foods you love again so you may as well devour them before you have to shun them once more for the sake of staying on a diet.

If you've been dieting for a long time, from your body's perspective, there's a deep fear in you that another diet is lurking right around the corner. You're just a step away from the big drought. Your body is so used to going through phases of starving, feeling deeply deprived and bingeing, and afterwards being riddled with guilt. It's a patterned habit and habits are hard to break.

Deprivation is no longer going to be the case. There is no restriction on what you eat. You choose what you want. No one has that control over you. That means that fear that

drives that behavior of bingeing will transform when it does not feel the threat of deprivation any longer.

As I mentioned before, your body is going to regulate itself. Overeating is a natural part of the process. I'm not going to tell you when to stop eating, you will have to learn that yourself. Later on in the chapter on Love Your Body, when I teach you Connirae Andreas' "Naturally Slender Eating Strategy", you'll understand that your body is naturally geared to feeling good and healthy.

That means that when you overeat a certain food, your body is busy learning and taking in information. It is assessing how much food it consumed, what parts of the body were affected, how the food smelled during each phase, how it tasted, what it looked like and felt like. Your brain is constantly processing billions of bits of information every minute. It filters out the majority of what you take in, however when you focus on something you bring it out into the open.

When you overeat, your body will have what Connirae calls is a compelling experience of what it is like to eat the food that you did. Most likely you will experience bloating, gas, stomach irritation, many different symptoms that range from an uncomfortable feeling of fullness to a sense of being stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey. Basically, you will not feel good. You may even end up sick from the experience. This is not a mistake and it does not mean that you have failed. Your body is busy creating kinesthetic anchors. That means that it is creating memory markers that you feel in your body that will trigger the next time that you see that food again.

This is actually a good thing because as you get the message that you can eat whatever you want to, as long as it is readily available, and your body creates those memory markers and remembers what it was like to feel overstuffed from eating that food, you will naturally begin to eat less of that food.

I like to joke around with my clients and tell them that they can send their brains to the Bahamas and leave their bodies to do all the work of this program. Your body will be your best teacher.

#### *Myth #6 - Weigh yourself often*

You have to weigh yourself to check your progress. What a lot of malarkey! I want you to toss your scales. I'll discuss this at much greater length in the chapter on "Loving Your Body."

Shoshana was a client who moved to Montana and she told me that as soon as she moved, she took her scale outdoors to where she had targets for shooting and she shot the dickens out of that piece of scrap metal.

She said it was a beautiful thing to watch it flying through the air, and then crash and fall to the ground.

Now I don't suggest that you go out and practice target shooting your scale, but I'd recommend that you toss it or if you are in a family where it is important to others to have it around, negotiate a place where it won't bother you.

For years, I had my bathroom scale inside of a large walk in closet in the bathroom. It was my habit that each morning before I dressed I would jump on the scale and weigh myself, then I would go to the bathroom and weigh myself again. Then I would get dressed and weigh myself again. I'd weigh myself with my shoes on and then take them off, You get the idea. It was nuts. Step away from the scale.

Here's why. One day among many others, when I was living in my guilty little world of scale obsession, I had been presented with a great opportunity to speak at a networking event to introduce myself to other businesswomen in my local community. It was a dinner meeting and I was pretty excited to get to know the other movers and shakers in my area. It meant coming out from behind the safety of doing teleclasses and phone coaching, and presenting myself in the flesh as The Juicy Woman. It was an opportunity for fantastic exposure and it had all sorts of great benefits connected with it.

But I knew I wasn't at the top of my game. The night before I ate more than I wanted to and my body felt bloated and fat. Normally I'd be a lot more confident, but because it had been awhile since I had spoken live, I was nervous and upset, fearing that the women there would judge me as being a big fat fraud. After all, most people would reason that a plus size woman has no right in the world calling herself a body image and self esteem expert. It just doesn't compute for many people and that morning, it didn't add up for me either.

I was just about to pull the clothes from my closet and start getting dressed for the day when I made this incredibly stupid bargain, goading myself to get on the scale. Here's how it went.

