ARE YOU STRUGGLING TO REACH OR MAINTAIN YOUR IDEAL WEIGHT?

WE KNOW THE SECRET: *The Best Way to Diet is from the Inside Out!*

Once and for all, we'll show you how to change the beliefs, habits and rituals that keep you stuck.

This information will truly revolutionize your weight loss and change your life.

*This is the Last Diet Guide You'll Ever Need to Read!*

J. Carol Pereyra, *Editor in Chief*
Greetings!

Are you tired of struggling to reach or maintain your ideal weight? You’re not alone. We all know HOW to lose weight. It’s a matter of taking in less calories than we burn. Yeah, right! If it were that easy, we’d all be supermodel thin.

As an "instant-gratification" society it's no wonder we reach for every quick fix we can find. When the quick-fixes fail, and our self-image plummets, many of us begin a vicious cycle of loss and re-gain.

Yes, different things work for different people. Yes, nutrition is individualistic. But the best diet is the one you don't know you're on.

The truth is that successful weigh loss really is about figuring out what’s eating you, instead of what you’re eating! The best way to start a diet is from the inside out.

We’re proud to bring you this special DIET and HEALTH guide. This issue is packed with information and tips that will show you a new way of looking at your weight loss challenge. Besides learning how to get your diet going by goal setting, you’ll also learn how to end the diet rituals that keep you stuck. You’ll learn how you may be using your weight as a shield against negativity; and how the power of suggestion can work in your favor; and of course, much more.

Let’s take this journey together. Diet isn’t about deprivation and lack. It’s about gaining a new esteem for life and making the decision to live a healthier lifestyle. It’s a big change, but you can do it! Don’t wait till Monday to start – start today and enjoy the journey!

Blessings to each and everyone of you!

J. Carol Pereyra
Editor in Chief

P.S. Send us your before and after pictures! We’re excited to see the changes you make!
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Early twentieth century healers were renowned for being overweight to avoid absorbing their patient’s symptoms. Some modern-day healers also unconsciously fall into this trap. You may be following this protective path without even realizing it. Could you be using your extra weight as an unconscious coat of armor to protect you against the negative energy of others?

As a psychiatrist who specializes in intuition, I know that there is more to overeating and obesity than meets the eye. One big reason that many diets fail is that traditional weight loss programs don’t factor in how we process subtle energy. In fact, it’s often discovered to be that one missing piece to finding your own successful weight loss formula.

What is Subtle Energy?
According to scientists, everything in the Universe is energy and vibrates or resonates at a certain frequency. Every plant, animal, sound, organ, tissue, cell, thought, emotion, color...even that gemstone that’s on your left finger. All matter radiates an energy field that is all around us. While physical matter vibrates at a low frequency and is dense in appearance, which makes it easy to see, subtle matter that makes up our energy fields vibrates at a high frequency, which is not easily seen by the human eye. None the less, it’s present around us, and affects us in many ways.

People who are overly sensitive to subtle energy (I call these people "empaths") may unknowingly overeat in response to being overwhelmed by these negative vibes. Subtle energy penetrates and surrounds the body. Empaths not only can sense this energy around them, but they take it in, absorbing it into their bodies.

Pounds as a Protector
When empaths are thin, they have less padding, and are more vulnerable to soaking up negative vibes. Similarly, many empaths will unconsciously pack on pounds to protect against overwhelming vibes. Energy is at the root of an empaths feelings of hunger, and food becomes a convenient grounding device. Just like a grounding device that will keep you safe from electricity, food becomes the grounding device to keep them safe from negativity.

For a diet to succeed it’s important to develop alternative coping strategies other than overeating. Whether accosted by an angry colleague or global threat, apply them immediately. Stick to those that work best for you. Here are 8 emergency interventions to stop "energy driven" eating. When the impulse to overeat hits:

Identify an Addictive Craving from True Hunger
Food cravings are really your bodies way of telling you that you need to release stress. An addictive craving is a frequent response to bad energy overload. Cravings can feel intense. Empaths tend to eat certain foods like a drug addict, and this leads to obesity. For instance, chocolate turns from simple pleasure to a crutch when gorged on, used to self-medicate stress, or to get a sugar high. Try to identify addictive foods, and limit them.
True nutritional hunger has nothing to do with soothing emotions, or feeding food obsessions. Feeling healthily nurtured from food never involves mood swings, but does offer an even feeling of satisfaction. A true need lets you enjoy your meal, optimizes energy, and doesn't lead to obesity.

Learn What Triggers Addictive Cravings
Quickly pinpoint energetic stressors that trigger addictive cravings. Immediately ask yourself: Have I been exposed to bad vibes? A loud-mouth neighbor? A stressful ordeal passing through airport security? A siege of overbearing phone messages from your mother? Don't write off the "smaller" incidents which notoriously send empaths running to the refrigerator. Methodically pinpoint cause and effect. You don't have to be victimized by negative energy. The trick is to find a way to clear it as soon as you've been slimed.

Release the Addictive Craving
Don't give into the craving by eating. Cravings can best be satisfied by relieving stress. If you're gripped by a craving, go into meditation mode. For a few quiet moments breathe slowly. The craving may feel impossible to handle, but that's okay. In this calm state ask your higher power to lift it from you.

Breathe Negativity Out of Your System
Take a five minute break for damage control. Slowly inhale and exhale. Breath activates positive energy and releases negative vibes. Breathing out toxic vibes is a proactive cleansing process. Allow "well-being" to permeate every inch of you. Repeat this exercise until you're free of negative residue.

Take a Bath or Shower
A speedy way to dissolve negative vibes is to immerse yourself in water. My tub is my refuge after a busy day. It washes away everything from bus exhaust to long hours of air travel, to personal unpleasantness. While you relax, water works on you. It has alchemical cleansing properties which will purify your physical body and energy field.

Burn Sage
Just because vibes are invisible doesn't mean you don't react to them. Sage is a calming element that has been used cross-culturally for centuries. Burn it like incense, and the desire to eat over lurking negative vibes will wane.

Visualize a Protective Shield Around You
Visualize white light surrounding you, so that, at least mentally, negative energy can't penetrate you.

Tune it to Food
Develop a diet that satisfies your needs. Your need for energy and nourishment should be your motivation to eat, more than taste. As you eat foods, notice whether they truly nourish or deplete you. Give foods you may have shunned in the past a new try, and experience their energy lift.

You don't have to let poisonous energy lodge itself in you. To stay on top of your eating, do a daily check-in. Stay alert for cravings prompted by negative vibes. Watch your responses, and your eating habits will change. Food is no place to be passive.

About the Author
Judith Orloff, MD is a psychiatrist and author of the New York Times Bestseller Emotional Freedom: Liberate Yourself From Negative Emotions and Transform Your Life (Harmony, 2009), upon which this article is based. Dr. Orloff synthesizes the pearls of traditional medicine with cutting-edge knowledge of intuition, subtle energy, and spirituality. For Judith's workshop schedule and more inspiration visit www.drjudithorloff.com

“Every time I go on a diet, I lose my mind. Unfortunately, it doesn’t weigh very much.”
Binge Eating Disorder affects more people than anorexia and bulimia combined. It makes people obese and can be life threatening.

Here are seven key questions that you can answer to help you decide whether or not you have Binge Eating Disorder:

1. Have you ever eaten a huge amount of food in a short period of time, i.e. more than 2,000 calories in less than 2 hours? People who binge do not graze continually. They eat a lot at once and feel helpless to stop until uncomfortably full or physically ill.

2. Do you ever shovel food down, barely chewing, tasting or savoring what you are eating? People who binge use food as an anesthetic for agitation, anxiety, anger or any uncomfortable feelings. When you binge, you're psychologically stuffing down negative emotions and swallowing them, before they can reach the surface.

3. Do you ever and/or often eat in secret? People who binge feel woefully ashamed about their eating habits. They tend to cut off social contact, relying on food as their best friend.

4. Do you ever find that your appetite craving is so strong that you eat frozen or scalding hot food? People who binge are so driven by the urge to binge that they can't wait for food to thaw or cool down.

5. Have you ever eaten food from your trash? People who binge often feel the cravings coming and throw food away in the hopes of thwarting their binging urge. It's a doomed tactic, as they only retrieve the food from the trash can.

6. Have you ever mixed strange or unpalatable foods like adding chili peppers to ice cream? People who binge do this as a tactic for preempting binge eating. One woman who regularly binged would drop her son off at preschool every day, return home and put all the leftovers from the night before into a pot with water. She'd combine fried chicken with salad and cake, stew the ingredients for 20 minutes, then eat the horrid concoction. She hoped the nausea from the mixture would keep her from binging. It didn't.

7. Have you ever gone to great lengths to procure your "favorite foods," which often are also your "forbidden foods," such as chocolate, ice cream or junk food? People who binge feel trapped in their heads, obsessing about and acquiring food. Willpower does not work to thwart a full-blown case of Binge Eating Disorder. For example, a person who regularly binges might drive out to a convenience store at 2 a.m. to buy the perfect double chocolate brownie mix, make the dessert and eat the entire panful. As it is with a substance abuse problem, nothing short of shackles and chains will stop them.

If any of this sounds like you or a loved one, take heart. Binge eating is treatable, especially if you catch it early on. So don't postpone getting help no matter how ashamed you feel. You are not alone. There are at least 4 million more Americans like you. You are not lazy or powerless. You simply need help.

HERE ARE SIX TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

1. Write it down. Keep a journal of
what, when and where you eat. You may be reluctant or ashamed to keep track. Think of your food log as a tool that will help shed light on exactly what your habits are and the best way to change them.

2. Eat three meals a day and two snacks. One huge trigger for binging is previous self-starvation or dieting. A person binges, feels guilty and then starves or diets in a vicious cycle. Be aware of the trap. Lack of food builds your appetite so that when the first piece of cake or potato chip enters your mouth, your body craves more and more, in a way you cannot tame. If you are bingeing, you've probably lost the connection between sensations of hunger, fullness and eating. You need to reintroduce your body to regularity by preplanning meals with preset portions. Don't skip.

3. Create the right dining ambience. If you are bingeing, chances are you routinely eat rapidly and while on the go, in your car, or in front of the television. Change the venue. Design one or two special places to eat, such as at the kitchen table, and limit food intake to those places. Before you eat, take 5 deep breaths. Then spend 5 minutes smelling your food. While eating, concentrate on chewing and swallowing. Play soothing music in the background. Studies show people chew faster or slower, depending on the speed of background rhythms.

4. Distract yourself. Another huge trigger for bingeing is emotional stress. Anger, anxiety and hurt fuel binges as a person uses food to "stuff down" the bad feelings. Plan alternatives to bingeing, in advance. They can include calling a friend, going for a walk, meditation, positive self-talk and journaling. Have these new tools in place so that when the adrenaline is flowing and the "craving" comes on, you're ready to step out of the moment. Chances are, the urge to binge will pass, at least temporarily.

5. Learn to solve your problem without food. Food is an avoidance tactic for issues you may not want to confront. When the urge to binge comes on, ask yourself:
   - What am I upset about?
   - What are other solutions?
   - What are the possible outcomes of my solutions?
   - Which alternative is best?

6. Seek outside help. You are bingeing for a reason. Those reasons are going to continue even after you stop the bingeing behavior. Therefore, the best advice is to talk to someone who can help you unravel and deal with the motivations behind the binge. The number one treatment for binge eating is "cognitive behavioral therapy," which works on both your behaviors and the feelings behind those behaviors.

Ultimately, you can stop the behavior and begin a course toward healing. The first step begins today, as you become aware of the issues. Remember it is your mind, your body and your life to live. Take charge!

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**Less Fat = More Pounds**

Nothing in life is free, even those fat-free foods.

For many dieters, the fat-free trap is a real danger. We falsely assume that the "free" is a license to eat all you want. But that's hardly the case.

Although a product may be low in fat, it is also supplemented with excess sugar and calories to maintain that satisfying taste. That means you’re actually getting almost the same amount of calories portion for portion. While the total grams of fat are reduced, the calorie count is not.

Take these foods as examples. Two tablespoons of regular peanut butter are 187 calories. Three regular chocolate chip cookies are 142 calories, while the reduced fat cookies are 118 calories. A ½ cup serving of granola cereal has 257 calories, compared to the low-fat version which has 213 calories for a ½ cup serving.

Some studies point to the fact that replacing fats with carbohydrates actually contributes to weight gain. Fat adds flavor to food, so when fat is removed, sugar, flour and starch thickeners are all added to improve the flavor and texture, which means more calories.

If you want a true fat-free or low-fat snack, opt for fresh fruits and vegetables.

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Once upon a time, the experts gave us dieting and exercise tips: Size-up (and down) your servings; make a daily workout calendar. We were told to simply follow the rules, and then skip merrily down the road to health.

But somewhere along the path toward wellness, we’ve gotten lost in a waist-land of extremes.

Carrie, 33, has to eat exactly 24 Shredded Mini-Wheats at breakfast. Never more, never less. This behavior stems from the rigid portion control she learned as a teenager. Dana, 43, must run every morning, whether in rain, sleet or snow, or if she’s sick, hurt or overtired. Her obsession is a leftover from her adolescent bulimia nervosa. To Dana, exercise has become a replacement for vomiting. She sees both as a means to “get rid of” excess calories.

At first glance, both women appear to have issues. But how serious? By definition, neither today has an eating disorder. Where on the disordered eating/exercise spectrum does each fall? And what is “normal,” anyway?

What’s Normal?
Normal is the middle of the bell curve. At each end are eating disorders: anorexia at the starvation side, and binge eating disorder at the overindulgence tail. Bulimia, with its binging and purging, simply goes back and forth between each extreme. If you are wondering where on the curve you sit or if your eating and exercise is "normal," here’s a quick quiz to help you decide:

Is My Eating Normal?
Do you:
1. Spend more time thinking about food than actually eating it?
2. Eat beyond the point of tasting?
3. Use eating and/or exercise to manage daily stress?
4. Exercise even if ill, injured, or fatigued?
5. Judge whether you are "bad" or "good" based on your food choices of the day? For example, "I was so "bad" today. I ate two chocolate brownies."
6. Let the scale determine whether you are deserving of friendships, a satisfying job, or a dish of Ben and Jerry's Chunky Monkey?

While this quiz is by no means a diagnostic measure of eating disorders, it can shed light on your unconscious or secreted food and body obsessions. If you answered, "yes" to three or more of the previous questions, then you're moving toward the extremes of disordered eating. You might want to stop, reflect, and turn yourself back toward the center.

Some Food For Thought:
To help you find your way back toward normal, here are some reflections on what "normal" eating and exercise means. Normal is not perfect.

Normal is:
✓ Sitting down to a meal and finishing when you are full.
✓ Eating because you are hungry, but occasionally giving yourself permission to eat because you are happy, sad, bored or the food just tastes that good.
✓ Eating three meals a day and two snacks, but sometimes going for four or five small ones, or a day of grazing continually.
✓ Eating your cake and then leaving one last piece in a Tupperware in the fridge - for the next day. Because you can have it tomorrow.
✓ Trading a workout, without guilt, for a social event, because that day you realize you need friends. Not the perfect body.
✓ Overeating at the holidays, because you trust your body cues and rhythms to compensate later.
✓ Deciding that this year you don't want to make a New Year's resolution that involves your body.
✓ Giving some thought to food
and/or exercise, but not all your mental energy.

✔ Seeing food and exercise as allies in health, not means of self-punishment or reward.

**Finding Normal For You**

Sound idealistic? It isn't. In fact, you were once there. As an infant, you understood normal eating and activity; that's because you hadn't yet read the tips about dieting or felt the pressure to be thinner.

Normal eating is a learned set of behaviors and choices. They are based mainly on internal cues of hunger and fullness. Babies act out of those cues, but then grow up, and pick up their parents' habits. Next, it's cultural pressure to be skinny. Then comes the "Gateway to a New You:" a fad diet and/or exercise plan. That means following someone else's recommendation to achieve a different body shape than the one you have today.

The moment the plan begins, the connection between body cues and eating gets broken. You break every diet feeling horrible, even though the diet was unrealistic and unable to sustain your long term caloric needs.

On the other hand, "normal eating is a relationship between our bodies and our plates," says Leann Simmons, a nutritionist in Arlington, MA and the creator of AtPeaceWithFood.com.

For some, that relationship is love-hate. For others, it's completely antagonistic. But no matter what the relationship is today, tomorrow it can be different. Seeing eating and exercise as a relationship with the body can help put you back on the path toward "normal."

Here are six steps to help you on your journey:

1. **Stop extreme dieting.**
   By dieting, you have disconnected your mind from your sensations of fullness and hunger. To reconnect, you have to re-experience how those sensations feel. Without a diet, you may fear that you will eat everything in the house. Trust yourself. Your body will eventually discover what is normal for you, if you give it a chance.

2. **Sense the sensations.**
   Hunger is not a good thing to be overridden or distracted from. It is a cue that your body needs energy. Fullness means its time to stop. Your goal is to eat to these cues, and let go of external ones such as the clock, the latest diet fad, or cultural pressure to be thinner.

3. **Keep a hunger journal.**
   To further help you increase your awareness of your body, log what you eat each day. If that makes you feel too neurotic, then write down how your body feels, your moods, and behaviors. Don't judge. Just record. If this is too much, set a watch or cell phone alarm at periodic intervals to check in with you. You may be surprised at what you find.

4. **Take note of external stresses.**
   The number one reason why people eat mindlessly or diet obsessively is stress. Food is instant gratification, and often used as a pacifier for emotional duress. So too does exercise soothe us with an outpouring of endorphins and other brain opiates. But food or intense workout regimes are not long-term solutions. Overeating and overexercising create other long-term problems, so plan in advance. Think about your most stressful times of the day, i.e. dinnertime, the kids screaming, and you trying to feed the family. Plan for these moments with a 10-minute “time-in,” in which you regroup and refocus on your body signals.

5. **Don't "should" on yourself.**
   You go to a party and say, I "should" eat the raw veggies not the mushroom pastry puffs. With the first utterance of the word "should," you're pressing your guilt button. That means you're likely to eat the puffs and beat yourself up the next day, or forego them and tell yourself you were "a good girl." Either way, you've made food into a morality issue. Here's another way to look at it: If you hear yourself saying, "I was 'bad' today," then stop and ask yourself: Did you shoot someone? Did you rob a bank? Forget "bad" and "good." Food is fuel for the body to maintain health. Period.

6. **Not all hungers need food.**
   There are many kinds of hunger, i.e. hunger for friendship, excitement, and success. All can feel like the same craving, especially to a person who has learned to use food to satisfy all. Your goal now is to learn how to discriminate. Identify the craving for what it is, then figure out how to feed it differently and appropriately.

7. **Take care of you:**
   Finding "normal" takes self-love, not self-deprivation or guilt as motivators. When you put you and your real needs first, the rest will fall into place.

   These steps are just the beginning. The rest will unfold over time. And it takes time. All good relationships take time and nurturing. If you suspect that your food/body issues are serious, then seek help. Otherwise, let go of dieting for today. Don't be afraid of your body and its urges. They will be your best guide toward "normal."
Whether you realize it or not, the power of suggestion plays a huge role in your life. It affects the choices you make and the quality of life you produce. Suggestion is everywhere!

Which of these demonstrates the power of suggestion?

a. A fast food server asks if you'd like fries with your order.
b. A blue business card is handed to you.
c. A passing stranger smiles at you.
d. All of the above

You’d be correct if you answered “d, all of the above”. A suggestion is an idea designed to elicit a response, sway an attitude or an opinion, or plant a belief. So when that fast food clerk asks if you’d like fries, she’s planting an idea in your mind that fries would be a tasty addition to your meal. When a stranger passes and smiles, it’s not only a friendly gesture, but also a suggestion for you to smile back. A blue business card suggests more than just an offer of doing business; the blue color is meant to suggest that the company is trust-worthy.