“Andrea, you don't have anything to worry about, sweetie. We're just checking here. What's the harm in knowing? Knowledge is power. Right? You know that those chips will probably show up as a gain so as long as you expect it. What's the big deal? No matter what the scale says it won't matter, because you're stronger than that. After all, you live and breathe this stuff. You teach it all the time. You already know how your thoughts affect your body, so you won't let that happen. Right?”

I swore up and down to myself that I knew what I was doing as I stepped on the scale, expecting to see a weight gain and promising myself that it would be okay, No matter what, I promised myself that I could handle it.

Yet for some reason I was unprepared for the level of disgust, disdain and disappointment that came rushing in when I saw the number. Hello! It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that after overeating the night before, it would show up on the scale the next morning. But I did it anyway and I even expected a gain, but it still twisted me up inside like a pretzel.

I hung my head in shame, glanced at the mirror and watched the big, salty tears running down my cheek. I knew there was no way that I could go to that meeting. I had lost the magic. The Juicy Woman had left the room. I hated myself for the weakling that I was as I dialed the phone and called the organizer, Marcia and told her that I “was under the weather and couldn’t come that evening.” Immediately after I hung up the phone, I ran for the safety of my covers, hiding under mounds of pillows and blankets feeling sorry for myself, like the old victim.

It was just Andrea there feeling shaky and scared and it was all brought on by my stupid addiction to seeking validation from that damned piece of scrap metal. Please, by all means learn from my mistake. My advice to you is to protect yourself from the heat, and step away from the scale. I promise you won’t be sorry.

### *Myth #7 – Avoid fattening foods*

Aw man, those are the best foods aren’t they? They are the ones that you want the most. By avoiding those yummy goodies you are denying and depriving yourself to the nth degree. What happens if you tell a child that they can’t do something. I’m sure for all you moms out there you just know that you’re going to have a knock down drag out fight on your hands.

Nobody likes to be told what they can and can not do. If you believe that certain foods are off limits, then you will want them more. You’ll feel deprived not having them and crave them like mad. Then when you get a chance to eat them, you’ll go out of your mind and lose all control.

When I first met my husband, Angel and we began dating, he brought me chocolates and my favorite flowers, daisies. At the time I was on a diet, so the flowers were tremendously appreciated, but I felt enormous pressure having all that chocolate in my house.

During one Valentine’s Day in 1991, we picked up his then 12 year old daughter, Janelle so that she could spend the weekend with us. Angel had given us each a box of chocolates and left us to hang out and relax while he took care of our newborn son, PT. Janelle and I sat all snuggled up and watched *Melrose Place* together. We decided to eat some chocolates. She opened her box and I opened mine. As we sat hypnotized by the events on the screen, watching whatever the latest Heather Locklear scheme was we lost track of time. In my happy TV trance, I was eating one chocolate after another, moving like a robot, hand to mouth, one after another.

I glanced over at Janelle and she had only eaten about 3 of her chocolates and just bitten into them and left the rest. I on the other hand had almost systematically demolished the entire one pound box. I reasoned to myself, “After all, if I still have these around tomorrow, how can I get back on my diet?” Does that thinking sound familiar to you? I felt pressured to eat them all because I had to get rid of the evidence before midnight. I’m so glad that hysteria is behind me and now my chocolate can feel safe around me because

now I do what Janelle did. I'll look at something, pick it up, smell it, taste it, and then take a small bite. If I don't love it, it won't make the cut and I won't end up eating it, or if by some chance I do decide to swallow it, you can bet I won't want any more of it.

By filling your pantries and stocking your cabinets and refrigerators with these foods, you are sending your brain a message that you are not depriving yourself any longer. You are telling your body that the drought is over and it can begin to relax and before you know it, you'll look at those foods with new eyes. It may seem odd to you now but as you move forward in this program, you'll see how actually having these foods around will give you a tremendous sense of comfort and believe it or not, there will come a time when you will only want to have the foods around and you won't even want to eat them. The point that I am making is that on this program, you will be eating to fuel your body, not to satisfy your deeper emotional needs.

Unlike dieting, where food was prescribed and restricted for a certain purpose, you will learn to re-experience the art of satisfaction and actually spend time consciously savoring your food, enjoying it to the hilt.

#### *Myth #8 – You Can't Be Trusted with Food*

As a dieter, you've been brainwashed to believe that you don't have control over what you eat. You know the old saying, one is too many and a million is never enough. Whenever we want something that we can't have, the desire to get it becomes overwhelming.

You only think that you can't be trusted around food, because you've never really given yourself permission to enjoy the food. When you eat the foods you love, you consider them as bad and think of yourself as breaking your diet, bending the rules and falling off the wagon. That's a heck of a lot of pressure. How can you really enjoy any food under those conditions?

I remember times when I tried to shove a Ring Ding or cookie in my mouth before someone came back in the room. How incredibly mortifying it was to have my husband, son or daughter walk in and find me with my mouth filled with chocolate, trying desperately to hide my guilt and change the subject. I felt so shameful and embarrassed, kind of like a criminal, only instead of committing grand larceny, I was caught with my hand in the cookie jar.

When you open yourself up to the idea of legalizing all foods, and eating what you want, then you won't want them with the same degree of desperation. Those chips that you used to crave may sit on the counter uneaten for hours or days or weeks. Those brownies that you swore you couldn't live without are starting to taste different to you. When you have the ability to stand back and relax instead of being in the middle of your own food war, you notice distinctions that you hadn't been aware of before. Mmmm, did that have nutmeg in it. I don't like that. Was that coriander. It's not for me. Beside becoming picky,

you will also see your habits in a very different light, allowing for a much greater understanding and compassion.

Food has taken on a very heavy emotional burden, causing you to feel desperate and wanting it more than ever. As long as you continue to diet, your cravings have got you by the nose.

The simple truth as I've learned it, is that you can trust yourself around food. You don't have to give up your power and sacrifice your satisfaction and eat the way you have been. It's up to you, but you may find that you won't want to eat the prepackaged diet meals that are low in calories and short on taste. You'll want to eat the good stuff. Maybe you'll want to cook for yourself more often or bake or upgrade the quality of the foods you're eating. Your body will slowly learn self mastery around food and naturally regulate when you start eating what you want.

*Myth #9 – Eating fat will make you fat!*

That's completely untrue. I'm sure that you're familiar with the fact that the French people eat a much richer diet than we Americans. They will typically eat real butter, heavy creams, rich sauces and cheeses. Yet they don't gain weight like we do. They also have a very low incidence of heart problems.

I've personally done a lot of experimentation here. I used to be a nonfat everything kind of gal, then once the blanket of restriction was pulled off, I started experimenting with all sorts of former forbidden yummys, fat laden foods, things I craved, yet would never eat because they were so 'fattening' I started buying Hebrew National Salami and all kinds of wursts, bratwurst, liverwurst, knockwurst, burgers and hotdogs, butter and cheese, and salads with mayonnaise, potato and macaroni, macaroni and cheese and lasagna and all sorts of goodies that I love and good grief, let's not forget rare steak with fat-lots of it!

Then as the novelty wore off, I discovered things about each that I had never noticed before. First when I ate them slowly and mindfully, they filled me up so much that it surprised me that there was much less room for more food. Now when I eat them, I only want a small bit of them in order to get the pleasure from them, because I'm aware that if I overeat those foods, I'll feel really sick. My thought is that eating fat won't make you any fatter than eating anything else, including nonfat foods. In fact as I just mentioned, when your body begins to regulate itself, you'll only need a small amount of fat to be very satisfied for a long time. You could eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich at 12:00 and not want to eat again until dinner. It's happened to me.

Let's think about the Eskimos who actually eat animal blubber as part of their diet, despite chewing on the fat, literally, they have a very low risk of heart disease. So many cultures eat heavier diets than we, here in America and yet according to the National Center for Health Statistics, one third of all adults in America are now obese. You'd have to begin to wonder if the problem really does lie in the fat.