Besides suggestions coming to us from the outside world, there are also self-suggestions, or suggestions generated through self-talk. A simple example of a self-suggestion would be when you ask yourself what you feel like eating for dinner. You think about different foods and then make a decision based on your own suggestions. Your life is full of self-talk, which turns into self-suggestion, and it impacts your life way beyond your food choices. All of your beliefs and opinions started as suggestion, either by you or someone else.

Are You Eating Your "Mental" Veggies?

You’ve likely heard diet gurus say, “You are what you eat.” Suggestions are no different. They are like food for the mind. You constantly take in suggestions. Every idea you’re exposed to, whether it’s from the media, your family and friends, or your own self-talk, comprises your mental diet. This mental diet can potentially have serious impacts on your emotional, mental and physical health. Suggestions shape who and what you are, and what you believe about yourself.

While it may be impossible to control the bombard of suggestions, you can add positive self-suggestion to your mental diet each day. Practicing positive self-suggestion is the mental equivalent of eating nutrient-packed vegetables. It not only uplifts your mind, but it also helps counteract the mental junk-food and negativity to which you are frequently exposed. Positive self-suggestion allows you to choose how you’ll interpret the world around you, by creating new patterns of thought and behavior.

Positive thinking centers on holding uplifting thoughts, even when setbacks occur. This is difficult to do, because it runs counter to the natural, emotional reactions you feel during unfortunate events. In fact, it can be very draining to insist that all your thoughts and emotions be pleasant. The average person, who is experiencing a negative event, will find it impossible to get their subconscious (aware of the negative) to cooperate with their conscious mind (forced to think positive).

Self-suggestion, on the other hand, is not an attempt to deny the harsh realities you may encounter. It goes deeper than that; self-suggestion changes your thoughts and beliefs, and perfectly aligns your subconscious and conscious thoughts. But how?

Which Road to Travel: Self-Suggestion Methods

You hold a wealth of untapped power, and it resides in the subconscious mind. It’s a hidden ally that you can engage and focus, to strengthen and improve your life, through the power of self-suggestion. However, unless your self-suggestions are well-received by your subconscious mind, they will fail.

Some people confuse positive self-suggestion with positive thinking. They are not the same. In fact, they often oppose each other.
tive affirmations, aim to create a strong impression on the subconscious. Self-hypnosis quiets the mind’s natural filter so that more positive and direct communication can take place between the conscious part of the mind and the subconscious. Self-hypnosis is great, but it takes time to practice.

Creative visualization is another effective method for feeding positive suggestion to your subconscious mind. But what if you aren’t very good at visualizing?

Finally, the most common and well-known method of self-suggestion is the use of affirmations. Affirmations are positive statements repeated over and over until their intention is absorbed by the subconscious. Affirmations are a great idea, but it takes a lot of time and effort to repeat dozens of phrases at various times throughout the day.

If only there was a way to get the benefits of self-hypnosis, creative visualization and positive affirmations without the drawbacks. There is...

**A Sprinkle a Day Keeps the Negativity Away**

Did you know that your everyday activities can give you a daily supply of good mental nutrition?

For example, every time you take a shower, imagine the water not only cleansing your physical body, but also clearing away all of the accumulated negative thoughts. It's a simple idea that works very well. Say out loud in the shower, “I cleanse myself of all negative thoughts and emotions”, or another meaningful phrase. Your shower becomes a living, moving symbol for purification. What's powerful about this method is that it uses positive affirmation and powerful imagery together, which your subconscious mind can readily use and act upon! It's something that can be repeated easily every time you take a shower or bath. How easy is that?

But it's not just when taking a shower that you can use this suggestion technique. There is life-changing symbolism in your every physical act, whether it's driving to the store, cleaning out the bedroom closet, or cooking a meal, you'll only need to recognize the significance of your everyday activities. Any activity you do can be used to promote change and self-improvement.

Here's a breakdown of this simple method:

1. Select an ordinary activity.
2. Find meaning or symbolism, and associate it with the activity.
3. Create and memorize a beneficial self-suggestion.
4. Recite the suggestion whenever you perform the activity.

You can easily use this method with any daily activity. By using this technique with several daily tasks, you'll supply your mind with all of the mental veggies it needs.

By combining imagery, verbal suggestion and repetition, this healthy self-suggestion technique offers the advantages of the usual suggestion methods, while avoiding the drawbacks.

**Tell Them You'd Prefer Veggies with Your Order**

Yes, life throws you many suggestions. Some are helpful and some are not. But you can take control and nourish your mind with positive self-suggestions. In this way, you'll be sure that at least some of the suggestions you're swallowing will be good for you.

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**About the Author**

Forbes Robbins Blair is a clinical hypnotherapist and the author of two books, including: *Self-Hypnosis Revolution: the Amazingly Simple Way to Use Self-Hypnosis to Change Your Life*. He has appeared as a regular expert guest on hypnosis and dreams on the XM Satellite Radio show Broadminded and teaches classes in the Washington D.C. area. You can read more about self-hypnosis (and dream analysis) on his website: www.forbesrobbinsblair.com.

“Your hormones are out of balance. We need to get more of them over to the other side.”
“Shrink yourself, you’re too fat!”
Pop culture and the medical community have teamed up with the $40 billion dollar diet industry to make us all believe we overeat... and we eat it up with enthusiastic zest appeal.

Has it worked on you? Do you think you're fat? Have you ever dieted and gained back weight, like the great majority of dieters shrinking and swelling with the seasons? Who is fat, and who just thinks they are ... and why is it such an issue? What can be done about this "epidemic" known as the "obesity crisis," if in fact we are in its midst?

FAT FACTS
Being fat is unhealthy, right? According to our government, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that overweight people had 86,094 fewer deaths than normal weight people. Underweight people had 33,746 more deaths than those in the normal range.

But don't be taking this as permission to stuff huge quantities of unmentionables into your piehole, believing it's OK. Quite the contrary. Living a healthy lifestyle is where it's at, regardless of weight.

FITNESS FIGURES FIRST
If you're skinny, but collapse into a fetal position after three minutes on a treadmill, that's not exactly fit. Fitness generally includes measures of strength and endurance, or how much can you lift or how long can you do aerobic exercise. Metabolic fitness typically includes measures of blood pressure, cholesterol and insulin resistance.

Exercising appears to be more important than obsessing about calories, fats or carbs. Research has found that all measures of metabolic fitness may improve with exercise alone, without significant changes in diet.

One study liposuctioned large amounts of fats from the subjects' abdomen, the most dangerous place to store fat. However, the subjects showed no significant changes in metabolic health, thereby underscoring that an unhealthy lifestyle causes problems, not the fat itself.

Fit does not equal thin. Thin does not equal healthy. Fat does not equal bad.

BODY MASS INDEX
Although the Body Mass Index can offer a vague sense of who is severely obese and who is not, BMI is strictly about height and weight. It is a completely invalid measure of physical or metabolic health. BMI often miscategorizes those with a high percentage of lean body mass as overweight, such as athletes, while under-categorizing those with less taut bodies, such as the elderly. This formula often mistakes fit bodies as overweight, which is widely considered to be unhealthy. Active people typically have a higher percentage of muscle, which weighs more than fat.

YOUR GENES IN YOUR JEANS
Current research suggests that 77 percent of our weight is determined by genetics. Genes help create our biological destiny called "set point." Set point is a weight range influenced by lifestyle. For instance, someone who is supposed to weigh around 150 pounds may weigh 120 or 180, depending on how much they eat and their activity levels. Similarly, someone who is programmed to weigh around 400 pounds might weigh more or less, but could never weigh 150.

The female hormone, estrogen, creates cravings for fat/sugar cravings to create our lovely curves. Testosterone creates cravings for fat/protein cravings to create muscles for the "hunt." Doesn't it ring true that women want their sweets while men want their steaks?

EATING DISORDERS
Someone has an eating disorder if they are preoccupied with food, exercise, weight and body image. To maintain a severe weight loss, people must generally live in a state of semi-starvation.

A primary psychological symptom of starvation is preoccupation with food. This is for survival, much like if you can't get enough water, all you can think about is finding water, or...
when sleep deprived, the drive to sleep trumps all else.

LIFESTYLE

It seems possible to live a healthy lifestyle and be fit regardless weight, or to be unfit by eating tons of junk and imitating a sloth. In this age of "diet mania in overweight America," here are seven tips for finding your ideal weight, and staying there forever, without overeating, undereating or yo-yo dieting.

1. Eat whatever you want, and incorporate "forbidden foods."

How long will any diet last if favorite foods are forbidden? People can typically hold their breath for a certain period of time, until they run out of steam and overcompensate...or binge, as we know it.

2. Consider calories. We have been told that a calorie is a calorie regardless if it comes from protein, fat or carbohydrates. Then, in a nasty twist of fate we were told that fats are more fattening, and white carbs will increase the size of our butts. Does anyone even know what a calorie is?

A calorie is a unit of energy, measuring the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of 1 gram of water by 1 degree Centigrade. This means different types of foods, burn off more quickly than others, although it does not seem to make a significant difference in the big picture. Calories are burned differently in our bodies, as compared with test tubes.

Did you ever have a skinny friend who can eat mass quantities without gaining an ounce? What about our fat friends who seem to gain weight with the smell of baked goods? Individual metabolisms burn foods very differently, depending upon genetic predisposition.

The United States Department of Agriculture offers recommendations for caloric intake. This is far from an exact science, since different bodies require vastly different amounts, but it is worth noting a few figures, just as a point of reference.

Sedentary women age 31 to 50 years old are told to consume 1,800 calories per day and hundreds more if active. Men of the same age should eat 2,200 calories per day, more if active. We have different needs on different days.

3. Eat when hungry, stop when full. If every other species on earth can master this, surely we can, too, having the biggest brains of all! Eating mass quantities to the point of nausea is a sickening proposition.

Try becoming acutely aware of internal appetite, as opposed to the sight or smell of food, or time of day. Keep a tasty nutrition or nut bar in your purse or pocket, so you can "feed on demand." Take note if you eat out of boredom, stress, depression, happiness, sadness, or because it's Friday. Getting back to nature can help to manage food obsessions.

4. Replace artificial ingredients with natural alternatives, and incorporate "naughty" foods into meals. We all want what we can't have, and "forbidden foods" are no exception. We seem to crave them more if we think they are forbidden.

There is some research finding that artificial sweeteners trick the body's natural instincts for satiety and may even lower serotonin levels. This is bad news for people who eat because of stress or depression.

Look for natural versions of the foods you love, such as Kozy Shack puddings, Newman's chocolate chip cookies or Frito Lay Sun Chips. Who knew that a few handfuls of Sun Chips and a dark beer is a nutritious meal? Dark beer has more antioxidants than light beer.

Incorporating "forbidden foods" into meals assures conscious, accurate calorie counts and might prevent inappropriate binge eating later. Consider incorporating highly nutritious foods as well, such as walnuts, olive oil, blueberries and green tea.

5. Cope well with emotional issues.

Many people eat for emotional reasons, since food is calming, reliable, rewarding and distracting. One way to manage emotional eating is to accept that you might do it and simply call it "lunch," so calories are accounted for and not added to the day's allotment.

Coping with difficult emotions is preferable, but this is the real world. If you polish off a bag of crunchy-munchies after dropping off your annoying kid for practice, allow it to be your next meal and move on without beating yourself up. Bodily signals will probably signal satiety and will let you know when it's time to eat again. At that point, you can enjoy whatever you way, guilt free!

More useful coping strategies include writing down feelings and problems and generating solutions. Exercise reduces stress, and amusing television can offer temporary refuge. Calling a friend to vent is often comforting.

Healthy coping involves putting problems in perspective by asking how important the issue you're fretting about will be in five weeks, five months or five years.

Solving problems is paramount to being well adjusted. Avoiding problems allows anxiety to simmer and depression to set in.

6. Satisfy compulsive eating by sticking to one low-calorie, continued next page
crunchy carbohydrate. Compulsive eating is defined as mindless munching and is not driven by nutrition or hunger. It is a ritualistic foodfest, where the act of eating takes precedence over everything else. This is often precipitated by stress or boredom and can be very fattening.

Binge foods typically contain carbs, fats or sugar, such as chocolate, ice cream, candy or chips. Pasta, bread and potatoes are irresistible to some people as well.

Why aren't we wolfing down chickens or asparagus in alarming amounts? Serotonin is the biological chemical responsible for creating calmness, and carbohydrates create a flood of serotonin in our systems. Together with sugar and fat, calmness is created as the body self-medicates.

Stick to one low-calorie carbohydrate. My favorite recommendation is "Pirate's Booty," a popcorn-like substance with a bit of cheese to offer protein, fat and flavor. You can polish off the bag for a few hundred calories, barely making a dent in the weekly calorie count.

Sticking to Pirate's Booty for neurotic eating assures that one is a healthy eater with all other foods. It pairs inappropriate eating with one food that won't pack on the pounds.

7. Self acceptance. If you eat when hungry, stop when satisfied, generally avoid artificial ingredients and move your body a reasonable amount, you will probably not end up as thin as you would like. We have been brainwashed by pop culture and heavy advertising to hate our bodies and pursue an unrealistically thin ideal.

How do we learn to love a body that we have come to regard as fat? The trick is to view your body in terms of function. For every part you hate, thank it for doing its job. Those thunder thighs get you where you want to go, and that belly might have given shelter to a baby. Begin viewing your body as a living, thriving miraculous system that allows you to take advantage of what life has to offer.

Your body serves as your vehicle on this earth and a conduit for pleasure through the senses. Be nice to it, since without it you could no longer enjoy hugs, movies, nature or love.

From now on, you're not allowed to put your body down publicly or privately. Simply allow yourself to be. Stand proud and act like you have self-esteem, even if you don't. You may even fool yourself.

SELF DISCOVERY
Try this exercise for control over bad habits.

Write it. Write down everything you want to eat in a week. Most people think they require pages and pages to record their insatiable cravings. However, experience suggests that most of us regularly prefer about 20-25 foods. This is a revelation, because if it all fits on one page, it suddenly feels manageable.

Do the math. Figure out how many calories are in a satisfying portion of each; not the "recommended serving size," but a portion designed for human consumption.

Have a plan. Make a menu for the week based on USDA calorie recommendations, or something that seems more realistic for you. Use the foods previously identified and know you can eat all of your favorite foods every week.

Here is a log of one day using this plan.

**Breakfast:** Van's all natural whole grain waffle with a scoop and a half of regular, all-natural ice cream (325 calories).

**Lunch:** A cup of chicken vegetable soup with a bunch of Garden of Eatin' sesame blue chips and Newman's Own salsa (450 calories).

**Dinner:** Local seafood, farm fresh corn on the cob, a magnificent salad and dinner roll all of which weighed in at 450 calories. A dessert medley of mango, peach and nectarines flavored with hazelnut liqueur and cinnamon, layered with real chocolate pudding and topped with authentic whipped cream was 250 calories.

A couple of glasses of wine (200 calories) brought the day's total to 1675; slightly lower than the target zone for successful weight management for an average sedentary woman.

Protein came from seafood, chicken soup and dairy. Fiber and complex carbohydrates came from the soup, salad, corn, fruit and waffle, and calcium was in the pudding, ice cream and whipped cream. Fats were all natural, and there were no potentially damaging polysyllabic chemicals of questionable artificial engineering. Sugar was always mixed with protein and fat, which prevents blood sugar from spiking. Fiber, volume and protein kept appetite at bay.

Americans are starting for change. It's time to enjoy food and life without obsessing about this roll or that bulge, and become your personal best.

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**About the Author**

Dr. Abby Aronowitz, Ph.D. is a psychologist, coach, author and speaker, specializing in weight control. She is an expert blogger for Diet.com and has been featured on eDiets.com, WebMD.com, and AOL Diet and Fitness. Her book “Your Final Diet” empowers people to make peace with food and body image issues. For more information, please call (866) 9AskDrAbby or visit www.AskDrAbby.com.
"No one will ever love you."
"You're fat, you're fat, and you're fat."
"You don't deserve happiness."

If someone else said these things to us, we would probably be furious and defensive. But for some reason, most of us are perfectly OK with saying abusive things like this to ourselves day after day.

One of the ironies of the human condition is that we are usually our own harshest critics, and because of that, most of us spend a large portion of our lives feeling like we're not OK. But what does that mean for our lives?

When we begin to look at the issue of whether or not someone is "OK," we are really looking at two related issues. One is self-esteem, and the other is a judgment about how we behave interpersonally. The latter really relates to the question about whether we treat others as if we believe that they are OK. Part of the question about someone's "OK-ness" is not about that person's intrinsic value and worth, but a judgment about how they behave. The reality is that if we don't feel OK about ourselves, it becomes that much easier for us to treat others as if they are not OK. Obviously that can lead to even more problems down the road.

To change the way we see ourselves from negative to positive, we need to understand how we learned to see ourselves negatively in the first place. This means understanding the way in which you may have been injured as a child, both in your family as well as in your relationships with peers. This doesn't mean that you necessarily need to do a huge inventory of all of your injuries, but it does mean that you might need to at least understand the dynamics of what injured you, and how those old injuries affect your life today.

There are a number of tools that can be used to boost your self-esteem, but the most popular ones are related to a form of psychotherapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. These tools examine the interface between thinking and feeling and how they influence each other. One of the most effective is this four-step process.

1. BE AWARE OF THAT INNER VOICE. Once you have identified what you want to change, you have to begin to notice your negative self-talk when it first kicks in. Pay attention to internalized negative thoughts like the ones quoted at the beginning of this article, as well as specific depressive feelings or physical behaviors (such as self-harm or addiction) the occur as a result of them. Before you can change anything, you have to be aware that it's happening.

2. NIP IT IN THE BUD. Once you realize that your negative thought, feeling or behavior is happening, press your internal stop button before that negativity has a chance to gain power and momentum. Don't try to make sense of anything yet; just turn off the negativity and come to a neutral, thoughtful place.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR FEELINGS. Once you've turned off the negativity, you can step back, get grounded and figure out what's causing those bad feelings. Pay close attention to your current physical and emotional states: What caused them? What were you doing when they started? What were you thinking? Who was there? Analyze the situation intellectually, not emotionally.

4. TURN IT AROUND. Once you understand why you're being negative, take steps to bring back the positive. If your sister's upcoming wedding has made you feel so fat that you might as well polish off an entire cheesecake, join a weight loss plan and set a reasonable goal to lose some weight before the wedding, rewarding yourself with a beautiful dress and haircut for the party. If your current girlfriend's dismissive reaction to your work stories makes you feel unloved and unappreciated, talk to her about the problem.

Remember, the reality is that you are OK, and your commitment to believing that will empower your healing process.

About the Author

Dr. Rifkin is a licensed clinical psychologist practicing in Boulder, Colorado for 30 years. He is the author of "The Healing Power of Anger: The Unexpected Path to Love and Fulfillment" and was the host and co-producer of the mental health outreach television show, "Emotional Success." He has served on the Board of Directors of the Colorado Psychological Association as well as the Chair of the Committee on Professional Practice. He received the President's Award for Special Service in that capacity. The first chapter of his book as well as an anger styles quiz and many helpful articles can be seen at his web site, www.HealAnger.com.
Extreme Self-Care is about taking your care to a whole new level – a level that, to some, may seem arrogant and selfish, or practiced by people who have an inappropriate sense of entitlement. It means taking radical action to improve your life and engaging in daily habits that allow you to maintain this new standard of living. It means scheduling time for yourself (on your calendar, in ink) every day.

1. **What is extreme Self-Care?**
   Extreme Self-Care involves surrounding yourself with people who are smart, self-aware, and only interested in two-way relationships. It means taking bold steps, such as eliminating clutter from your life, for good; creating a soul-nourishing work and home environment, and keeping it that way; getting your financial act together so that you always have choices about how to live your life; and not making any commitments whatsoever out of guilt or obligation. In addition, Extreme Self-Care suggests that we make pleasure a priority – real pleasure, not just a massage every couple of months, an occasional bath, or a yearly vacation. While these ideas might seem far-fetched or out of the realm of possibility for some, it’s important to remember that it’s a process that unfolds over time. The thing to remember is this: The possibility of living a great life starts with an open mind.

2. **Aren’t you just promoting selfish-ness?**
   Yes, that’s exactly what I’m doing. The practice of Extreme Self-Care forces us to make choices and decisions that honor and reflect the true nature of our soul. While the whole notion of this might seem selfish or self-centered, doing so actually allows us to make our greatest contribution to the world. When we care for ourselves, deeply and deliberately, we naturally begin to care more for others in a healthier and more effective way. To our families, our friends, and the planet, we become conscious and conscientious people who tell the truth. And we make choices from a place of love and compassion instead of guilt and obligation. To that end, we begin to understand – on a visceral level – that we’re all connected, and that our individual actions affect the greater whole in a more profound and consistent way than we ever imagined. Enjoying a life of Extreme Self-Care means living and working in a soul-nurturing environment; developing a greater appreciation for, and connection with, nature; doing work that provides an opportunity to express your...
greatest gifts and talents; and caring for your emotional, physical, and spiritual health in a way that’s aligned with who you are and what you most need. When you allow yourself to want this and then have it, you can’t help but want it for others as well.

3. **Is the need for Extreme Self Care primarily an issue for women?**
   It’s an issue for both men and women, but for generations women have received specific training that causes them to feel anxiety, guilt, and discomfort when they put their needs first. So, in that regard, it becomes more of an issue for a larger number of women than men.

4. **What one thing can people do right away to practice Extreme Self-Care?**
   The most important thing a person can do to begin making changes that honor their Extreme Self-Care is to get support. By sharing this unfolding journey with someone who is equally committed to their own self-care, we put accountability in place and we give ourselves the gift of someone to lean on when we’re tempted to fall back into old, outdated patterns of behavior. That’s why we created a section on our website called: “Life Makeover Groups” at “cherylrichardson.com.” We have over 4,000 groups around the world – a free community – for people who are serious about getting their lives in shape and want to share that journey – in person – with others. Support and community are the secret weapons used against the enemies of apathy and numbness.

5. **What’s an Absolute No List?**
   One of the most immediate ways to feel the effects of Extreme Self-Care is to become very discriminating about how you spend your precious time and energy. One exercise is to...
think carefully about our top priorities: things like emotional, physical, or spiritual health; children and other significant relationships; community service; work-related projects; and so forth. Once we identify the things that most need our immediate attention, choose the top-seven priorities – those things we’ll devote time and attention to over a three- to six-month period. Once the list is narrowed down to seven, write these priorities on a 3” x 5” index card that is kept in view. By referring to this Absolute Yes list, readers we ensure that our precious time and energy would first and foremost be devoted to the things that mattered most.

6. Why do we need to master the art of disappointing people?
Because you can’t live a life based on your most treasured priorities and values without being able to disappoint people, hurt their feelings, or be with their anger when you stop being an automatic yes machine. Most of us don’t like to hurt or disappoint our fellow men and women. It’s an uncomfortable thing to do. Some common reasons for this are:

- We don’t want to feel guilty.
- We don’t want to disappoint others because we know how bad it feels.
- We don’t have the language to let someone down with grace and love.
- Our fear of conflict and desire to keep the peace keeps us from telling the truth.
- We want people to like us and are uncomfortable when they don’t.

One of the harsh realities about practicing Extreme Self-Care is that you must learn to manage the anxiety that arises when other people are disappointed, angry, or hurt. And they will be. When you decide to break your pattern of self-sacrifice and deprivation, you’ll need to start saying no, setting limits, and putting boundaries in place to protect your time, energy, and emotional needs. This poses a difficult challenge for any sensitive, caring person. Why? Because you will, for instance, disappoint a friend when you decide not to babysit her kids. Or you’ll probably hurt your son’s feelings when you tell him that he has to walk to his friend’s house instead of always being chauffeured. Or you might anger your partner when you ask him to wash his own clothes. Because you’ll be changing the rules of the game, certain individuals won’t like it. But remember, if you want to live a meaningful life that also makes a difference in the lives of others, you need to make a difference in your own life first. That way your motivation is pure and without regret.

7. What effect does our work and home environment have on our personal health?
The power of being in a space that feels fully aligned with our soul is sorely underrated. A soul-loving environment is a home or office free from clutter and disorganization – a space filled with elements that allow us to be and act our best. When we live or work in a place that’s filled with too much stuff or devoid of beauty, it drains our energy. We end up feeling depressed, exhausted, and unmotivated. We don’t function well, and this can ultimately end up affecting other areas of our lives. I’ve worked with many people, for example, who feel as if they’re drowning in clutter and, over time, end up isolated because they’re too embarrassed to share their home with others. Or I’ve watched business owners struggle to bring in new clients while working in an outdated office that looks (and feels) like a black hole – not the best environment for courting new business.

Like a weed that wiggles its way through concrete to find the light, we adapt to our environment. If we tolerate a home that doesn’t feel like us, chances are we’ll tolerate a relationship that doesn’t feel quite right either, or we’ll stay working at a job that’s just “okay.” While the idea may seem a bit strange, how we live “in here” at home translates into how we live “out there” in the world.

8. What advice do you have for women who feel compelled to always be in charge whether at work or at home?
Learn to ask for and receive help. If there’s one thing I’ve struggled with the most over the years as I’ve worked hard to become a more conscious woman, it’s asking for and receiving help. Like so many women, my natural default is to want to be in charge by doing things myself. And over time, this “I’ll do it myself” mentality has turned into “Hi, I’m General Manager of the Universe, and you need to do this my way and in my time to keep me happy.” What follows from there isn’t pretty. Eventually I proudly wear the cloak of martyr, and everyone pays the price. I get bitchy and resentful, and I end up feeling painfully alone.

There are plenty of reasons why we don’t ask for help. First and foremost, those of us who like to be the boss have typically been in that role for a very long time. As a result, it doesn’t even occur to us to ask. Second, there are the perceived costs. When I talk to people about why they don’t ask for help, I hear things such as:

- “I don’t want to appear weak.”
- “It takes too much energy to explain what I need, so I don’t bother.”
- “I hate being disappointed when people don’t follow through.”
- “It’s too much of a hassle to fight
with family members who resist helping out.”
- “I don’t want to hear no.”
- “I don’t want to feel indebted to anyone.”
- “When I’m at work, I know I can do it faster, cheaper, and better; so I don’t want to waste time and money.”
- “In my family, we were taught to be self-sufficient, and I’m too proud to put anyone out.”

If you look closely, you’ll see that what all of these examples have in common is, in fact, control – the desire to avoid conflict or disappointment, or the attempt to manage the perceptions of others by not appearing weak. And then there’s the idea that doing everything on your own makes you less indebted to others. When you let go of control and allow others to take the wheel, you empower them. You teach them to trust themselves, to become resourceful, and to take greater responsibility for the quality of their own lives. You can practice letting go in simple ways, such as by permitting your child to choose his or her own clothes for school; allowing a friend to navigate directions without butting in; or sharing household responsibilities with a teenager, like doing the laundry or cooking meals. You might even consider more challenging steps, such as turning over the handling of the finances to your partner for a while – even though they may take a different road.

9. What do sex and a housekeeper have in common?
I’ve met many women who feel overburdened and short on support, and they tell me that sex becomes just another item on an already long to-do list. They feel driven to check off items on this list so that they can relax. And, when they finally do feel ready to relax, sleep is a far more appealing option.

When you feel pressed for time, overwhelmed with responsibilities, and alone with your misery, you repeatedly engage the body’s “fight or flight” system, which raises your cortisol levels. This “alert mode” causes you to worry, to ruminate about what needs to get done, and to live in a chronic state of anxiety. Can you imagine enjoying the pleasure of lovemaking when your body is screaming, “Hurry up! I’ve got lots to do before I can stop worrying about tomorrow!”? Of course not. You’re ready for action, all right, but not the kind that welcomes intimacy.

Yet the intimacy that comes from a strong, healthy relationship is an important part of Extreme Self-Care. We all need physical closeness to feel deeply connected to our partners. So if a lack of sex or physical affection is an issue in your relationship, one of the first things you want to do is delegate the less important tasks of life and allow your body to relax. Hire someone else to clean your house or do the grocery shopping. As one good friend said, “When my husband vacuums the house, it’s as good as foreplay.”

10. What is an Extreme Self Care first aid kit and when would someone need to use it?
We will all face major life challenges at one point or another and those are the times when we’ll need Extreme Self-Care the most. People you love may die. Jobs could be lost. Geographical moves might be forced upon you by a partner’s career change. An unexpected medical diagnosis may throw your world into a tailspin. That’s just the way life works here on planet Earth. These are the times when we need an Extreme Self-Care First-Aid Kit – when we’re feeling scared, unsteady, and desperate to find a way back to center.

An Extreme Self-Care First-Aid Kit is a well prepared plan of action put in place before you need to use it. It consists of ten things you can do on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level that will give you comfort, connection, and a feeling of steadiness while navigating the rough waters of a crisis. When faced with a difficult period, what matters most is that you return to the behaviors and practices that reflect Extreme Self-Care as quickly as possible, so you can restore yourself to sanity and strength. That way, you’ll bring your best, most resourceful self to the challenge at hand.

About the Author
Cheryl Richardson is the author of many bestselling books. Her work has been covered widely on national television, including The Oprah Winfrey Show, the Today Show, and Good Morning America. She is also featured in many top newspapers and magazines that include: The New York Times and Good Housekeeping.
Listen to Cheryl live every Friday on www.HayHouseRadio.com
Here's a new fitness challenge for everyone: Get over it! Stop thinking about rain-thin pinup models in bikinis and get real with yourself. There is no point in aspiring to achieve the impossible. Stop thinking thin and start thinking healthy. And there's a huge difference in what you need to be doing to get healthy in your age 20's than when you're in your 40's or older. All exercise is not created equal. You'll be much more successful if you use a sensible, age-appropriate approach than if you just repeat "I want to look like Halle Berry" to yourself and set the stage for failure.

If you're over 50 and you're noticing some spreading, sagging, and cellulite, you're in great company. Are you exercising and trying to eat less, but you see no visible results? Are you in a cycle of resolving to lose weight, spending days and weeks adhering to an exercise program, and getting frustrated about the lack of results? This is especially true for older folks who are in a constant struggle with the fight against fat.

Face it. If you're in your 40's, 50's, or older, you've already figured out the truth. As we age, our metabolism slows down and we are burning fewer calories. This is especially true for women in their 40's and 50's who are entering the stages of menopause. But according to some health and nutrition experts, the key to maintaining a healthy weight is to be mindful of what kind of food you're putting in your body and to be consistent with exercise. Of course with any workout plan, it is always best to consult your physician to make sure you're ready and able. If you're in this age group, you need some moderate to intense aerobic activity.

Over 50? Feeling flabby and fatigued?

- Mall walking (or any walking) is the easiest by far. If you do it at the mall, you will stay out of the direct sun, be safer, and you can join mall walking groups to make it more fun. Try to keep up the pace and break a sweat.

- Tai chi is an exercise system of slow, controlled movements. It's calming, helps manage stress, and it strengthens your muscles.

- Biking alone or better yet, join a club. Try to go at least a mile and get up a few hills.

- Swimming is excellent for those with joint or bone sensitivity. Try laps or water aerobics.

- Yoga and Pilates studios are everywhere. You'll enhance your social life, which improves your mental health, and it strengthens your core muscles, which is great for your overall health.

You may have to sweat a little, but what the heck? If doctors believe exercise also helps prevent disease and extends and improves your quality of life, then isn't it worth it? Recent studies suggest regular exercise may help prevent breast cancer. Older adults who exercise regularly tend not only to be stronger and have better balance and coordination, but also to be better able to manage the
sorts of daily chores that allow people to remain independent. They are also more likely to be physically fit.

Ladies, you could even make housework fun by dancing to your favorite tunes while cleaning or doing laundry. And if you want to add a little something extra to your love life, try some Kegel exercises. By practicing them you will have more control over your vaginal muscles. You'll get more sexual satisfaction and a reduced chance of vaginal infections.

Yes, I will get into that dress!
Keeping it moving through your 30's and 40's

Sudden bursts of strenuous exercise are not going to get you into that little black cocktail dress two weeks from now. In fact, you may accomplish nothing but strain your muscles and maybe even hurt your back or joints. Better to exercise moderately but regularly than to suddenly become an overnight fitness fanatic. Remember, there's not much point in looking fabulous in the dress if your back is killing your and your knees hurt. Try some of these tips.

Cross-train. Don't just stay with one activity. Change your routine, it will be more interesting and you won't overtax one particular muscle group. It will also improve your overall health.

Add resistance training or weight training to your routine. In your 30's and 40's, aerobic exercise alone will not help your body fight osteoporosis. Don't forget to add as many calcium-rich foods to your diet as possible, or take supplements as advised by your doctor.

Learn to walk again. Attach 3-5 lb. weights to your ankles or wrists and make it a combination of aerobic and resistance training exercise.

Start making better food choices. You cannot live on pizza and coffee anymore. Poor nutrition can lead to bone loss. Osteoporosis could take a severe toll on your health, and it's preventable. So put down the junk and eat your veggies.

At this age, you're juggling career, family, and plenty of stress. Any exercise program helps manage your stress, keep depression at bay, and improves your quality of sleep.

Exercise is as important to weight loss or maintenance as calorie intake. Although you don't burn many more calories exercising than you do while resting, exercise increases your basal metabolic rate – the rate at which you use up energy while at rest. Therefore, you burn more calories per hour throughout the day, and that adds up. All aspects of health and fitness work together for your benefit. There is no reason not to stay as fit as possible as you move through the phases of your life.

So just get started. Make sure your goals are attainable. Stop looking at magazines with ultra-skinny models in lingerie. Start with a reasonable goal and work up. Soon you'll notice that you don't need to make friends with your fat. As you keep moving, it will, too.

About the Author
Beverly Mahone is a veteran journalist, author, baby boomer expert and motivational speaker who writes and speaks about issues affecting baby boomers. She is also the author of the best selling book “Whatever! A Baby Boomer’s Journey into Middle Age.” For more information, visit her website: www.boomerdivanation.org

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BONKERISM

The toughest part of a diet isn't watching what you eat. It's watching what other people eat.

"It's time to get serious about losing weight. Today I filed a restraining order against the pizza delivery guy."
Poised and in control, Linda sat with perfect posture in her dining chair, never fidgeting. She took a forkful of a salmon salad with low calorie cilantro-lime vinaigrette, perfectly bedecked with almonds. "Isn't this yummy?" she asked in a plummy but sarcastic voice. "I try every day to be strong and to stay true to my diet, but my heart never stops talking. I'm worn out."

Emotional weight is at play. Linda's memories and day-to-day life were a mélange of restrictive diets and self-deprecating moments. She had a grin-and-bear-it attitude, until she succumbed to hunger and exhaustion. We've all been there, all felt the overwhelming urge to ask, "Why do I keep repeating the same diet when I know it's fraught with loopholes, exaggerated claims and pitfalls?"

**So What's a Person to Do?**

Year after year, people are drawn in to the same dispiriting diet, only in a new guise. Worst yet, with each failed diet, emotional weight builds up, and self-esteem takes another plunge, unleashing bouts of overeating and more desperate weight loss measures.

This isn't an insoluble problem; you don't have to internalize all this, and remain stuck in a dispiriting yo-yo cycle.

Imagine for a moment you can achieve a healthy body weight and be genuinely happy with what you see in the mirror without dieting. You want to look good and be healthy, too. You want to aspire to health and wellness, not thinness.

To change your body and become healthier, you must change your relationship with yourself. That calls for self awareness. Wisdom is a heightened state of awareness that endows you with the insight to stay patient and focused on the process, not just the end goal. Prevention is a form of wisdom. It's treating wellness. Health depends much more on your ability to prevent disease than to treat illness.

Once diets rituals take the place of awareness, the balance in the body is disrupted. The mind-body connection is severed and you're no longer consciously participating in the choices that affect your health. And after that, impatience toward reaching your goals escalate, and you begin to hurry a process that can't be hurried. Yet each step of the way, patience is requisite to freeing yourself from the anxiety of always starting over.

Unfortunately, the disruption doesn't stop here. It turns another corner, and emotional weight begins to build up and mix-up, and when left untreated, body weight will continue to fluctuate and the mirror image and numbers on the scale will never be good enough. This is why, a person can be thin, but still feel heavy, the heaviness lies in the mind in the form of emotional weight. Emotional weight distorts body image. It's also the reason a person can eat and eat and never feel satisfied. The hunger is not a physical hunger, but an emotional hunger. Everyone carries emotional weight, but some carry more than others. Not surprisingly, however, in our rush to lose weight quickly, we also lose sight of how vital this "emotional connection" is to every aspect of health.

**Put Faith in Yourself, Not a Diet**

Even in the most seemingly benign scenario, all diet rituals impair your ability to cope by leaving emotional weight. They prevent the joining of mind, body and spirit, which would produce the balance for a healthy body and self-image.

Diet rituals are knee-jerk reactions to the frustration and guilt of not being
able to control your body weight. These are the six diet rituals:

1. Step on the scale and fixate over the fluctuating numbers, even though you know it's perfectly normal for body weight to fluctuate.

The scale is not a reliable barometer for overall metabolic or emotional health. Relying on the scale for approval or to determine if you're successful shows little trust in yourself. The scale doesn't tell you that you have emotional weight: 10 pounds of anger, five pounds of guilt. Ironically, it's stress and anxiety that increases cortisol levels, stimulate fat synthesis and blocks neurotransmission important to appetite control. Trust yourself. You want your emotional scale to read—peace of mind.

2. Compulsively count calories and dramatically cut back even though you know your metabolic rate will lower and your body will burn fewer calories.

Extremes and rigid behavior are the first signs that you don't trust yourself. Overcontrol comes from fear of losing control. It's not about calories; it's about the nutrients. Eat slowly and give the brain a chance to release the hormone cholecystokinin (CCK), which signals that "I'm full" feeling.

3. Label food bad or forbidden, even though you know it makes you desire it more.

When food is labeled this way, it gives it power. Whenever you eat "forbidden food," it reinforces the distrust you already have in yourself. Don't deprive yourself of any specific food, but eat smaller, more frequent meals or healthful snacks.

4. Obsessively look at before-and-after pictures and lament not having a body like the picture, even though you know it's futile to make comparisons.

At first glance, comparing yourself to others may seem perfectly harmless, when quite the opposite is true. You might as well compare the size of your nose and then ask why it's different. Look past vanity and focus on overall health. You have a unique biochemical makeup, and your metabolism and look is part of it. Find what works best for you and accept yourself for who you are.

5. Eat low-calorie prepackaged meals, weight-loss drinks or diet pills, even though you know you need to make permanent lifestyle changes.

Foods, thoughts and emotions all act as powerful chemicals, substances that can either build health or destroy it. The biochemical changes in the brain are directly related to the food you eat. Every day eat a balance of fresh, high-quality food that is less refined, processed, and laden with sodium and synthetic chemicals. You need quality food and good quality sleep time to recharge and burn fat.

6. Exercise simply to burn calories, even though you know exercise is not a means to an end.

Here, exercise is being used as a form of self-punishment done when you have repressed guilt about what or how much you've eaten. The key to exercise is moderation and consistency, not overexercising. Moderate exercise prompts the body to conserve carbohydrates by producing more enzymes that burn fat. Start slow and listen to your body.