Here's some more interesting bits of information and research to ponder to bust down the old myth that says that fat is making you fat.

You'll recall when I discussed Dr. Ernsberger's findings, I discussed how your negative nasty body hating thoughts are pumping up your insulin reserves and keeping you plumped up!

Here's more proof of the astonishing connection that exists between our minds and bodies. In his book, "The Crack in the Cosmic Egg", Joseph Chilton Pearce, tells of a study in which fasting volunteers had their blood drawn and analyzed for their nutrient content. Once the initial levels were determined, they were then put under hypnosis, and asked to imagine eating bowls of sugar. When they were taken out of the trance, their blood was drawn again. Having eaten nothing, their blood sugar levels reflected a significant elevation in levels.

That means that by merely imagining or being hypnotized to believe that they were eating sugar, their blood sugar levels increased.

To move more closely into the specifics about asking the question if fat turns to fat in your body, I'd like to discuss a study that was done by Dr. Judith Rodin at Yale University.

Dr. Rudin showed fasting volunteers steaks and then cooked them in front of the volunteers. It's important to keep in mind that no one ate anything. They merely watched the steak being cooked in front of them and inhaled the aromas. Similar to the dynamics of the first experiment with the bowls of sugar, the volunteers blood sugar levels were analyzed before, during and after the testing process.

Many of the volunteers blood sugar levels reflected significant increases of insulin in the during and after phases of the experiment. Remember one of the things that insulin does in the body is it converts nutrients into fat.

From performing this experiment, Dr. Rudin theorized that people can actually gain weight by simply smelling or hearing food cook, without ever eating it.

She suggested that this finding may explain why some people are unable to lose weight on diets and in fact, others will actually gain weight under dietary restrictions. I don't know about you but I'm thinking that it's a good idea to get control of these myths that have been making you fat!

Now let's take a quick peak at the many reasons why dieting doesn't work so that when you turn to the next chapter, you'll be solid in your decision to say goodbye to dieting and leave deprivation in the dust!

## **Why Diets Don't Work**

### *1. Eating To Self Comfort Has Become a Habit*

The way you eat and the relationship you have with food has become a conditioned habit. Whether your background is Italian, like mine or German, French, Spanish, Indian, African American, Irish or any other ethnicity, you probably have food preferences that you've come to acquire that remind you of your heritage.

Going back and visiting our parents and families brings with it all sorts of food challenges. Seeing mom automatically makes you think of her famous apple pie or each time you sit at the table, you're reminded of stress and food fights. Maybe you had to learn to be a food sprinter if you hoped to get a crack at those coveted chocolate biscuits. Perhaps each time you get off the phone with your brother, you find yourself so hungry you could eat a horse, trying to recover from the tension so thick you could cut it with a knife.

Food is a big factor in our lives. We celebrate with food, we commiserate with it. Food is always around for every type of occasion. It's the cookie mom offers to bake when you're feeling blue, the cupcakes you bring to school on your birthday, the lollipop you get after being poked by the doctor. These are all examples of how we're conditioned to expect food to make us feel better.

When you're feeling blue, it's natural to seek out the comfort of a non-judgmental friend. As my client Ayla says, "Food is always there for you." But diets are very rigid in their approach to eating and push you to think of the foods you love as indulgences that have to be earned or worked off.

I know that when I'm feeling blue, nothing helps me more than making a big pot of soup or preparing my mother's creamy rice pudding. I think it's actually the process of going through the motions of preparing the food that is so much more pleasurable and comforting to me. Eating the food itself is not as consuming a need as it used to be because now I have a variety of other coping strategies to deal with my stress that make eating those foods a choice, rather than a necessity.

### *2. Diets Focus On Food – Not Feelings*

Years of dieting has taught you all the mechanics of learning how to follow a diet. You're probably a pro in knowing right off the bat how many calories are in each morsel that passes your lips. In fact, I'll just bet that you can instantly look at a dish of lasagne and calculate how many fat grams are in it. Maybe you even have a running tally of everything that you've eaten over the past week.