**Learned Helplessness**

It's scary to give up the idea of dieting when maybe that's all you know. Diet rituals are deeply ingrained conditioned responses that have taught you to be helpless by preventing you from understanding what's at the heart of your weight problem. It's gradual and often goes unnoticed as unhealthy habits and diet rituals take away awareness and the mind-body connection becomes severed.

Learned helplessness also results from negativity and resistance to change. The more positively you think, the more confidence you'll gain. You're not helpless; you choose what to believe and then choose how to label your actions. Gradually replace unhealthy eating habits, beliefs and attitudes with new awareness, breaking free of old destructive patterns of conditioning.

**Anxiety of Stagnation**

Doing nothing but thinking creates anxiety and feelings of helplessness, because you're always worrying about what you should be doing. It's the anxiety of stagnation, the anxiety that comes from not doing anything but thinking and worrying.

Get rid of the idea that it's all or nothing. Focus on making small, but important day-to-day changes. Give yourself time to succeed and don't get hung up on having to be perfect, or worry about what hasn't happened.

Likewise, hashing and thrashing over what you've already done is another way to punish yourself for not being perfect. You must let them go. Most of us need to make mistakes and reset goals, trying several new directions before finding what works best. Give yourself credit for and believe in the value of "small" positive changes.
Let Deep Emotions Surface

Emotional awareness comes from inner wisdom. Wisdom teaches you to value all experience, and use it to guide yourself toward peace of mind. Emotions were meant to be expressed, not repressed. It's a slow, steady journey that requires you listen closely to your body and emotions.

Emotions are the most spontaneous part of you, the most primary expression of awareness. When overgrown or pushed away, emotional weight forms. When deep-rooted emotions remain unexpressed, you're apt to overeat and feel unhappy. As emotions mix up, you mix up. Emotional weight creates metabolic confusion and inconsistencies in thought and behavior as you feel anxious about being anxious, depressed about being depressed. You can only ignore an incoming escalation of emotions for so long, until they manifest through overeating. Eventually physical and emotional hunger wells up inside and feelings of entrapment grow, and finally you turn to or away from food for comfort, control and emotional support.

Changing your relationship with yourself means pulling back and making more emotional observations, rather than intellectual ones, about why you overeat or restrict calories. You must find and release the deeper emotions buried inside so they can weaken the grip of destructive diet rituals and move you closer to genuine understanding and acceptance about yourself and your body. When you eat, ask yourself: Is what I'm experiencing a physical or emotional hunger?

Take brief but relaxing breaks throughout your day. Close your eyes and shut down your over-stimulated mind, and become acutely aware of your body and emotions. Within a very short time, you'll know what you intuitively already knew. Just like any healthy relationship, it's a precious gift, and keeping it has a lot to do with understanding and appreciating it.

About the Author

Dr. Sundermeyer's specialty is inspiring people to eat, think and feel healthier. Her refreshingly truthful books and lectures encapsulate 25 years of experience as a health psychologist. She holds a master's degree in clinical psychology and a doctorate in nutritional science; is an accomplished author of five books, and freelance health writer. She has been featured in major newspapers and magazines, and has appeared on hundreds of television and radio shows nationwide including the Discovery Channel, Lifetime Television and NPR. You can visit her Web site at www.Zbestlife.com

See the Fullness of Who You Are

You must change your relationship with yourself by creating an emotional intimacy with yourself, rather than an intimacy with food and devotion to diet rituals. Negative feelings, self-doubt, low self-esteem, anger, fear, impatience, happiness, and disappointment aren't stored in adipose tissue. Allow yourself to express the sadness you're experiencing. It's repression of sadness or anger that can cause depression and anxiety. Express the guilt that may be hidden underneath your frustration or disappointment. It's not a fear of fat, but rather fear of trust and the fear of not being perfect.

Lighten Up in Body

Treat your body like a good, intelligent friend. Your body is always talking to you. Lighten up in body by listening to it and trusting it. Avoid making snap judgments about what is happening in your body or about how flawed it is.

The body is totally aware of what you eat, think and feel, and never loses awareness, even though you do. You must respect and stay in touch with your body, or it will reflect your lack of attention.

When you eat whatever you want, and however much you want, and you think whatever you want regardless of the consequence to your health, you're living in opposition to and ignoring what your body needs to function intelligently. Fat burning, for instance, is an enormously complex process that can't be rushed, and being aware of this should stop you from attempting to blow off 10 pounds in a week. Likewise, restriction of one type of food will interfere with what you're trying to achieve: a balanced and harmonious relationship with yourself.

Lighten Up in Mind

Go ahead and ditch the diet rituals and express yourself. Pay close attention to the conversations in your mind and stop worrying about things that are out of your control. Take out time to give yourself a pat on the back, a few words of praise. Be kind and compassionate to yourself. Listen to, and yes, trust your body and emotions.

The wear and tear of worrying can sap stamina, and the less energy you have, the less capable you are at caring for your health. Achieving a healthy body weight has a lot to do with thoughts and perceptions. You can control how you perceive things. Happiness is often born through reflection and realization.
Take a Laugh Break

The doctor told me I should exercise 3x a week, so I have worked out this easy daily program I can do anywhere:

Tuesday:
Drag my heels.
Push my luck.
Make mountains out of mole hills.
Hit the nail on the head.

Thursday:
Toot my own horn.
Climb the ladder of success.
Pull out the stops.
Add fuel to the fire.

Saturday:
Open a can of worms.
Put my foot in my mouth.
Start the ball rolling.
Go over the edge.

The Government has issued new guidelines for a healthy diet. They advise you to:

1. List your ten favorite foods.
2. List your five favorite drinks.
3. List all green vegetables that look like marsh grass, fur balls, or little trees.
4. List water.
5. Avoid 1 & 2; eat only 3; drink only 4

My personal trainer told me to touch my toes. I said, "I don't have that kind of relationship with my feet. Can I just wave?"

Rosey and Nina were best of friends and tried to do everything together. Rosey announced that she was going to start a diet to lose some pounds she had put on recently.

"Good," Nina exclaimed. "I'm ready to start a diet too. We can be dieting buddies and help each other out. And when I feel the urge to drive out and get a burger and fries, I'll call you first." "Great," Rosey replied. "I'll ride with you to Burger King."

I'm not fat... I'm just short for my weight.

"Brain cells come and brain cells go, but fat cells live forever"

Can it be a mistake that "STRESSED" is "DESSERTS" spelled backwards?

Bathroom scales: equipment which only seems to work correctly when one holds on to a towel rail, stands on one foot and leans hard to the left.

Girl: I'd like a triple vanilla ice cream sundae with chocolate syrup, nuts, whipped cream, topped off with a slice of cucumber.

Waiter: Did I hear you right? Did you say top it off with a slice of cucumber?

Girl: Good heavens, you're right! forget the cucumber – I'm on a diet.

"Inside me lives a skin-ny woman crying to get out. But I can usually shut her up with cookies..."
In this very moment you are seamlessly connected to the cosmos. The same deep intelligence that streams through the rivers flows through your bloodstream, and the same breath that nourishes your cells animates the life of a rain forest. Although it may seem like you are separate from the world "out there," in reality your body and the universe are made up of the same molecules, obey the same principles, and are inextricably connected.

The guiding principle of ayurvedic medicine and the other Eastern healing arts is this interconnection of all things. More than 5,000 years ago, the ancient Vedic sages of India understood what quantum physicists are just beginning to recognize: we are all part of an infinite field of intelligence that orchestrates all of the activities in the universe. With every breath, we exchange our personal energy with the energy of the universe, and we are constantly taking in impressions via the five sense organs – the ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose.

In Ayurveda, sensory impressions are considered crucial to health. Just as the food we eat creates our bodily tissues, the information and energy we ingest via our senses determine the quality of our thoughts and emotions. If we want greater physical and emotional well-being, we can use sounds, feelings, sights, tastes, and smells to balance and heal our selves. Here are a few suggestions that you can use in your own daily routine.

**Sound Therapy**

Sound has a profound effect on the entire mind-body physiology. When you listen to a beautiful song or soothing ocean waves, your body creates chemicals that make you feel happy and support wholeness. On the other hand, you can probably recall feeling raw or tired after being subjected to harsh, abrasive sounds. Research shows that long-term noise pollution contributes to chronic health problems, such as high blood pressure, anxiety, and fatigue.

Thousands of years ago, the ayurvedic physicians recognized that sound is a powerful healing tool, and they created musical compositions called ragas, which mirror nature's rhythms and harmonies. The ancient texts specify which ragas to play in the morning, noon, evening, and other times of day to optimize healing. Fortunately, to benefit from sound therapy, you don't have to master musical theory or Vedic literature (though that could be a beautiful adventure). You can begin right now by experimenting with
music to create your own sound therapy.

The specific sounds that will benefit you most depend a great deal on your mind-body type, known as your *dosha* in Ayurveda.

Listen to a variety of musical styles and sounds and pay attention to what feels good to *you*. It can be classical Western music, Indian ragas, Australian aboriginal rhythms, or contemporary instrumentals. The key is to tune in to your body and fill your environment with sounds that enhance your well-being – including the sound of silence.

**Healing Sights**

The visual impressions you take in have a surprisingly profound effect on your mind, body, and emotions. Watching violent movies or television shows triggers your body’s stress response, creating jittery cells and suppressing the immune system. In contrast, looking at peaceful or beautiful images creates a cascade of soothing neurochemicals in the body.

Surrounding yourself with images that uplift your spirit is as important for your health as nutritious food. Spending time in nature is healing for your mind, body, and soul. When you view a gorgeous sunset, look into the eyes of your beloved, or see a magnificent painting, you cultivate the power of your inner pharmacy.

**Aromatherapy**

The most primitive of the senses, smell connects us directly with our memories, emotions, and instincts. When we smell something, we are actually absorbing some of its molecules, making aromatherapy a form of natural medicine.

The linking of a particular smell to

*If we learn to live in balance from the deepest level, our health and potential have no foreseeable limits.*

~ Deepak Chopra
an emotional state is known as neu- 
roassociative conditioning, a tech-
nique that can be used to increase 
our body's healing response and ac-
vate our inner pharmacy. For exam-
ple, if each time we sit to meditate 
we use a sandalwood fragrance, we 
will soon learn to associate the feel-
ing of relaxation with the aroma. At 
other times, simply smelling the fra-
grance will trigger a sense of quiet 
relaxation.

In order to benefit from the healing 
effects of aromatherapy, identify an 
aroma that you are especially fond 
of. The essential questions to ask are 
How do I like this scent? How does it make me feel? Deeply inhale the 
essence whenever you are feeling 
relaxed, at peace or are having a par-
ticularly good day. Your body will 
gradually begin to associate pleasur-
able feelings with the aroma. Before 
long, just a hint of the fragrance will 
evoke a heightened state of well-
being.

You can use a candle-powered or 
electric aroma diffuser, but using a 
teacup and a miniature coffee 
warmer works just as well. Choose 
an aromatic oil and place about 10 
drops in hot water. This will fill a 
room with a light scent for about a 
half-hour. You can add more oil and 
extend this time as long as you like. 
If you have trouble falling asleep, 
you can use aromatherapy at bed-
time. About an hour before bedtime, 
run yourself a hot bath, putting a few 
drops of essential lavender oil in the 
water. Turn on some soothing music, 
dim the lights, and soak for 10 to15 
minutes. Have the intention to allow 
the stress of the day to leave your 
body.

Some aromas are calming while oth-
ers are more energizing or relaxing:

**Invigorating:** Lemon, Orange, 
Clove, Cinnamon, Eucalyptus.

**Cooling:** Jasmine, Mint, Lime, 
Rose, Sandalwood.

**Calming:** Lavender, Vanilla, Rose 
geranium, Neroli, Basil.

**The Sense of Taste**

Ayurveda categorizes food into six 
tastes: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, 
bitter, and astringent. Each of the 
tastes has a unique effect on our 
mind-body physiology and provides 
the flavor that makes eating a pleas-
ure. If you include the six tastes in a 
meal, you will get the nutrients you 
need and will feel completely satis-
fied and energized. If one or more of 
the tastes are missing from a meal, 
you may feel full but unsatisfied and 
find yourself snacking two hours 
later.

**Therapeutic Touch**

Touch is fundamental to health and 
well-being. The skin is the largest 
organ in the body and is rich with 
nerve receptors, neurochemicals, 
and immune modulators. Peptides 
closely related to antidepressants can 
be found in the skin, which may 
explain why massage often induces 
an elevated mood. When your skin is 
stimulated by loving, therapeutic 
touch, it releases many healing 
chemicals that enhance immune 
function, improve circulation, and 
promote restful sleep.

You can give yourself the healing 
benefits of touch every day with an 
ayurvedic massage, known as an 
*abhyanga* or "self-abhy." If you are 
feeling stressed and ungrounded, use 
heavy, warm oils such as sesame or 
almond. If you are feeling irritated or 
overheated, try cooling oils such as 
coconut, sunflower or olive. Finally, 
if you are feeling sluggish or lethar-
gic, massaging yourself vigorously 
with oils such as safflower or mus-
tard will help invigorate you.

Here is how to perform a self-abhy:

✓ Begin by pouring a tablespoon of 
warm oil onto your scalp, vigorously 
working in the oil. Use small circular 
storesh to massage your entire scalp, 
as if you were shampooing your hair.

✓ Now move to your face and ears, 
massaging more gently. Put a bit 
more oil in your palms and massage 
your neck, front, and back, moving 
out to your shoulders.

✓ Vigorously massage your arms, 
using a circular motion at the shoul-
ders, and back-and-forth motions on 
the arms. Then massage your chest, 
stomach, and lower abdomen using 
gentle circular motions. Use a 
straight up-and-down motion over 
the breastbone. Reach around to 
your back and spine and massage 
them as well as you can.

✓ Energetically massage your legs, 
using circular motions at the ankles 
and knees, and back-and-forth 
motions on the long parts. With the 
remaining oil, thoroughly massage 
your feet, giving your toes extra 
attention. Massage your body with 
love and tenderness – your state of 
mind is as important as your tech-
nique in creating a healing experi-
ence for yourself.

✓ Leaving a thin, almost impercepti-
ble layer of oil on the body is 
extremely beneficial, toning the skin 
and warming the muscles throughout 
the day. It’s therefore recommended 
that you use very mild soap and 
lukewarm water to rinse your body 
after the massage.

**Beyond the Five Senses:**

**The Healing Power of Meditation**

From the perspective of ayurveda 
and mind-body medicine, the body
isn't a sloshing bag of biochemcials; it's a field of intelligence or consciousness that is constantly responding to your thoughts, emotions, and the input of sensory impressions. By immersing yourself in nourishing sounds, touch, sights, tastes, and smells, you can enhance the mind's ability to heal and balance the body. To go even deeper and directly access the mind's infinite healing powers, the most effective tool is meditation. During meditation, the mind's noisy thought traffic slows, the body relaxes, you have access to the field of pure consciousness. This state of silent, expanded awareness is extremely refreshing to the mind, which finds it increasingly easy to let go of negative thought-patters, conditioned beliefs, and accumulated stress. When this happens, the mind is actually learning to heal itself. A large body of scientific research has established that having a regular meditation practice produces tangible benefits for mental and physical health, including:

- Lowered blood pressure and hypertension.
- Slower heart rate and decreased cholesterol levels.
- Reduced production of "stress hormones," including cortisol and adrenaline.
- More efficient oxygen use by the body.
- Increased production of the anti-aging hormone DHEA.
- Improved immune function.

Beyond these significant health benefits, the greatest gift of meditation is the sense of inner peace it brings into your daily life. When you emerge from your meditation session, you take some of the stillness and calm with you as you move through your day. All of your thoughts, actions, and reactions are infused with a little more love and mindful attention. The result is a deeper appreciation and a profound awareness of the divine quality of existence.

**Learn to Meditate**

The Chopra Center offers instruction in *Primordial Sound Meditation*, a natural, easy practice that dates back thousands of years to India's Vedic tradition. When you learn *Primordial Sound Meditation*, you will receive a personal mantra.

A mantra is a specific sound or vibration, which when repeated silently, helps you experience expanded awareness and silence. *Mantra* is a Sanskrit word that means "vehicle of the mind" — and it truly is a vehicle that takes you into quieter, more peaceful levels of the mind. You can also meditate using the ancient So Hum mantra:

1. Choose a place where you won't be disturbed. Sit in a chair or on the floor, using blankets and pillows to make yourself as comfortable as possible.

2. Close your eyes for a few minutes and observe the inflow and outflow of your breath.

3. Now take a slow, deep breath through your nose, while thinking or silently repeating the word *So*.

4. Then slowly exhale through your nose while silently repeating the word *Hum*. Continue to allow your breath to flow easily, silently repeating *So . . . Hum . . .* with each inflow and outflow of the breath. Whenever your attention drifts to thoughts in your mind, sounds in the environment, or sensations in your body, gently return to your breath, silently repeating *So . . . Hum*.

5. Do this process for 20 to 30 minutes. Just breathe easily and effortlessly, without trying to concentrate. When the time is up, sit with your eyes closed for a few minutes before going about your usual activities.

**About the Author**

Recognized as one of the world's foremost leaders in the field of mind-body medicine, Dr. Deepak Chopra continues to transform our understanding of the meaning of health. In 1996 he and colleague David Simon, M.D. co-founded the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California (San Diego County). They envisioned the creation of a beautiful, nurturing wellness center where people could come to heal their physical pain, find emotional freedom, connect to their spiritual life, and learn tools for self-empowerment. Now more than a decade later, thousands have found profound healing and transformation at the Center’s seminars, retreats, workshops, and teacher training programs. Deepak Chopra is the bestselling author of more than 50 books, including *Perfect Health; The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success; The Book of Secrets; The Path to Love; The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire; and The Third Jesus*. His newest book (forthcoming) is *Reinventing the Body, Resurrecting the Soul*. The Chopra Center offers a wide variety of programs in stress management, mind-body medicine, emotional healing, meditation, yoga, and ayurveda. For more information, visit [www.chopra.com](http://www.chopra.com) or call 888.494.1639.
Between the stress of corporate America and the prevalence of sedentary jobs, many of today's business professionals weigh more than they did just a few short years ago. In fact, sixty percent of the US population is overweight, and thirty percent are classified as obese. With breakroom vending machines tempting us with sugary sodas, calorie rich energy drinks, and candy bars, it's no wonder that today's workers are packing on the pounds.

But being overweight has become a huge health problem for our country, a serious drain on our medical finances and work productivity. Additionally, those who are overweight die sooner. Think about it . . . how many overweight or obese people do you see in their 80s and 90s?

Extra pounds are often the behind-the-scenes culprit contributing to diabetes, hypertension, heart problems, and muscle weakness. Being overloaded with too much weight contributes to many orthopedic problems, especially pain and stiffness in the back and lower extremities. Since you can't drive a Mac truck on Volkswagen tires, you need to remove the excess weight tastefully, slowly, and sensibly.

"But how?" you may be thinking. "I've tried just about every diet under the sun. Plus, I work ten to twelve hours per day at a desk job. There's simply no time to exercise!"

Unfortunately, people often interpret the word "diet" to mean deprivation, punishment, and failure. The true meaning of the word "diet" is Greek for "a way of life." Therefore, we all need to banish our way of thinking of the term "diet" and instead focus on a new way of life.

Every year, the media and weight loss industry bombard us with "new" and "breakthrough" diets that promise to melt away excessive pounds almost overnight. The list of diets include high/low protein, high/low fat, high/low carbohydrates, and even some one-food diets like grapefruit, bananas, or popcorn – or named after an individual or an exotic location.

The truth is that there is no "magic formula" or "secret food" that helps you lose weight. So let's agree to stop this dieting foolishness right now. In fact, if you are overweight, the best advice is to stop buying into the fad diets, save your money, and simply liquidate now.