Fabulous. I applaud your sense of order and sanity, but what happens when life hits the skids and it's not possible to keep such a clear head? Dieting doesn't care

what's going on in your life and there are no allowances made for the frustration you feel when boyfriends don't call, and the pint of Haagen Dazs in the freezer is the only thing looking good to you, or friends that break ties for no apparent reason who know how to push all your buttons make you want to eat an entire cow, or any other overwhelming emotion that barrels its way into your life.

It's great knowing what we should eat and the amount that is recommended by doctors, but that doesn't always work. We're all different. If you're on a diet and life broadsides you with some horrible situation, you'll want to reach out and find comfort and safety and as long as food is your only safe haven, you'll run to it. Take my word for it. Stop dieting now.

### *3. Dieting Inhibits Your Ability To Tune Into Hunger*

I can't overstate this enough. You've been taught to ignore your body's signals of natural hunger and to suppress it by keeping yourself filled up with broths, diet sodas and teas. If you're always walking around in a state of semi fullness, you won't know when to stop eating.

I used to always consider myself to be a volume eater. Whether I was eating a bag of potato chips, chocolate, or steamed vegetables, it was quantity that I was after and lots of it, or so I thought.

When I first began to eat without the structure of dieting, I struggled to find a happy medium with food, because I was still so set in my dieting ways that I took my habits of eating large quantities and applied them to trying to learn how to eat and honor my body's natural hunger. It should be no surprise that it didn't work, because I ended up being so stuffed, that I couldn't have listened to my body if it would have shouted at me with a bull horn, because I was terrified of not eating enough and walking away from my last meal not fully satisfied.

As a consequence of that, I let my appetite control me and at one point I realized that I was eating every hour on the hour, because something was pushing my buttons. I was angry and trying to stuff it down and avoid dealing with the source of my upset.

It's natural that you'll falter and flail around in the beginning and learn from your mistakes, but if you never stop dieting, you'll always struggle with the inclination or desire to overeat because you'll feel like you may be missing out on something.

### *4. Dieting Conveys Negative Messages*

You've probably become terrified of bringing non diet foods into the house. Fearing that you'll 'cheat' on your diet, you try to white knuckle your way through your cravings. When they hit, and you give in and eat, you hate yourself and chalk it up to being weak and undisciplined. Dieting creates a never-ending cycle of

guilt and deprivation and negative self talk that keeps you in patterns of overeating.

Any plus size gal who's ever tried to inconspicuously hide a pint of Ben and Jerry's mint oreo cookie ice cream under a pile of fresh spinach or leafy lettuce on the check out counter at the supermarket knows what it's like to feel the judgment and shame of society's burden of guilt weighing down on her shoulders, pushing her to feel like a fat pig, out of control and disgusting, a pimple on the butt of society.

Whether she feels contrite and remorseful or angry and defiant, for weighing more than everyone thinks she should, for allowing herself to get that way, and for not doing everything that she possibly could to avoid being fat; mark my words, she is feeling miserable about herself.

If the world is sending you the message that you should be able to control your weight with less food and more exercise, it's impossible not to feel ashamed. You'd swear on a stack of bibles that it's all your fault.

### *5. Dieting Reinforces that You Are Not In Control*

Each time you lose weight through dieting, you are being psychologically reinforced to give up your power, suppress your desires, keep your nose to the grindstone and follow the letter of the law. Eventually your level of frustration will reach a peak and all hell will break loose and you'll find your head stuck in a vat of ice cream, unable to come up for air.

Dieting never works in the long run because the odds are so completely overwhelmingly against you. Each time you lose a little weight, you feel a bit more encouraged to tough it out a little more. Then you start experiencing a plateau or a weight gain and you're right back to where you started.

I'm not much of a gambler. In fact I'm a pretty conservative gal. I don't care for the taste of alcohol, I don't smoke and anything stronger than a Tylenol sends shivers up my spine, because I like being in control and I don't give it up easily. Yet in all the years that I wasted dieting, I never once realized how much I was gambling with my health.

When I did the research to create my RECLAIM method, I found the work of Dr. Nancy Bonios to be incredibly illuminating. I loved her brilliant way of connecting an awareness of Intuitive Eating with visualization and body awareness exercises. I knew that she was on the right path in exploring the body/mind connection and I took my cues to follow up and take the lead from her, building upon what I know in my years as a NLP'er and professional coach.

As I listened intently to her Beyond Dieting audio cassettes, I learned that, similar to gambling addiction, when you lose weight dieting, each loss builds up your hope with the next diet you try. This type of behavioral conditioning is called intermittent

reinforcement. It is such a powerful tool to manipulate your behavior that it explains otherwise irrational and self defeating behavior around slot machines. Every time you're about to quit playing a losing slot machine, you get a small payoff, which reinforces you to keep playing a little longer hoping for that big win, the jackpot.

This usually proves to be an exercise in futility, since the odds are overwhelmingly not in your favor. This is exactly what happens with dieting. Each time you lose weight, despite gaining it back you go back to dieting once more because your initial weight loss reinforced your belief that dieting works. So despite your eventual weight gain, you keep hoping for the big jackpot of a permanent solution with each succeeding dieting attempt.”

So there's no getting around it. You're not in control with dieting because just like a slot machine, the intermittent reinforcement that you get while on a diet will keep you going back repeating the same abusive and addictive pattern over and over again.

## 6. Diets Encourage Black and White Thinking

Dieting is so much more than a means of controlling your food, it hijacks your thoughts. Besides pushing you to judge every mouthful as good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, it keeps you looking at your entire life from a very distorted, dysfunctional perspective. Imagine now that you have been given the gift of being able to tune your life and get perfect reception in all areas. That may require zooming in and magnifying the parts that aren't working and asking yourself what needs to change? The core of your weight issue is not a result of being unable to control yourself around food. That's only the way that it manifests. The real problem is that there are parts of your life that are out of control and it's up to you to pinpoint them and find new ways of balancing and creating harmony.

As I mentioned before, the difference between process thinking and formula thinking is that your success on this program involves patience on your part, since unlike dieting the RECLAIM method is a process of change, not a simplistic formula.

The changes that you will be making are from the inside out. That's how a process works. You will be laying down seeds, new beliefs that will empower you to change your life. The good news is that these internal changes you're making through this program will last forever. They're yours to keep. They'll actually become so natural and easy that you'll feel like they've always been a part of you.

As you gradually change throughout this program, you may find yourself getting impatient and wanting to see results and expect that things should be changing immediately. It doesn't work that way. You may express your fear of change by feeling like you have to sabotage your efforts by quitting prematurely.

I can only offer you my hard earned experience. I've learned that when we encounter resistance, it's time to lower the bar and make things easier. It's usually a cue that some part of you doesn't feel safe making the leap necessary to reach whatever goal you set. You've lifted the bar too high. Remember what Cathy Vartuli says about changing your

relationship with your body? She says, “people who don’t feel safe, dislike, distrust and disrespect their bodies.” To begin to regain trust with your body, you have ease up a bit, slow down, lower your expectations, take it easy and then reassess where you are. Impatience will always be ready, threatening to blow the house in. So invite it in for a cup of tea and give it space to breathe. That will ease the pressure. When you become aware of the resistance, tell yourself this. “I’m doing just fine exactly as I am. This program is taking exactly the right length of time for me and my body knows what’s best for me and I’m willing to trust it.”

Remember it’s time to stop thinking quick and temporary when it comes to weight loss and start thinking gradual and permanent. Unless of course, you’re not ready to stop yo-yoing up and down the scales yet, but I know that’s not the case or you wouldn’t be reading this book.

## 7. Diets Lead You to Resent Your Body

If you’re like most women, you’ve spent the majority of your life thinking something must be wrong with you and that you are an absolute and total failure because you haven’t been able to get to your goal weight by dieting. You’re a size 14, 18, 20, 36, 500, Oh God!