"The Liquidation Way of Life"

Fortunately, there is an easy way to lose weight and win with your health at the same time. Quite simply, stop drinking calories for thirst. In other words, if you can spill it, don't swill it! By following this one simple rule, you will painlessly shed unwanted pounds. This is the weight loss number to remember: 3,500 calories equals a pound of FAT!!

Consider this: If you drink one eight-ounce glass of milk a day, you ingest the caloric equivalent of one "fat" pound each month – more than ten pounds in a year. The same holds true if you drink one can of soda or one energy drink per day. If you drink all three every day, you risk gaining three pounds a month, or a whopping thirty-six pounds in a single year! So if you stop drinking these three items each day and make no other changes in your diet, you would drop over thirty-six pounds in a single year.

By Dale Anderson, M.D.
Here's a handy list of drinks you can easily liquidate:

- 4 oz of juice = 100 to 120 calories
- 8 oz of milk = 100 to 150 calories
- 8 oz sports drink = 100 to 150 calories
- 12 oz of soda = 120 calories
- 12 oz of beer = 100 to 130 calories

In a month, daily consumption of these liquid items can easily top 3,500 calories. One pound of fat equals 3,500 calories. To lose weight, you either have to work off 3,500 calories through exercise, or you have to not put an extra 3,500 calories into your body. And just like that – it ADDS UP to FAT.

To make the most of the liquidation way of life, follow these guidelines:

- **H2O is the Way to Go.** Drink eight to sixteen glasses of calorie-free water for thirst every day. Never sip a single calorie in liquid form, except for the occasional glass of "medicinal" red wine, a party beer, or nonfat milk on your morning cereal. Your liquid calories should only come spoonful by spoonful as soup or on cereal, but never gulped from a glass, cup, can, or bottle. Don't sip it – Skip it!

- **Avoid "Breakfast on-the-Go" and "Energy Boosting" Drinks.** Many people overlook the added calories of smoothies, slushies, or blended drinks that they normally consume as "breakfast on-the-go." Because the liquidation way of life says, "If you can swill it, spill it," drink nothing that has a calorie out of a glass, can, cup, or straw. Sure, if you are a normal weight, then a once in a while indulgence is okay, but not for someone who is overweight.

Avoid the expensive, exotic, designer drinks that often act as a substitute for food, because they only give a temporary feeling of having eaten. So while they pack on the calories, they don't give the sustained feeling being full. Within an hour or so, you'll be raiding the vending machine to get your fill of real food, which will only add more calories to your day.

- **Dilution is the Solution.** Most "zero calorie" drinks that are sweetened with artificial sugars are okay to consume. However, some preliminary research suggests that sugar substitutes give you a hankering for sweets. So drink zero calorie beverages in moderation. Still, if you just can't stomach plain water, then dilution is the solution. Gradually, you can dilute any diet drink or juice by 70-90 percent and still get a sweetness or taste you crave.

- **Make Time for Tea.** Tea is a great way to flavor water. But before you say, "I don't like tea," take a stroll down the tea aisle of your local grocery store. Today's tea is much more than Earl Gray. Tea (which often has caffeine, so you can get the mid-afternoon boost you crave) comes in a multitude of flavors, from citrus to berry to herbs, meaning that you don't have to add any sweeteners to have a great taste. Additionally, tea is so versatile – you can drink it hot, cold, or lukewarm. It's tea-riffic! Don't LEAF home without it!

**Drain Calories and Fatten YOUR Wallet – Not Theirs!**

Just because you have a sedentary job doesn't mean you have to succumb to weight gain, nor do you have to blow your paycheck on diet fads. You can liquidate your way to a more slender you. In fact, many research studies have shown that cutting back on calories extends the life of monkeys, rats, mice, and humans. For example, rats and mice that cut their daily caloric intake by thirty to sixty percent lived thirty to sixty percent longer.

The real skinny on looking and feeling younger and more energetic is choosing a way of life that features these marquee headliners: Whole grains, fruits, fish, lean meats, green veggies, and lots of water. Deprivation and torture is not the answer. Food is fuel. By making some simple and healthy choices about what you consume, you reduce your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancers, and obesity. And by eating rather than drinking your fruits, you may even add five, ten, fifteen, or more productive and fruitful years to your life.

Quite simply, if you follow this simple liquidation way of life, you, too, will become and remain a healthy "lightweight." Never again will you be "swallowed up" by the "get thin quick"fad diets.

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**About the Author**

Dale Anderson, MD owns the business ACTHAPPY.com. He is a physician speaker who prescribes UP BEAT theater skills to individuals and groups who want to MASTER the physiology of a SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE. He travels the country prescribing METHOD acting techniques and happiness as good medicine. Named “Best Speaker” by Minnesota Meeting and Events Magazine. His 4th book, “Never Act Your Age,” was awarded a National Senior Media Award, a National Health Information Award and a Foreword Magazine Award. Contact Dale at 651-484-5162 or visit www.acthappy.com. Requests for republication permission of his articles can be edited to meet the needs for other Business, Health, Education, Spiritual and Senior publications. Dr@ActHappy.com
Weight gain is as simple as increased calories ingested and decreased calories burned.

Yeah, right! That statement doesn't take into consideration many real life issues that keep the pounds packing on – issues like how you feel about yourself, unresolved childhood hurts, how your family treats you, a deep rejection, a dead-end job, or a dull, boring routine. The reality for many is that, ultimately, the ups and downs of the scale are about how we react to the ups and downs of life.

Chances are good that you, or someone close to you, is struggling to achieve or maintain an ideal weight. A great place to start is by challenging many common ideas about weight, weight gain and weight loss. To start, they can rename themselves as YTBT (Yet-To-Be-Thin).

"Thin" myths

Myth: YTBT people and thin people live on different sides of an unbridgeable divide.

Fact: If you believe that you're so much different than a thin person, how can you ever become one? It's no wonder that you haven't managed it.

Myth: Thin people have a faster metabolic rate.

Fact: This is "victim thinking" that stops you from taking responsibility for your situation. This deprives you of the possibility of changing it. No matter your size, as a general principle, the more active you are, the faster you will burn off the calories.

Myth: Thin people starve themselves.

Fact: People for whom thinness is, or has become, their natural state don't have a lean and hungry look about them; they eat whatever they feel like eating, in moderation.

Myth: Thin people don't like chocolate/cake/french fries/pizza.

Fact: Not only do they like these things, they may actually enjoy them more than YTBT people. Why? Because they taste what they are eating, stop when they're full, and enjoy their meal without guilt. Whereas, YTBT people often feel guilty, zone out, and carry on eating, way beyond the point of feeling full.

Myth: Thin people don't eat for comfort.

Fact: Sure they do. But they also use other strategies for comforting themselves that don't involve ingesting calories.

Myth: Thin people are miserable.

Fact: Nonsense. This is the other half of the myth, "better to be fat and happy." Generally speaking, your body shape does not determine your mood. It's far more likely that your mood will generate your body shape.

Diets rarely work

Diets are negative, and rarely get the job done permanently. The very word "diet" makes us think about deprivation, or giving up foods that are comforting and enjoyable. On a diet, you're not eating the way you'll eat for the rest of your life. Instead, you're eating foods you may not like very much and don't find satisfying. If you're determined enough, you might stick with it until you reach your goal. But what happens then? Eventually you give up and re-enter the world of uncontrolled eating.

Some people end up on the diet hamster wheel. The first diet works reasonably well, but in time the weight comes back, so they move on to the next diet, and the next, and the next. Each time they put back the weight they lost and more. Each time they become increasingly discouraged and increasingly focused on losing x number of pounds.

What actually happens is that they become increasingly focused on what they don't want (those pounds). They don't want the pounds, they...
don't want to be a failure, they don't want... But here's the problem: what we focus on increases.

There is a common belief that we can use the fear, negativity, and deprivation of a diet to get the results we want. If you're in the habit of responding to fear and negativity by eating comfort foods, then you can see how this might not be the best strategy.

**Say it, believe it**

Realize that the unconscious mind is deaf to the word "not." We simply omit the "not." Every time a person says to herself, "I don't want to be fat," what the unconscious mind hears is the most unfortunate message it could possibly hear.

Your unconscious is a loyal servant. It will provide you with exactly what it hears you ask for. Give it crystal clear orders that it will record correctly. Communicate in a positive, encouraging way.

**Focus on what you do want, not what you don't want**

Be as clear about what you do want, as about what you don't want. Instead of telling yourself: "I don't always want to be fat and wear big, baggy sexless clothes," start seeing yourself the way you want to be: "I love being slim and wearing the styles I really love."

Is that true? Yes, it is, inasmuch as that is what you really, really want for yourself. Is it your reality yet? Not yet, no. But, if you believe it now, it soon will be.

Once you start to feel that you can be that slim person, you've cleared one of the major blocks to achieving lasting slimness. If you see it and believe it in your mind, before it actually happens, you'll be proved right. Likewise, even if you do lose the weight, but you don't see yourself in your mind's eye as a thin person, the pounds will soon reappear.

Here's the thing: your unconscious mind never works to prove you wrong. Tell it you are slim and that you can maintain your target weight, and that will become your reality. The more you visualize the slim, attractive you, the more you'll subconsciously and consciously work to create it.

"**Have your cake and be thin too**"

Calorie intake is one significant component of your slimness strategy. How much easier is it for you to manage your calorie intake successfully when you feel good about yourself? You see, you can have your cake and eat it, and be a thin person.

If you really enjoy that slice of cake and know that it's ok to eat it today and, if you fancy a slice tomorrow, or the day after, and know it's ok to eat that too, then how desperate will you be to snaffle it all down?

Perhaps, in the past, you have underestimated how powerfully, and inevitably, your self-denial has triggered a strong desire for certain foods.

**The love of food is not the root of fatness**

The love of food isn't the root of fatness any more than money is the root of evil. The excessive love of money, to the exclusion of all else, is the root of evil. By the same token, the excessive love of food may, in some cases, be the root of fatness.

In many cases, shame, pain, stress and anger are the roots of fatness. Excessive weight is, most commonly, a manifestation of low self-worth. This is not to say that thin people don't suffer with self-worth issues, because they do. But they have found different ways to manage it, which may or may not be as damaging. At any rate, what matters here is not how other people stifle their difficulties, but how best you can address and resolve yours.

Many people embrace a 'fat strategy' at an early age. They may have suffered some kind of abuse or other shame and not been emotionally able to process it. Instead they used weight, rightly or wrongly, to create some kind of buffer and protection from more pain and abuse. Equally, they may have been brought up in a family where fatness was almost a statement of solidarity, where one parent, or both, had a vested interest in having children who looked like a (large) chip off the (large) old block.

**Shed the feelings and the weight will follow**

People who have a long history of being overweight, or 'yo-yoing' weight loss and gain, may have some longstanding emotional issues that need healing. For the longest time, fatness may have been the best strategy they knew to shield themselves from the destructive experiences they suffered.

Happily, this doesn't mean that they need years of 'talking therapy' before they are reborn as their inner thin twin. What they can do is revisit the experience(s) that caused the weight gain, with the wisdom and compassion of their adult experience. In reality, this tends to be a lot less traumatic than it sounds, especially if they revisit the painful experience(s) with someone who has appropriate professional skills to support them.

Ultimately, there are two tiers of pain that come about as a result of a painful experience, and both need to be addressed:

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✓ The pain of the original experience
✓ The pain deriving from their beliefs about the experience

The original experience is, of course, long gone. However painful it was, it is still ancient history. It's their beliefs about their experience, or the sense they make of it, and the story they build around it, that perpetuates the pain over months, years and even decades.

For as long as they are still asking themselves the same questions like, "How could it have happened?" or "How could this person have done such a thing to me?" the pain will continue. As long as they keep revisiting their own perceived failure or humiliation in a situation, their pain is current. As long as they feel they need to go back to rewrite the past, before they can be happy in the present, they condemn themselves to relive that pain endlessly.

Especially when the past has been a painful one, logic and our powerful human urge for happiness, actually encourage us to let go of that past, and rejoice in the present. Once we begin to look at that experience with compassion and wisdom, we can leave our pain where it belongs – in the past.

**Set yourself up for success**

Dieters are generally a sincere and motivated group of people. They are also more likely to self-sabotage. In addition to the negative beliefs and painful past experiences that keep packing on the pounds, they employ a fantastic, fail-safe mechanism for self-sabotage: *deadlines*. They pre-determine that they will lose X amount of weight by a certain date.

They invest in getting rid of some of what they don't want by an artificially appointed date, regardless of whatever else happens in their life. They set the bar very high. When they fail to achieve their goal by the appointed date, they interpret that fact, not simply as a technical hitch, but as yet another failure, and proof that they'll never succeed.

How can we set ourselves up for success? By being non-specific and supportive of ourselves. Instead of obsessing about being 10, 20 or 40 lbs lighter in three months time, visualize yourself *slowly* metamorphosing into someone who is comfortable in their body, maintains a healthy weight and looks great in their clothes.

It is much easier when you have set an attractive long-term vision, to accommodate the short-term blip. When you look long-term, blips seem to just flatten out into insignificance.

**Why wait?**

Why wait any longer? Maybe, until now, you didn't have access to all this information. Maybe, even if you had some of it, you weren't ready to process it. Maybe, before now, you didn't have the confidence to trust that you can achieve your goals. You can change that now, moment by moment, by focusing on what you want.

Start visualizing yourself slim and enjoying your new slim lifestyle. Believe it, and your beliefs and attitudes around food will change. Believe it, and you'll soon see it when you look in the mirror.

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**About the Author**

Dr. Annie Kaszina, Ph.D., is a writer, speaker and coach who specializes in helping people take a good life and make it better, by discovering their *Invisible Skill Set* in three steps: (1) Find out how great they really are. (2) Help them realize how much light they've been keeping under the bushel. (3) Take the brakes off. Annie works with bright, successful people by helping them clear their old stumbling blocks and confidence issues so they can feel GREAT about themselves and their success and really get the most out of their work, their relationships, their abilities and their life. Dr. Kaszina is the author of *But If I Say ‘No’ They Won’t Like Me: the ultimate People Pleasers’ guide to confidence.*

www.saynowithconfidence.net.

To find out how Annie can help you, email: annie@anniekaszina.com

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“At your age, good health is pretty much a thing of the past. My advice is, find an illness you enjoy.”
Raise your hand if you made yet another promise to lose weight - a promise you’ve already broken. Are you ready for a new way to craft your intentions that motivates follow-through?

Before you beat yourself up for lack of integrity with your own self-promises, take a look at the process of commitment and communication. They say communication is the key to success, and this is doubly true for self-communication. Achievement begins with clear expression of what you want. But that’s not all. Why you want it is even more important than what you want. Two factors help us articulate the why.

1. **Feelings.** Our basic reason for wanting anything is that it will make us feel good. If you can name the feelings you want to experience when you’ve achieved your goal, it will spark the desire that motivates action towards achievement.

   How do you want to feel? Here’s a short list to choose from – feel free to add your own. Do you want to feel: appealing, bold, buoyant, carefree, competent, energized, frisky, fulfilled, independent, loving, optimistic, peaceful, relaxed, secure, witty, wise, worthy?

2. **Core Values.** A second consideration for deciding what we want is what core value it honors. If we speak and act based on what we think others expect of us, or on some idea of what “should” be the case, we open ourselves to inadequacy, inferiority and disappointment. When our core values drive our thoughts, words and actions, we experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment.

   What are your core values? Here’s a short list to choose from – feel free to add your own. Do you value: accomplishment, adventure, balance, beauty, creativity, flexibility, freedom, harmony, honesty, humor, integrity, orderliness, security, serenity, space, spontaneity, truth, wisdom? What else? Once you’ve nailed down your reasons for wanting what you want, success is close at hand.

**7 Steps to Get What You Want**

1. **Be Still.** Before we can have, we must do. Before we can do, we must think. Before we can think, we must be. How do you find stillness?

2. **Think.** Be specific about what you want. It’s not enough to say you want a healthy garden. Do you want flowers or fruit? Dandelions or daisies? Roma tomatoes or beefsteak tomatoes?

3. **Add the Why.** Why do you want the Roma tomato? What will it feel like? Do you love the taste? The texture? Does it fill your heart with love as you remember grandpa tending his tomato garden?

4. **Write it Down.** When shoots first spring from the ground, it’s hard to tell the weeds from the tomato plants. A little water spurs them into definitive shapes for you to nurture. Concrete expression such as writing or creating a vision board gives shape to your dream.

5. **Observe, Recognize, Allow.** Sunshine, water and time nurture the stages of growth. The sunshine of attention and awareness nurture the growth of the bud. Be aware: the rosebud looks nothing like the open rose. Recognize the options and opportunities that arise in response to your intention.

6. **Act.** Action is the fertilizer that brightens the foliage, opens the bud, and sweetens the fruit. Take joy in the action.

7. **Enjoy!** There’s no getting around it: action produces results. Action taken with intention for specific outcome cannot help but take you closer to what you desire. If what manifests differs from your original intention, review the previous 6 steps. What will you do differently next time?

**+1 to Grow On: Gratitude.** When you bite into the warm, juicy, flavorful tomato, you find a gift of seeds to perpetuate the process. Gratitude perpetuates the process of creativity, love and well-being. Feeling gratitude is joy in itself. Expression of gratitude magnifies its power. Sow it liberally!

*About the Author*

**Nina Durfee** is a certified professional life coach and a meditation instructor, helping people to live not by default, but by design. For information about one-on-one coaching, group coaching, or workshops email her at Nina@LifeSculpt.net or go to www.LifeSculpt.net
For those of you who aren’t familiar with affirmations and have never worked with them, I’d like to explain a little about what they are and how they work. Very simply, an affirmation is anything you say or think. A lot of what we normally say and think is quite negative and doesn’t create good experiences for us. We have to retrain our thinking and speaking into positive patterns if we want to heal our lives.

Every thought you think and every word you speak is an affirmation. All of our self-talk, our internal dialogue, is a stream of affirmations. You’re using affirmations every moment whether you know it or not. You’re affirming and creating your life experiences with every word and thought.

An affirmation opens the door. It’s a beginning point on the path to change. In essence, you’re saying to your subconscious mind: “I am taking responsibility. I am aware that there is something I can do to change.” When I talk about doing affirmations, I mean consciously choosing words that will either help eliminate something from your life or help create something new in your life.

Your beliefs are merely habitual thinking patterns that you learned as a child. Many of them work very well for you. Other beliefs may be limiting your ability to create the very things you say you want. What you want and what you believe you deserve may be very different. You need to pay attention to your thoughts so that you can begin to eliminate the ones creating experiences you do not want in your life.

Please realize that every complaint is an affirmation of something you think you don’t want in your life. Every time you get angry, you’re affirming that you want more anger in your life. Every time you feel like a victim, you’re affirming that you want to continue to feel like a victim. If you feel that life isn’t giving you what you want, then it’s certain that you will never have the goodies that life gives to others – that is, until you change the way you think and talk.
“Affirmative statements are going beyond the reality of the present into the creation of the future through the words you use in the now.”
You’re not a bad person for thinking the way you do. You’ve just never learned how to think and talk. People throughout the world are just now beginning to learn that our thoughts create our experiences. Your parents probably didn’t know this, so they couldn’t possibly teach it to you. They taught you how to look at life in the way that their parents taught them. So nobody is wrong. However, it’s time for all of us to wake up and begin to consciously create our lives in a way that pleases and supports us. You can do it. We all can do it – we just need to learn how. So let’s get to it.

Some people say that “affirmations don’t work” (which is an affirmation in itself), when what they mean is that they don’t know how to use them correctly. They may say, “My prosperity is growing.” but then think, “Oh, this is stupid, I know it won’t work.” Which affirmation do you think will win out? The negative one, of course, because it’s part of a long-standing, habitual way of looking at life. Sometimes people will say their affirmations once a day and complain the rest of the time. It will take a long time for affirmations to work if they’re done that way. The complaining affirmations will always win, because there are more of them, and they’re usually said with great feeling.