You may say, “For shame, look at those thighs, girlfriend, what the hell happened to you? How could I ever let myself get this far? What’s wrong with me? I hate myself!” You know you probably say all these things and more. Don’t you? I sure have and on occasion still do.

We are so incredibly viciously cruel in the way that we speak about ourselves and our bodies. The judgment and harshness is unmatched by anyone else, yet in the blink of an eye, we respond instantly to a friend’s call for help, or offer words of love and affection to a precious pet, and all we have to do is forget our car keys and all of a sudden it’s morally reprehensible and punishment is death by cruelty for being overweight. Where’s the justice in that? Say Goodbye to Dieting Now!

## *8. Diets Imply that You Must Rely On an External Authority*

This is where I nail the dieting coffin shut-Here’s another deeply disturbing and equally sobering truth that I learned while doing research. There are actually addictive and damaging aspects of dieting.

In the same way that an addict needs their fix, it’s possible to get addicted to dieting. The push me pull you/loss gain cycle and the hopes and disappointments you go through can actually lead to an addiction to dieting. Even though it’s painful and frustrating, it’s what we know. I always say, the devil you know is better than the one you don’t. Because our brain is busy pumping up those natural opiates, clouding our judgment, giving us a false kind of high, it’s hard to break out of that self defeating cycle.

According to Wayne State University Pharmacologist, Mary Ann Marozzi she says that dieters are always in a state of being hooked and looking for their next fix. Unfortunately she says, this addiction may be the reason that anorexics sometimes diet themselves to death.

So you see, you're not addicted to food, but you may be addicted to dieting. John Bradshaw is a well known author and lecturer. According to his research , "compulsive addictive behavior is a pathological relationship to any mood altering experience that has life damaging consequences." I'm sure that you'd agree that dieting messes with your mind, messes with your mood and definitely has life damaging consequences.

Most people are stuck in denial and refuse to see what dieting has done to their life, how it's affected their families, their self esteem, their bodies, health, happiness, and every other aspect of their lives. We'll touch on sex later for sure.

The first step to change is becoming aware and noticing the problem. See how you answer the following questions taken from the Beyond Dieting Program and consider whether you may be addicted to dieting.

- Do you feel guilty or anxious when you are not dieting or exercising for weight control?
- Do you believe dieting slows your metabolism but you feel compelled to diet anyway?
- Are you afraid to eat food that is not light, lowfat, lean, low calorie or healthy, fearing that you'd be fatter if you allowed yourself to eat normal food?
- Despite repeated losses and regains, do you still believe that dieting will solve your problem if you can only find the right diet?
- Do you credit the diet when you lose weight, but blame yourself when you gain the weight back?
- Do you weigh yourself often finding the number on the scale makes you feel good or bad about yourself?
- Do you mentally compute the calories or fat grams in any food you want to eat or analyze how many ounces it contains?
- Is dieting, weight loss or what you can eat a topic that you talk about often?
- Do you subscribe to the no pain, no gain belief? Do you believe you must suffer in order to be thin?
- Are you afraid not to diet?

If you found yourself answering yes to many of these questions, do consider the possibility that you may be addicted to dieting. Diet addiction invariably leads to yo-yo dieting, which is much more serious than jumping up and down between clothing sizes.

Many studies have shown that dieting slows down your metabolism, making it harder to lose weight each time you start on a new diet and easier to regain any weight you were able to lose.

And to add insult to injury, each time you gain weight, it comes back as pure fat, because the line of credit on your fat storage gets a kick in the pants each time you go up and down the scales. Let's not forget that yo-yo dieting has been associated with the formation of gall stones, gall bladder problems and certain types of hypertension and that's not all, you can add shortened life span to the list and according to a long term study done in Framington, MA, they found that it even causes death too! And that's just killing you on a physical level, we haven't even gotten to what it does to your poor delicate self esteem. If you fail at dieting for years, it beats you down emotionally, psychologically and now you know the extent of how it kicks your butt physically. So knowing that, what would you like to do next? Would you like to learn how to have more self acceptance? It starts with making peace with food. Turn the page and find out how.