However, saying affirmations is only part of the process. What you do the rest of the day and night is even more important. The secrets to having your affirmations work quickly and consistently is to prepare an atmosphere for them to grow in. Affirmations are like seeds planted in soil. Poor soil, poor growth. Rich soil, abundant growth. The more you choose to think thoughts that make you feel good, the quicker the affirmations work.

So think happy thoughts, it’s that simple. And it is doable. The way you choose to think, right now, is just that – a choice. You may not realize it because you’ve thought this way for so long, but it really is a choice.

**Creating Affirmations**

Doing affirmations is consciously choosing to think certain thoughts that will manifest positive results in the future. They create a focal point that will allow you to begin changing your thinking. Affirmative statements are going beyond the reality of the present into the creation of the future through the words you use in the now.

When you choose to say “I am very prosperous,” you may actually have very little money in the bank at the moment, but what you’re doing is planting seeds for future prosperity. Each time you repeat this statement, you’re reaffirming the seeds you’ve planted in the atmosphere of your mind. That’s why you want it to be a happy atmosphere. Things grow much quicker in fertile, rich soil.

It’s important for you to always say your affirmations in the present tense, and without contractions. (Although I use contractions throughout the running text of my books, I never use them in affirmations, since I don’t want to diminish their power.) For example, typical affirmations would start: “I have . . .” or “I am . . .” If you say, “I am going to . . .” or “I will have . . .”, then your thought stays out there in the future. The Universe takes your thoughts and words very literally and gives you what you say you want. Always. This is another reason to maintain a happy mental atmosphere. It’s easier to think in positive affirmations when you feel good.

Think of it this way: Every thought you think counts, so don’t waste your precious thoughts. Every positive thought brings good into your life. Every negative thought pushes good away; it keeps it just out of your reach. How many times in your life have you almost gotten something good and it seemed to be snatched away at the last moment? If you could remember what your mental atmosphere was like at those times, you’d have the answer. Too many negative thoughts create a barrier against positive affirmations.

If you say, “I don’t want to be sick anymore,” this is not an affirmation for good health. You have to state clearly what you do want: “I accept perfect health now.” “I hate this car” does not bring you a wonderful new car because you’re not being clear. Even if you do get a new car, in a short time you’ll probably hate it, because that’s what you’ve been affirming. If you want a new car, then say something like this: “I have a beautiful new car that suits all of my needs.”

You’ll hear some people saying, “life sucks!” (which is a terrible affirmation). Can you imagine what experiences that statement will attract to you? Of course, it isn’t life that sucks, it’s your thinking that sucks. That thought will help you feel terrible. And when you feel terrible, no good can come into your life.

Don’t waste time arguing for your
limitations: poor relationships, problems, illnesses, poverty, and so on. The more you talk about the problem, the more you anchor it in place. Don’t blame others for what’s seemingly wrong in your life – that’s just another waste of time. Remember, you’re under the laws of your own consciousness, your own thoughts, and you attract specific experiences to you as a result of the way you think.

Now . . . today . . . this moment . . . you can choose to change your thinking. Your life won’t turn around overnight, but if you’re consistent and make the choice on a daily basis to think thoughts that make you feel good, you’ll definitely make positive changes in every area of your life.

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Editors Note: This article, in part, is an excerpt from Louise Hay’s new book, Experience Your Good Now: Learning to Use Affirmations, (May 2010, Hay House, Inc.)

**About the Author**

Thirty years ago, Louise Hay wrote a “little blue book” (Heal Your Body) and started publishing material that would change the world and its way of thinking. Since then, 50 million books have gone out into the world. 50 Million Books...50 Million Lives Changed. Louise L. Hay, the author of the international best-seller You Can Heal Your Life, is a metaphysical lecturer and teacher with more than 50 million books sold worldwide. For more than 25 years, she has helped people throughout the world discover and implement the full potential of their own creative powers for personal growth and self-healing. She has appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show and many other TV and radio programs both in the U.S. and abroad. Visit her at: www.healyourlife.com.

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**How Do You Achieve What You Want?**

Most people would like to know what the secret is to achieving their dreams or living the life that they really want to. While it may not be easy to really figure out how to do this, the fact is that you can and when you do, your life will never be the same. You see, most people never realize just how much control that they have over their own lives. Too many people complain about what they don’t have or what they have not been given, they forget that it is there job to go out and get what they want.

We live in a world where people want a quick fix. If they want to feel good, they buy drugs. If the want to lose weight, they get surgery or they buy pills. But, to really achieve something means that you are going to have to put in some kind of work in order to get what you want.

1. **You have to know what you want to achieve.** Something like I want to lose weight is not nearly as clear as I want to lose 50 pounds within 8 months. Be exact and precise on what you want.

2. **You have to know what to do in order to get it.** If you want to be a professional singer, you have to take lessons and record a demo and then shop it around. Whatever your dream is, think about what you would have to do in order to get it.

3. **You have to really desire it.** Does it wake you up in the morning? If you had to put in a lot of work in order to achieve your dream, would you still want it?

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“**I’m learning how to relax, doctor — but I want to relax better and faster! I want to be on the cutting edge of relaxation!”**
Mirror, Mirror On the Wall

ACCEPTING AND LOVING OUR IMPERFECT BODIES

By Geneen Roth

A healthy body image includes having a realistic picture of our body, and accepting this image without fear or shame.

Every summer for four or five days, I go to a Zen retreat center in Carmel Valley and stare at naked women's bodies. Some would call this peeping. I call it observing reality. Because as I sit in the women's baths, soaking in the mineral springs that come bubbling out of the ground or dipping into the icy stream to cool off, this is what I see: sagging breasts, dimpled buttocks, cellulite thighs, stretch marks, flabby stomachs and drooping underarms. Oh yes, I did see one body that looked like a magazine body - on a ten year old.

When I look at bodies of normal women, I am reminded that no one looks like the pictures we see in magazines. Even the models don't look like the pictures we see of them. The finished product has often erased a few inches from the legs, the arms, removed any cellulite, sags, droops or imperfections that make a body human.

A few years ago, when my picture was taken for the cover of my book, Appetites, I had a mole on my forehead. I asked the art director at the publishing company to remove it from the photograph and with one magical stroke of the computer, it was gone. I was giddy from the power of being able to alter my face so easily. Then I thought, "Gee, what would it look like if he just removed some of those wrinkles around my eyes and took away just a teensy part of the fullness of my face?" I was getting giddier by the moment, thinking of how gorgeous I could look with my eyes a little larger, my cheeks a little thinner, my hair a little thicker. When I spoke to the art director about making more changes, he said, "But Geneen, then you won't look like yourself."

I felt like saying, "Oh that..." But then I remembered that Appetites was about self-acceptance, and the desire to change my face was possibly, maybe, perhaps a bit hypocritical.

Take a look at a normal woman's body. And "normal" does not include models, actresses and elite athletes. Normal women have wrinkles, sags and cellulite. But since we don't compare ourselves to normal women, we end up feeling as if our bodies are wrong, as if our imperfect bodies are an indication that we are not working hard enough, don't care passionately enough, and have let ourselves go. When we compare ourselves to airbrushed, computerized bodies, we believe that if we drank enough water, ate the right combinations of food, and exercised the requisite thirty minutes four days a week, we could look like that, too.

Drinking enough water, eating nourishing food and exercising a few times a week are all loving ways to treat our bodies, but if we engage in those activities with the hope that we will look like airbrushed photographs or pre-pubescent girls, we will live in a perpetual state of self-loathing.

Take a good, long look at real women's bodies. Look at the bodies you see in the mall or the grocery store. So they have wrinkles or cellulite or sags. So what? That is what "living" looks like. That is what loving and losing and hoping and caring does to bodies. The goal of life is not to get through to the end and wind up looking like you just began.

After you've looked at normal women's bodies, look at yourself in the mirror. Stand there for at least three minutes, once a week for six weeks. Every time you notice a stretch mark, a sag, a wrinkle, say to yourself, "This is what living looks like. This is what loving looks like." And you will be telling the truth.

About the Author

Geneen Roth has been writing and teaching about hunger, pleasure, deprivation and healing for over 28 years. This article is based on her book, When You Eat at the Refrigerator, Pull Up a Chair. Her work explores the question of what we are truly hungry for when we turn to food, or shopping, or any activity designed to comfort our hearts. Geneen has appeared on many national television shows including: Oprah, 20/20, The NBC Nightly News, The View and Good Morning America. Articles about Geneen and her work have appeared in numerous publications including: Cosmopolitan, Time, The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, and The Philadelphia Inquirer. Geneen was a columnist for Prevention Magazine. She is the author of seven books, including The New York Times bestseller, When Food is Love; Breaking Free From Emotional Eating; Feeding the Hungry Heart; Why Weight; Appetites; and others. Her website is www.GeneenRoth.com.
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Everyone overeats at times. Most of us, at times, restrict our food intake to shed pounds. This is “normal” behavior.

This article is designed to provide you with the basic information about the nature of eating disorders, their causes & treatments. This information can be helpful in determining whether you or someone you love has an eating disorder.

Before we begin, though, we want to stress two important points:

First, if you (or someone you love) have an eating disorder, YOU ARE NOT ALONE! Between 5 and 10 million Americans have anorexia or bulimia and another 25 million suffer with binge eating disorder. Hopefully, knowing that other people have experienced what you are going through, and have gotten better with treatment, will provide you with some sense of hope.

Second, don't rely on your "willpower" to get over this condition. An eating disorder is a serious, potentially life-threatening disease. Between 6% and 20% of eating disordered individuals will literally die as a result of their disease. Seek professional help for yourself or someone you love as soon as possible if you suspect there is a problem.

What is an Eating Disorder?

As a general characterization, individuals with eating disorders tend to have difficulty accepting and feeling good about themselves. They tend to think of themselves as "fat" and "ugly" because of their body size and shape, even when this self-judgment is objectively inaccurate and false, identifying and defining themselves according to their perceived "fatness."

There are three primary eating disorders: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder. Each disorder is characterized by a distinctive pattern of disordered and harmful eating behavior. Anorexia generally involves the severe and extreme restriction of eating in an effort to lose weight. Because of this restriction, anorexics are typically underweight (defined as weighing only 85% or less of the expected weight for their height and gender). Bulimia is characterized by the presence of binges, which are episodes of consuming abnormally large amounts of food in a short period of time. Bulimic binges are often followed by compensatory purge behaviors that are an attempt to get rid of the consumed calories.

Inducing vomiting, taking laxatives and excessive exercising, all performed in an effort to prevent weight gain, are examples of purging behavior characteristic of bulimia.

Binge and purge behavior may occur during anorexia as well as in bulimia. However, extreme eating restriction is always present in anorexics and rarely in bulimics. Binge Eating Disorder is similar to Bulimia because both conditions share binge-eating behavior. However, individuals with Binge Eating Disorder do not purge or get rid of what they have consumed, unlike those with Bulimia.

Harmful eating behavior may start as isolated experiments with food restriction or binge/purge behaviors that gradually progress to become both chronic and cyclic in nature. In other words, disordered eating becomes an ongoing problem, one that often waxes and wanes in intensity over time. Eating-disordered individuals who successfully manage to restrict and control what they eat may feel a short-term sense of empowerment and accomplishment.
Such positive feelings do not tend to last very long, however. A bad day at school or work, a conflict with another person, or simply reading a fashion magazine or watching television may trigger renewed feelings of self-hatred and disgust, and lead to consumption of "banned" foods. This breakdown in willpower leads to self-perceptions of weakness and unacceptability, which in turn motivate further food restriction. Endless cycling of dysfunctional eating behaviors indicates the onset of a disorder.

Eating disorders are an addiction mixed with an image distortion. For many it is also complicated by deeper underlying trauma, remembered or not. Deep issues with birth trauma and experiences in the womb are now understood as significant causes of eating disorders and are now being studied in the new science of prenatal psychology. Nurture and food are always associated on a subconscious level with the mother. In some young girls, it has been found, that the one place the mother cannot control the girl is with her eating or not eating. It can be an underlying declaration of independence from "Mommy." This needs to be discovered and worked through in therapy.

Eating disorders typically begin in adolescence or early adulthood. Anorexia and Bulimia rarely begin before the age of puberty, but onset of puberty is occurring earlier, as early as age 7-8 in girls and 8-9 in boys. Ninety percent of cases are diagnosed before age twenty, while fewer than 10% of all cases occur before age ten. Clearly, the tumultuous events of adolescence, such as self-consciousness, puberty, peer pressure and awareness of image, can play a big role in triggering these illnesses.

If your child asks if they are fat, say, “Why do you ask me that?” Defuse the cause and bring the child back to a good feeling about him/herself. Self-sense is one of the most important areas that parents can support in their child, assuring your child to feel good about herself. It needs to be a continual deconstructing of the media and the message. Remember: repetition is the mother of skill.

**Healing and Recovery**

Treatments have also advanced to allow those with these conditions to recover and go on to enjoy their lives, free of compulsive drives.

The biggest block to healing and recovery is denial. If the ones suffering are in denial about their behaviors, they will deny a problem, deny help and even refuse to talk about it. This is very frustrating to family and friends. If their disorder is mild and has not yet developed to a point where it is noticeably interfering with their lives, they may honestly believe they are OK. But it is a progressive disorder and will grow into a serious condition.

How long will it take? No one can say. When severe it may require an intervention as with drug addicts and alcoholics. An intervention is a process of confronting the individual with the help of a professional interventionist who works with the family and friends to help the patient see and acknowledge that they indeed have a problem and need professional help. But it is far from hopeless.

**About the Author**

Jeffrey L. Fine, Ph.D., CEDS, holds a Ph.D. in Humanistic Psychology. He is a Certified Eating Disorder Specialist, and is best known for helping thousands of people in his thirty years of practice. He has a Web Based Therapy Practice. He is a member of the Association for Eating Disorder Professionals, a member of the Association for Pre- and Perinatal Psychology and Health and former student of the famed Linus Pauling, the discoverer of Vitamin C. Dr. Fine is also co-author of *The Art Of Conscious Parenting: The Natural Way to Give Birth, Bond With, And Raise Healthy Children*, which he wrote with his wife, Dalit Fine, M.S. Website: www.theNewParentingClub.com
Do you ever wonder why, despite your best intentions, you just aren’t getting the results you want in life? Maybe you’ve been trying to boost your career; improve your relationship; get in shape; gain more self-confidence; save more money; be more organized; or a hundred other worthwhile self-improvements. You’ve put energy into making these important changes, but you just aren’t seeing positive results. What’s holding you back? You’re a good person and a hard worker. In general, you’re doing ok in life. But there always seems to be something standing between you and your desired achievements. So, what’s keeping you from getting where you want to be? It’s probably not a lack of desire, effort, skill or knowledge that’s holding you back. You may be sabotaging your own efforts, without even realizing it.

We all sabotage ourselves to some degree. Even the most successful, happy, well-balanced person will still get in their own way occasionally. Self-sabotaging behavior is when there is no logical or rational explanation for why you can’t do the things you want to do or have the things you want to have. It’s probably not a lack of desire, effort, skill or knowledge that’s holding you back. You may be sabotaging your own efforts, without even realizing it.

What's holding you back? You're a good person and a hard worker. In general, you're doing ok in life. But there always seems to be something standing between you and your desired achievements. So, what's keeping you from getting where you want to be? It's probably not a lack of desire, effort, skill or knowledge that's holding you back. You may be sabotaging your own efforts, without even realizing it.

There are dozens of factors that can hold you back from success. Here are seven of the most common, self-sabotaging behaviors that may be holding you back. As you read through these items, take an honest inventory of your beliefs and behaviors to see if you’re engaging in any of them. Then, carefully consider the solutions to ending these behaviors, and start working towards your goals today.

**You’re holding yourself back if you are:**
1. Frozen by the fear of failure
2. Unable to sustain self-motivation
3. Not really ready for change
4. Procrastinating and engaging in analysis paralysis
5. Expecting perfection
6. Experiencing distraction and difficulty focusing
7. Making excuses about time and money

**FROZEN BY THE FEAR OF FAILURE**
One of the most common types of thinking which holds us back is the fear of failure. We doubt ourselves and our abilities. Before plunging into something important, we hesitate and think about all the things that can go wrong. While it’s smart to anticipate and plan for obstacles, it’s not helpful to get stuck and preoccupied with thinking about them.

The biggest problem with the fear of failure is that it holds us back from pushing ourselves beyond our comfort zone and growing.

**Solution:**
The best way to manage the fear of failure is to take risks. Ask yourself, ‘What is one thing that makes me uncomfortable, but could lead to an important outcome if I tried it?’ Then identify a series of three action steps to help you accomplish that goal. Begin with the step that is easiest or must come first. If you’re able to complete your action step successfully, you’ll learn that the fear was unfounded and gain greater confidence. If you do fail, you’ll learn that you can handle the failure and it’s probably not as bad as you thought. This will also help you have more courage and self-assurance in the future.

**UNABLE TO SUSTAIN SELF MOTIVATION**
You approach a new project with energy and motivation. But then what happens? That motivation fades like sunlight in the evening. Why? It can be the fear of failure as we’ve discussed. Or it may be that you’re unsure how to keep yourself motivated.

We tend to make assumptions about what will motivate us. For instance, it’s easy to think that factors like salary and work conditions will motivate us to perform better on our jobs, but research shows those things only prevent job dissatisfaction, but do not motivate us. What truly motivates us, in all areas of our life, is achievement, recognition, advancement, responsibility, and growth.
Solution:
We usually learn how to become self-motivated from a young age. Children take positive feedback from parents, teachers, and other people and learn how to internalize a reward system. If you don’t have great self-motivation you can develop it by recognizing and rewarding desirable actions you take.

NOT REALLY READY TO CHANGE
We often make the inaccurate assumption that we are ready to change. Just because something sounds like an important idea does not mean that we are ready to do it today. Resolving our ambivalence about change is the key to long term goal achievement. There are specific stages of change that we go through. When you know the stage of change you are currently in, you can propel yourself forward towards the next stage. Think about one of your major goals and consider which stage of change you are really in:

1. “Pre-Contemplation.” You are not yet thinking about making a change. This may be because you have not thought about doing something new or because you have already thought things through and decided not to make a change.

2. “Contemplation.” You have begun to think about changing, but are not sure what to do. You are considering the good and not-so-good aspects of change.

3. “Preparation Stage.” When you feel that the reasons to change outweigh the reasons not to change, you become determined to do something. You start to plan how you can make the change.

4. “Action.” You are ready to initiate something new right now and implement the plans that you created in the previous step. At this point, you may publicly announce your commitment to others in your life.

5. “Maintenance.” Your goal is to sustain the progress that has been made. It is common to have some “slips” where your old habits briefly return. This is fine as long as you identify the problems and keep up with your progress.

Solution:
Know your current stage of change, and consciously work towards the next stage. Be sure to choose goals and activities that are consistent with your stage of change, otherwise your motivation will quickly dwindle.

PROCRASTINATING AND ENGAGING IN ANALYSIS PARALYSIS
One of the main reasons that you don’t accomplish all that you want, is that you don’t start, or you start too late. Procrastination is a type of avoidance. When something makes us nervous or uncomfortable, we avoid it. Avoidance may decrease fearful thoughts initially, but over time it actually increases your anxiety. The more you avoid something, the harder it becomes, and the less confidence you have in yourself.

Solution:
Just do it! Always confront that which makes you anxious, and stay in the situation long enough that your negative reaction subsides. Next time you have negative feelings about a task, push through those feelings and get yourself to do it anyway. Chances are that after your initial reaction, you will have a positive experience, which makes it much easier and more enjoyable the next time, which reduces your procrastination and avoidance. The key to successfully ending procrastination is to keep doing the activity that you wanted to avoid, until a positive result occurs.

EXPECTING PERFECTIONISM
When you feel like something has to be perfect, how do you feel? Calm, tranquil, and relaxed? Probably not. The idea that you need to make something perfect puts a lot of pressure on you. Perfection makes it difficult for you to begin something and finish it. It destroys confidence because you will never feel good enough.

Solution:
To get past perfectionism, you will need to do something radical and purposely do a task imperfectly. This sounds crazy but when you do this, you learn that you can mess something up a bit and not suffer any major negative consequences. You can complete something only 85% perfectly and the world will not come crashing down, and in fact, you may find you get even better results.

EXPERIENCING DISTRACTION AND DIFFICULTY FOCUSING
Focusing your attention like a laser beam on a target is a key to success. Scattering your attention onto various tasks, projects and situations is a road to self-sabotage. First, determine whether you are primarily distracted by internal or external distractions.

An internal source of distraction can include:

- A thought
- A physical sensation, such as hunger or thirst, physical pain or discomfort
- A feeling of tiredness, fatigue or lack of energy
- A lack of interest in what you are doing
- A frustration or irritation
- A sense of guilt (that you should be doing something else) or boredom

An external source of distraction can include:

- The phone ringing
- Someone asking you a question or knocking on your door
- A television or radio program
- People talking nearby
- A pop-up on your computer screen
- A book sitting on your desk that looks interesting
- A smell in the room where you are working
- A too-hot or too-cold environment

continued next page
stimulus control, I need to not have my emails open or better yet, I would not even be connected to the internet when I need to concentrate on my writing.

If you cannot change your environment, learn how to focus despite external distractions. Begin by working on something that is very engaging and enjoyable. Then work on doing more mundane tasks in a distracting environment. You can practice by going to cafes and trying to work on your laptop, or working with distracting background noise like a television or radio on.

Finally, schedule breaks in attention. It is impossible to focus on one thing for longer than about sixty minutes. Strategically used, breaks in your attention can help you to refocus. Scheduling rewarding breaks will help you stay focused while you are working, and increase the likelihood that you will continue to work towards your goals.

**MAKING EXCUSES ABOUT TIME AND MONEY**

We’ve all said to ourselves, “I’d definitely do that if only I had the time or money.” We could survey a thousand people and approximately nine hundred and ninety-five would say that they don’t have all of the time and money they need, to do what they want to do in life. This is a fact of life: valuable resources always feel like they are in short supply.

**Solution:**
Set goals to improve your use of time. There is a great deal of evidence which shows that we tend to accomplish that which is:
1. Written down
2. Put into our schedule
3. Measurable and in very specific terms
4. Designed with some degree of flexibility built in

Break up and prioritize your tasks. If you are someone who has many things on your plate, you know the importance of prioritizing your activities. You have constant activities competing for your limited time and attention. By creating a mental priority of your activities, you will make decisions more quickly and easily. You won’t waste time contemplating whether you will do something and when. You’ll know that only a legitimate emergency will interfere with your prioritized activities.

Here are some questions to ask yourself in determining your list of top priorities:
- Is this task very significant and meaningful to me?
- Will I feel a significant sense of accomplishment if I worked on this?
- Is there a time deadline for this activity (either an outside deadline or a self-imposed one)?
- Will there be an important benefit, to me or others, when I finish this?
- If I were not able to work on this, would there be some negative consequences?

Prioritizing tasks will help you to determine the order in which you will work on them. Once you know the order of your projects, it is important to break up large tasks into smaller tasks. This idea is particularly true for people who have attention difficulties. Create a list of several steps that go into finishing something. Take small breaks in between the steps to give you time to regain your focus and motivation.

It’s helpful to write down the steps of your project and then check them off as you go. This process motivates you and makes the steps very clear. You will know exactly what you need to get done and when.

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**About the Author**

Larina Kase, PsyD, MBA is a psychologist and New York Times bestselling author who helps people push themselves and achieve more than they ever thought possible. Learn the groundbreaking 6-Step GROWTH formula in “The Confident Leader: How the Most Successful People Go from Effective to Exceptional.”

www.pascoaching.com
The world today is so uncertain, but you can fight back.

Taking a small step to take care of yourself can transform your life. If you don't have fifteen minutes in your day for you, there is some thing wrong. Bad wrong. Regardless of what is your bank account, you are the CEO of taking care of your health. Take fifteen minutes and "check in" with your body. Maybe it's not very glamorous but don't let that fool you.

Here's a 12 Step Program technique to break the addiction of ignoring your body. If you were in AA your sponsor would tell you to HALT. Literally. Stop. Check in to see if you were Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. I add thirsty because most of us are not drinking enough water.

**BOD-ES 101**
The messages of your body are profoundly articulate. Since they convey so much information, I call this internal language of your body- Bod-ese. You've been getting Bod-ese signals every day of your life. As a baby you knew when you were hungry, thirsty or tired. Your body needed care and you let everyone in earshot know about it.

Now that you are a Big Important Person with Big Important Deadlines, you have better things to than eat or sleep. Your body isn't just an amazing machine, it's also a soulful instrument. Have you been listening to its signals and notes?

**12 STEPS TO LISTEN TO YOUR BODY**
In the rush of everyday life, it's easy to be disconnected from your body's needs. Here is an exercise to get touch with your body signals. You may begin by using one or two of the tips, but I wanted to give you a selection to choose from.

1. **Turn Off and Tune In.** Turn off your phone and all your beeping gizmos. Your body speaks in sensations. It's easier to hear them when it's silent. Exhale tension. Inhale relaxation. Do this three times so you feel more connected to your body.

2. **Observe It.** Close your eyes and observe your body. What sensations do you notice? Does your left shoulder ache and your throat feel tight? Take note.

3. **Take a Baseline Picture.** Now, take a quick "snapshot" of how you feel. This instant scan of your bod is your baseline reading.

4. **Feel A Smile Bringer.** Now, think of someone, something, or someplace that delights you. Now, feel your body sensations. Do you feel warmth in your heart? Are you more relaxed, and is your breathing deeper?

5. **Feel The Yuck Response.** Now, think of something, somewhere, or someone that pisses you off. (Your email inbox, your boss, or your least favorite politician.) Now, feel your body sensations. Do you feel a sense of uneasiness or coldness?

6. **Temperature Check.** Notice the difference. What was the change? It may be subtle. For most folks warmth and ease translate to a "yes" in Bod-ese. Cold and greater tension is a "no" in Bod-ese


8. **Vote!** Vote for yourself and do what works for you. Give your body a chance to cast a ballot.

9. **Give Yourself FAB 15.** What did your body request? Do you need some protein? Are you parched? Is it time to stretch and get some fresh air?

10. **Just Do It.** Carve out a 15-minute break to replenish yourself. Enact the request from your body.

11. **First Impressions First.** Your first impression is usually the most accurate. Go for it. Like me you may be tired or thirsty when you think you are hungry. (Today I reached for food when my body was...thirsty.)

12. **Thank You Is A Magic Word.** Thank yourself. It is a magic word. When you acknowledge yourself for making a positive a step you anchor it.
How high do you regard YOU?

Did you know that how you evaluate your self-worth is directly related to your ability to make positive changes in your life?

By Vanessa Anderson Smith

Do you know how much you're worth? Not your investment portfolios or your current bank statement. YOU. Yes, YOU. You matter!

This is beautifully illustrated in the starfish story, where a young man on the beach is picking up one starfish at a time and throwing it back into the ocean. An older man comes along and asks what he is doing. The young man replied that the starfish would die if he left them there. The older man joked that there was no way he'd get to all the starfish and make a difference. The young man picked up a starfish and as he was throwing it back into the water, said "I made a difference to that one."

You make a difference in this world, whether you are aware of it or not. It's not important if you touch one life or thousands. It's just important that you exist.

We care for you. ("We" means the whole of humanity. They leant me their voice for the sake of this article, to show how needed you are) Now, it is time for you to care about you. How you feel about yourself is directly linked to your health, how well you take care of yourself, how you communicate with others, how effective you are in your career, and ultimately, whether or not you are open to life changes.

How are self-esteem and change connected? Think about a friend who may frequently repeat the same story, filled with complaints and blame, yet she takes no steps to change her situation. Reflect for a minute, and think about it. Have you ever wanted to change something in your life, like your career, your relationship, or your living situation? Yet, somehow, despite the plethora of self-help, goal setting, and how to books, you have yet to make the changes you so desire? The problem may not be in knowing what to do. Nor is it in understanding how to do it. The real issue may be in believing you are worth making the change; that you actually deserve to live a fulfilling and fruitful life.

Changing one's life can feel scary sometimes. Deciding to change takes you into the unknown. Even if you don't like your present life circumstances, at least it's "known". Strangely, you may even find comfort in your current discomfort, simply because it's familiar. That light at the end of the tunnel may be shining brightly, but you still have to walk through the darkness. At what point do you turn around? When the wind starts to holler and you can't find a wall to hold on to? Do you stop
when a "friend" discourages your idea for change? Do you give up when you have a temporary setback? When do you give up on yourself?

In order to transform your life, you'll need to give yourself permission to do so. Be willing to let go of what no longer supports you, and remain open to what does. Walking through your own internal, often emotional, fire is a turning point in developing your inner strength. You become capable by being capable. You become flexible by being flexible. You become strong by being strong. When the urge to turn back is at its strongest, that is exactly when you need to hold on and keep moving forward.

Take a look at your life right now. What areas are calling out for attention? Where could you be more satisfied, successful, and fulfilled? Whatever you have tried before, it does not matter. What is important is that you are willing to love yourself enough to make the change. It matters that you are willing to keep your goal or vision burning so strong that it outweighs any of the excuses that might normally trip you up.

Here are some tips for discovering your worth:

**WHAT ELSE IS TRUE?**

The stories we tell ourselves about life are often steeped in limitation and are one sided. For example, what do you tell yourself about losing weight? "I always yo-yo diet. I can't keep the weight off." Will repeating this inspire you and somehow make you feel like weight loss is possible? Probably not. Ask yourself, what else is true? You may recall that you really liked feeling healthy during the period you were eating healthy, or that you felt exhilarated when you frequently exercised. By noticing the little successes and reminding yourself of the other truths in the picture, you give yourself more room to grow and change.

**SHIFT YOUR PERCEPTION**

Pick a corner of any room and stand there. Look around. What do you see? What stands out? Now stand in another corner. Repeat the steps in all four corners. People tend to view their experience from the same perspective. When you physically move your body and pay attention to how your perception shifts, you are training your brain to find other ways of looking at life in general. Aren't you tired of seeing things in the same way and repeating "That's the way it is." Life is the way you are, and the way you perceive it to be. Find a new perspective!

**THE THREE MAGIC PHRASES**

"I love myself. I forgive myself. I set myself free." These three magic phrases apply in all situations. Do you ever say mean things to yourself? Do you have a roomful of regrets? Do you frequently feel angry or depressed? Whenever you disrespect yourself or someone else, there is hatred instead of love, anger instead of forgiveness, and you bind yourself regretfully to that experience. Holding onto past hurts doesn't help anything. Make amends, love yourself, forgive yourself and others, and set yourself free.

**USE YOUR AUTOMATIC TOOLS**

There are many tools and techniques to help you deal with life. Yet, in the heat of the moment, how do you remember to use them? Everyone knows that taking a deep breath in the middle of an argument will help to calm you. Likewise, eating a whole chocolate cake when you're frustrated isn't a good idea. Practice common sense tools and techniques, and whatever other tricks you have up your sleeve, so when the time comes and it's necessary to use them, it will be more automatic. When you take care of yourself in this way, both in practice and in the middle of it, you affirm your love for yourself.

"I'LL SEE IT WHEN I BELIEVE IT"

Do you frequently say "I'll believe it when I see it." Well, the truth is that until you believe it is possible, you won't see it. One hundred years ago, the majority of people would have thought it impossible to go to the moon or to have the Internet. Now, it is an accepted part of our everyday lives. Put your skepticism on hold. There is a whole world of possibilities just waiting for you.

**About the Author**

Vanessa Smith, MA, CLC, is a Wellness Coach and Intuitive who helps people have successful, fulfilling and vibrantly healthy lives. She believes everyone has untapped potential, and when they are ready to realize it, their lives will naturally bloom. Ready for more inspiration? Find Vanessa at www.LetYourLifeBloom.com and www.IntegrativeWellnessWorks.com

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Most people gain weight by having intimate dinners for two...alone.
Imagine your bad habits are like crocodiles. You give in to your food cravings – you're not nourishing yourself, you're feeding one of your crocodiles. You are late to everything and you don't get organized – that's another crocodile. You blame others for your problems. That's a third crocodile. Every time you choose that behavior, you feed another crocodile. And you know what happens when you feed something – it grows. No matter what your bad habit is, whether it's overeating, procrastinating or not listening to others, you can break free of the bad behavior and stop sabotaging your success. The key is to identify the reason for the bad habit. Granted, that's often easier said than done, but if you take the time to reflect on a situation, you can usually find an answer and force the "crocodiles" to retreat.

Every January, it's the same story. People lament over the extra pounds they accumulated during the holiday season. Perhaps a friend even blamed you for her excess weight gain because she ate all the holiday cookies you baked. But unless you were standing over your friend and force-feeding her cookies, you are not responsible. Your friend is responsible for continuously eating the cookies. While this is a simplistic example, it illustrates how easy it is to pass the buck and the blame onto someone else.

Suppose you know that you're late for everything – for meetings, for appointments, for work, etc. Your boss pulls you aside and informs you that if you're late for work one more time, you'll be fired. The next day, you're late for work and you lose your job. At that point you have to ask yourself, "Why do I run late?" Really think about why you do the specific behavior and be honest with yourself. Perhaps you like pushing the envelope. Or maybe you don't like your job so you're waiting for the last minute to get there. Or perhaps you try to pack so much into each minute of the day that no one could possibly keep your schedule on time.

Once you know why you have a certain bad habit, you can take the appropriate steps to correct it and recreate yourself. The following guidelines will help.

1. **Change your mindset.**
   If you can't change your situation, then you have to change your mindset. Stop feeding the "crocodile" negative thoughts about yourself. Suppose you discover that you're always late because you don't have the passion you once did for your job. And while you'd love to look for another one, that may not be feasible right now – you have to stay where you are because you need the paycheck. So instead of giving up and telling yourself, "I'm always late no matter what I do," say, "I am always punctual and make my appointments and deadlines on time." At first you may feel like you're just saying meaningless words and you may even feel silly. That's normal. That's also the part you have to get over. The point of changing your mindset is to change where your focus lies. Only then can you change yourself.

2. **Focus on what you like.**
   If you don't like some aspect of your life, that's normal. But if you are feeding that croc a steady diet of complaints about it, it will take over your life. Start focusing on the one thing you do like about your current situation, no matter how small it may be. To find the one kernel of happiness that can inspire you, ask yourself, "What keeps me going?" If you dislike one of your co-workers, do you like your clients? Your boss? The fact that you get a regular paycheck? Pinpoint that one thing. Focus on the money you earn, and what the paycheck gives you: Money to pay your bills, money to take a...
vacation, money to send the kids to school, etc. Think about the positive aspects of it. This will give you a reason to work on eliminating that bad habit. After all, if you don't learn to get along with your co-workers, you could lose your job and your money.

3. **See yourself in a new way.**
At least once per day for 10 minutes, visualize yourself free of the bad habit and watch that crocodile just start to fade away. If you're always late, see yourself getting to work on time and sitting at your desk comfortably. See yourself enjoying your job. Take it a step further and visualize yourself getting a raise or getting a promotion. The point is to not let your mind focus on where you are; take yourself to a different level. If you think visualization is a waste of time, consider the fact that major pro athletes do visualization exercises all the time to increase their performance. If visualization helps them shoot more baskets, throw more footballs, and make more holes in one, it can help you recreate yourself and break free of bad habits.

4. **Keep a journal.**
If you're sabotaging yourself with a persistent bad habit, keep a journal and find out why you're doing it. If you're always running late to important meetings, you should write down the circumstances that caused you to be late that day. Think of all the stress it causes you and everyone else when you are behind schedule. Every time you're late, that crocodile gets a little bigger. Perhaps you’ll write that you were late because you ran into a client at lunch and couldn't get back to the office on time. Or maybe you were late because you were finishing up an important phone call. As you journal, just keep track of the behaviors you are trying to correct or what sets you off rather than writing about everything that happened in your day. In other words, make your journal situational. Write down what led up to you displaying a certain habit and how you felt afterwards. You can then review your journal every couple of weeks and pinpoint patterns in your behavior. You can also distinguish between everyday life occurrences you have no control over versus situations you have power over. Once you see a pattern develop, such as you being late due to a lack of motivation, you have the ability to change – and the crocodile that’s been keeping you in a negative rut will begin to leave you alone.

5. **Give yourself time.**
Remember that it takes 30 days to ingrain a new habit into your daily routine. And if you're like most people, you'll likely fall off the wagon occasionally. Should that occur, don't be hard on yourself. Honor yourself and realize that slip-ups are a normal part of the process. Find out why you went off track and then continue forward. Also, once you hit that 30-day mark, don't stop the process. Keep doing the affirmations, the focusing process, the visualizations, and the journaling. If you don't, you'll revert to your old habits. Realize that you are recreating yourself in your mind, and that takes consistent, long-term effort. That's how to get rid of those crocodiles that are undermining your success.

It's time to change. Bad habits don't have to ruin your success anymore. No matter what your bad habit is, you can eliminate it and be the person you've always wanted to be. So start practicing these steps today. Before you know it, you'll be free of those self-sabotaging crocodiles and you will attain the success you've always known was possible.

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**About the Author**

Tamara Vaughn is a speaker and author of the upcoming book, *The PowerShift Principle: Empowering Yourself through Life’s Challenges.* She is the president of SuccessNRG, Inc., a transformational company designed to foster personal growth and self-empowerment. Her experience includes 17 years practicing law, and 10 years of life coaching, seminars and workshops. Tamara has weathered the storms of adversity, personally and professionally, and her expertise is helping others do the same. For more information, contact Tamara at 866-64-Success or visit www.SuccessNRG.com

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“Each 8-ounce serving contains the minimum daily requirement of vitamins, minerals and antidepressants.”
We all have the same basic needs that drive us.

Our basic human needs are not just desires or wants, but profound needs which serve as the basis of every choice we make. These needs are our constant and closest companions. They never stop driving us and they never go away. We cannot simply resolve a need – it will be back tomorrow or even in five minutes.

In order to fulfill these needs, we develop "vehicles" or "strategies," some of which are empowering to our lives, and others which may be fulfilling for the moment, but are quite destructive in the long term.
These six basic human needs are:

1. Certainty/Comfort
2. Uncertainty/Variety
3. Significance
4. Connection & Love
5. Growth
6. Contribution

For example, to meet need #3 (significance) some people tear others down, some people collect the most toys, and some contribute to society in unique and meaningful ways. The vehicles you select for fulfilling your needs will determine not only your fulfillment in the moment, but also your long term fulfillment, and whether or not you will truly grow and contribute in a significant way. A good means for measuring this is to think about your life's experiences and sort them into one of four classes.

A Class 1 experience is one that:

1. feels good
2. is good for you
3. is good for others
4. serves the greater good.

When we find these four criteria in an experience, we usually call it a "peak life experience."

A Class 2 experience is one that:

1. does not feel good
2. is good for you
3. is good for others
4. serves the greater good.

These are experiences that we often want to avoid in life but ultimately give us the most joy because they cause us to grow as human beings, and as we master them we become much more fulfilled.
A great secret to being fulfilled is to learn how to convert Class 2 experiences into Class 1 experiences, i.e., learning how to take things that don't feel good but are good for you, good for others, and serve the greater good, and make the process of doing them feel good as well. When you learn to love those things that improve your life and improve the lives of others, you develop a level of pride, strength, and confidence very few human beings ever experience.

A **Class 3** experience is one that:

1. feels good,
2. is not good for you
3. is not good for others
4. does not serve the greater good

These are those non-productive experiences that we all too often allow ourselves to indulge in. Drinking excess alcohol would fit into this category. Class 3 experiences provide for the immediate pleasure which, in the long term, destroys people's quality of life and gives them ultimate pain.

A **Class 4** experience is something that:

1. does not feel good
2. is not good for you
3. is not good for others
4. does not serve the greater good

Why would someone continuously indulge in a Class 4 experience? Smoking cigarettes the first time, for example, was not a pleasurable feeling. But people will often indulge in Class 4 experiences simply because of peer pressure or because of conditioning and old belief systems. You must free yourself of Class 4 experiences to be fulfilled.

We all have the same basic problems because we all have the same six human needs. Serious problems can arise when we choose destructive "vehicles" to try to satisfy those needs. We can choose to establish new patterns of fulfilling those needs that will move us rapidly towards life mastery.

**Our Six Basic Human Needs**

1. **Certainty/Comfort**

For most people, certainty equals survival. We all need a sense of certainty that we can avoid pain and gain pleasure. Some people try to achieve certainty by trying to control everything around them. This is usually a Class 3 experience i.e. it may feel good for the moment, but it's not for them, and it's not good for those around them, and it doesn't serve the greater good. On the other hand, using your internal courage or faith to achieve certainty would be a Class 1 vehicle.

When you're really using your faith, you feel good, what you're doing is good for you, and in a courageous and faith-filled state, you tend also to do things that serve the greater good. Here's the paradox though. When a person becomes totally certain, when things are completely predictable, when you satiate this need, you become b-o-r-e-d. So while we want certainty, we simultaneously want a certain amount of uncertainty and variety.

**Thought Questions:**

- What is necessary for you to feel certain?

**2. Uncertainty/Variety**

Everyone needs variety, a surprise, a challenge to feel fully alive and to experience fulfillment. With too much certainty we're bored. Likewise, with too much variety we become extremely fearful and concerned. We need a degree of certainty in our lives to experience the variety. There's a delicate balance between these two needs that must be struck for us to feel truly fulfilled. Some people choose to get variety by doing drugs or alcohol. Some people do it by watching movies. Others use stimulating conversation and opportunities to learn.

**Thought Questions:**

- What kind of variety/uncertainty do you experience on a regular basis?
- Are these experiences a Class 1, 2, 3 or 4?

**3. Significance**

We all have a need for significance, a sense that we are unique in some way, that we have special purpose and meaning for our lives. Again we try to meet this need through destructive vehicles - making ourselves unique by, for example, manufacturing a belief that we're better than everyone else.

Some people become unique by developing extreme problems that set them apart from others. Medical science has now proven that some people have developed the subconscious ability to make themselves ill in order to gain the caring attention of others. This would clearly be a Class 4 experience.
“Our basic human needs are not just desires or wants, but profound needs which serve as the basis of every choice we make.”

~Anthony Robbins

Some people develop uniqueness by earning more money, having more toys, going to school and achieving more degrees. Others may seek significance by dressing in a unique way, or having a certain sense of style. Or we can choose to live a life of extraordinary service. This is clearly a Class 1 experience, although it may feel like a Class 2 at times.

Just remember, we all need to feel unique. But, paradoxically, in order to feel unique, we have to separate ourselves. If we feel totally unique, we feel different and separate, and this violates our need for connection and love.

Thought Questions:
• How do you get significance?
• Does your method for meeting this need create a Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 experiences?

4. Connection & Love
This includes feeling connected with yourself as well with others with whom you can share your love. To meet this need, you can join a group or a club that has a positive purpose. Some individuals join a gang for negative purposes but they still achieve the feeling of connection. By aligning with your creator, and feeling like your being guided you can feel immediate connection.

Again, some people become ill in order to feel connected and loved. Some people will steal, do drugs, drink excess amounts of alcohol to feel a part of a group and a sense of connection. Others will perform at extraordinary levels in order to be accepted, loved, or connected to a high performance team. A simple thing to remember is, as with all other human needs, if you give consistently that which you wish to receive, you tend to get it back from others.

Thought Questions:
• In what ways do you meet this need?
• Are you choices and experiences a Class 1, 2, 3 or 4?

5. Growth

Growth equals life. On this planet, everything that is alive is either growing or dying. Growth is one of the two primary needs in life. It doesn't matter how much money you have, how many people acknowledge you, what you've achieved in life; unless you feel like you're growing, you will be unhappy and unfulfilled. Anything that you want to remain in your life – your money, your body, your relationship, your happiness or love – must be cultivated, developed, expanded.

Thought Questions:
• In what ways do you meet this need?
• In what ways can you meet this need to ensure a Class 1 experience?

6. Contribution

We all have a deep need to go beyond ourselves and to live a life that serves the greater good. It is in the moments that we do this that we experience true joy and fulfillment. Contribution to others requires you to go beyond your own needs and give to others. Most emotional problems and sources of pain disappear when you focus on serving someone other than yourself. Therefore, contribution is the human need that effectively regulates your other five needs: If you are focused on contribution, you have the certainty of being able to contribute (there is always a way); you have variety in the number of things that can go right and wrong (contribution is highly interactive); you have significance because the commitment to contribution is rare and is the sign of an extraordinary person; you have connection because there is a spiritual connection in helping others; and you have to experience growth because contribution requires you to go beyond your own needs.

Contributions are not only made to others; contributing to ourselves is a meaningful action as well, for we cannot give to others what we do not have. A balance of contribution to oneself and others, especially unselfish contribution, is the ultimate secret to the joy that so many people wish to have in their lives.

Thought Questions:
• In what ways do you meet this need?
• In what ways can you meet this need to ensure a Class 1 experience?

Why We Do What We Do

When we perceive that an action will meet many of our needs, we are driven to take that action.

If there's anything that you love to do (and that you could do for hours), it's because you get a tremendous amount of certainty, variety, significance, connection, growth, and/or contribution from this.

Likewise, if there's something you avoid doing or are constantly putting off, it's because your current strategy, or way of approaching the task, causes you to feel a lack of certainty that it will be pleasurable (maybe you actually have a sense of certainty that it will be painful) or you don't believe it meets any of your other needs.

We can make anything we do meet all six of our needs if we simply change our perception of the task (i.e. change what we notice, appreciate or believe about the action) or our strategy (i.e. change how we approach getting the job done).

By understanding what our needs are, and how they work, we can set ourselves up for lasting fulfillment in life.

Success and happiness can be found by meeting these six human needs. The tricky part is meeting these oftentimes conflicting needs in ways that are constructive, proactive and empowering. 

About the Author

What began as a young person's desire to help individuals transform the quality of their lives has grown into Robbins' lifelong crusade as he is called on by leaders from every walk of life – presidents, political leaders, advocates for humanity, CEOs of multinational corporations, psychologists, peak performance athletes, world-class entertainers, teachers and parents. A recognized authority on the psychology of leadership, negotiations, organizational turnaround and peak performance, he has been honored consistently for his strategic intellect and humanitarian endeavors. Robbins has directly impacted the lives of more than 50 million people from over 100 countries with his best-selling books, multimedia and health products, public speaking engagements and live events. To receive a free coaching strategy session call 888-732-4340 or for a free product download visit www.TonyRobbins.com.

Robbins is also a committed philanthropist. His non-profit Anthony Robbins Foundation provides assistance to the homeless, elderly and inner-city youth, and feeds more than two million people in countries throughout the world every year through its international holiday "Basket Brigade." Please visit www.AnthonyRobbinsFoundation.org.
**YOUR ASSIGNMENT 1**

What's something you **LOVE** to do? Something you feel compelled to do? Something that's effortless and totally fulfilling? Something you could do 24hrs per day? Write it down then complete this Human Needs Analysis #1 to see why you feel that way about it.

**Activity/Behavior:**

How would I rate (0-10) the level of fulfillment this offers me for this need? How specifically does this meet or fail to meet my need?

**Certainty/Comfort** □ Yes □ No  
Ability to Avoid Pain (i.e., decrease stress) and gain pleasure; security, survival

**Uncertainty/Variety** □ Yes □ No  
Surprise, Diversity, Difference, Challenge, Excitement

**Significance** □ Yes □ No  
Importance, Uniqueness, Being Needed, Having Purpose or Meaning

**Connection/Love** □ Yes □ No  
Bonding, Oneness, Sharing Intimacy, Feeling a Part of Unity

**Growth** □ Yes □ No  
Learning, Changing, Expanding, Stretching, Improving

**Contribution** □ Yes □ No  
Giving, Helping, Serving, Nurturing, Making a Difference

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**YOUR ASSIGNMENT 2**

What's something you **HATE** to do? Something you never get done because you hate it so much? Write it down then use this Human Needs Analysis #2 to see why you feel that way about it.

**Activity/Behavior:**

How would I rate (0-10) the level of fulfillment this offers me for this need?

**Certainty/Comfort** □ Yes □ No  
Ability to Avoid Pain (i.e., decrease stress) and gain pleasure; security, survival

**Uncertainty/Variety** □ Yes □ No  
Surprise, Diversity, Difference, Challenge, Excitement

**Significance** □ Yes □ No  
Importance, Uniqueness, Being Needed, Having Purpose or Meaning

**Connection/Love** □ Yes □ No  
Bonding, Oneness, Sharing Intimacy, Feeling a Part of Unity

**Growth** □ Yes □ No  
Learning, Changing, Expanding, Stretching, Improving

**Contribution** □ Yes □ No  
Giving, Helping, Serving, Nurturing, Making a Difference

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**YOUR ASSIGNMENT 3**

Now choose something you don’t like to do, something that doesn’t feel good, but you know is good for you and others, and serves the greater good. Turn this ‘Class 2’ Experience into a ‘Class 1’ experience by asking yourself, what could I choose to believe about this, or how could I approach this differently, that will make it fulfill each of my six human needs at the highest possible level? Write down your answers in a journal as they come to you. Then go out and apply them immediately.

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**GBONKERISM**

Strength is the capacity to break a chocolate bar into four pieces with your bare hands - and then eat just one of the pieces.

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“One day a week, I allow myself to eat anything I want. The rest of the week, I still eat anything I want, but it’s not allowed.”
Being able to change with ease is a very useful human quality. No matter what your past has been like, you have the ability to change your future. Don’t limit yourself because of what others tell you or because of your past experience.

Motivation is vital. If you have had a very unpleasant past, your motivation to change will be very powerful, although you may have to be patient. It’s like stopping a big ship that is going full-speed ahead; it has to finish going that last mile. Then it has to turn around, and get up steam to go the other way. It can certainly be done; it just isn’t immediate. Once you are going in the right direction, everything happens faster. The trick to change is to NOT dwell on the fact that the ship hasn’t already changed direction, but to trust that it will soon. Many people sabotage their initial choices by giving up too soon, and failing to switch the basic internal pattern of expecting things to change immediately.

Don’t worry right now about how you’ll get the things that you want. They will manifest. The Universe figures that out. It’s up to you to seize the opportunities that will present themselves. Don’t worry about making a mistake in deciding what you want. You can always change your mind as things unfold. Ok, lets go!

Be Clear
The first step is to decide how you want to change. How do you want your future to unfold? Go to basics. Do you want to be thin, or do you want to be healthier? Do you want to be more attractive to others, or do you want to like your body better? Those are four different things. State what you want clearly, without comparisons. How healthy? How much more attractive? To make the commitment full-heartedly (instead of half-heartedly), it’s best to write down what you want. State it as clearly and succinctly as you can, using positive phraseology – no comparatives, no negatives. Write it in an attractive way, because you are going to put it where you see it on a very regular basis, and you want to feel pleased every time you look at it.

Commit The second step is to commit to what you want without reservation. When you are satisfied with what you have, write: “I – (then your full name) – now commit to doing whatever I need to do in order to allow this desire to manifest.” Sign and date it. Replace it with an updated version whenever you need, as things change. Recognize that it is often necessary to give something up in order to move on to something new. You can change your mind if you find that the risk of giving something up is too frightening, but if you are willing to let go of what is not serving you any more, then it makes room for new and exciting things that will serve you.

Imagine The third step is to let yourself imagine how you will feel when you have this thing that you want, without allowing questions or doubts to creep in. Give your imagination free rein. Let yourself be there. Do this for as long as you are able, every day. At first one second may be all you can manage without the doubts coming up. Keep practicing. Let the feeling permeate your body, let yourself become aware of the feeling fully throughout your body. Let yourself shiver with delight, jump with joy. Don’t censor the way your body reflects the joy of having what you want.

Pay Attention The fourth step is to pay attention. As you go about your life, you will begin to notice unusual things presenting themselves. They may appear to be nothing to do with what you want, but don’t ignore them. You may notice things you never saw before, you may find yourself thinking unusual thoughts, or having sensations and feelings that are odd to you. Practice thinking and doing things that are new and different. You may be in the habit of absenting yourself from your life. Now you have to be present. You must start from this present moment, accepting the way

So You’re Ready to Change?
Let’s Go!

By Mikaya Heart
things are now, however much you dislike it. Remember, you are changing it. It won’t always be like this. But you can’t go anywhere if you don’t start from where you are now. Be careful with positive affirmations. Don’t tell yourself, “Everyone finds me attractive,” when you really don’t believe that. All that happens then is you throw yourself into conflict and probably get sick. Say instead, “I have started the process of change so that people will find me attractive.” When you really do believe the process of change has begun, say, “I am beginning to believe that people find me attractive.” Then it turns into, “Some people find me attractive.” Finally it becomes, “People find me attractive.” Choose the words that feel right to you.

Create New Habits

The fifth step is to change your habits of thinking, feeling, acting, and reacting. You must learn to see the glass as half full, not half empty. You may have to correct the habit of negativity many times every day at first. Be patient with yourself. You are learning to be motivated by trust. Most people in our world are motivated by fear, and that fosters the experience of fear. You want to foster the experience of trust. Feelings tend to be more pervasive than thoughts. The above practices may bring up a lot of old stuck feelings from the past: fear, sadness, pain, and lack of self-worth. You can push those feelings away for a while, but in the long run it will suck a lot of energy and will make you very tense and stressed. You may need to give yourself some safe space every day to feel difficult feelings, with the intention of letting them pass.

Having said you can manifest anything, I have one caution. Don’t try to change anyone else. It doesn’t work and it will make you very frustrated. Do you want to manifest a relationship with another person? Do you want to be loved? Do things that make you feel loving. Develop the experience of giving love as well as receiving. That cycle of giving and receiving is essential.

It takes courage to make changes, since the unknown is always a little risky. That point when the ship has stopped, but hasn’t quite turned around yet, can be uncomfortable. When you feel discouraged or scared, go back to the sensation of desiring that thing. How much do you want this change? That feeling of desire recharges your system. Take a realistic look at what you have to lose by trying, and then ask yourself if it’s worth it. Perhaps you need some external support. If you don’t personally know other people who will support you rather than undermine you (and, sadly, there are people in the world who will undermine you), then at least know that you are not alone in doing this work. In this day and age, millions of people are taking the steps to make positive changes in their lives. And we’re all rooting for each other.

About the Author

Mikaya Heart coaches people in the art of being human. As well as numerous articles and short stories, she has written books on subjects as varied as shamanism, lesbianism, and orgasm. Her most recent book, My Sweet Wild Dance, is about daring to be different. See www.mikayaheart.org

Visualization

What you see is what you'll get. Chances are there is something you want, something you want to be, something you want to do, or something you want to have. You can have it, be it and do it; once you see it.

Visualization is the process of creating pictures in your mind. You already use visualization everyday. You park your car in a parking lot and you usually remember the mental image that you created of it’s location, or someone mentions “mom” and a mental image of mom pops in your mind.

It’s been reported that before Arnold Schwarzenegger had achieved his fitness goals, he hired an artist to draw his body with huge muscle mass. He said that he knew he could achieve what he could conceive.

Your subconscious mind stores and retrieves your past experiences, relationships, successes and all other information, as mental pictures. If you give it a clear mental picture of what you want, it’ll work overtime to help you get it. Remember, your subconscious mind will always make sure you get exactly what it understood you asked for. Draw a very specific and clear picture in your mind of what you want.

To use visualization to achieve your goals:

1. Choose your goal. Nothing is impossible.
2. Visualize exactly what you want in detail. Not just what it looks like, but how it smells, tastes, sounds, and even how you feel when you get it. This requires detail!
3. Repeat the visualization everyday.
4. Believe with every fiber of your being that you will achieve it.
5. When you begin to notice that you’re subconsciously taking steps toward your goal, move it along faster by taking conscious steps as well.

Everything starts just with a thought. Look around you. Someone visualized everything you see, before it was created. Their visualization became a reality. Yours can too!
So, your life isn't what you thought it would be? Who would have guessed that you would be struggling to lose weight, or that you would find yourself feeling tired and bored? Did you ever envision that you would have health problems, or that you'd be wearing the size clothes hanging in your closet? Would you have ever believed, in your happily-ever-after dream world, that you'd be living a life without passion, or struggling to find “normal?”

The reality is that most of us are not living the life of our dreams. But why? We are intelligent people! There are many who repeatedly ask themselves, "How did I get here?" and then quickly answer, "It's not my fault." That quick answer keeps us stuck where we are.

It is true, that the design of your life, as it is right now, may not be what you consciously chose, or even entirely all of your doing. There are many unfortunate life events that are powerful enough to alter our destiny – but only if we let them!

Each day we make decisions. Each night we go to bed and wake up the next day with the outcome of those decisions.

Wake up and smell the roses. Come out of the woods. Stop grieving and look in the mirror. As an adult, you've always had the power of choice. Somewhere in the chain of your life's events, you made choices, good or bad, right or wrong, but you're the one who decided. No matter what hand life dealt you, and while you certainly didn't choose for some of the bad stuff to happen to you, you have always had a choice as to how you respond to it, how you play the cards you're dealt, and what you make of the life you have.

Did you learn from your life experiences, or do you now just whine about them? Do you practice forgiveness or do you wallow in blame and rage? Do you use unfortunate life events as a stepping stone, or as an excuse? Bury that blame and reject that rage! You have the power of choice. You have the power to redesign your life any way you want it to be!

Forgive Yourself and Others. Work through the negative emotions you feel about your life right now. It's natural to be angry with yourself, or your parents, or someone else, about what you feel should have or could have been done differently. Let go of "coulda, woulda, shoulda" and move on. This is where you are today.

Cash Your Reality Check. Face the truth: If you had made just one choice differently, odds are good that you'd be in a different place right now. Likewise, if you make different choices today, you'll be in a dif-
different place a year from now. You are the one in control.

**Believe You Can Change.** Consider this: Every day, you make the decision to be whoever you want to be. You may feel stuck at a job you hate, or unable to beat an addiction, or trapped in an unhealthy relationship, but you are only fooling yourself. If you believe you are stuck, then you are stuck. If you believe you are free to choose, then you are free to choose.

**Where You Are Now?** Assess where you are in life today. Is there something specific causing you to feel restless, helpless, or unimportant? Is there something missing from your life, or is there something you remove? What exactly is the source of your discontent? Is it your relationships, your job, your home, your roles, your health, your path or your mindset?

**Be Certain.** Before you pack your partner's suitcases, or tell your boss to take your job and shove it, be certain that you truly desire, and are ready for, changes in certain areas of your life. Many others have made changes, only to find the grass really isn't greener on the other side.

**Define What You Want.** The biggest challenge is in truly knowing what you want. Most people don't know themselves well enough to know what they want. Write down all the things you would like to be, do and have. Write everything down, however crazy it may seem. What did you enjoy before you were married? Did you sacrifice any dreams, ambitions or hobbies? Imagine that you are 100 years old and looking back over your life. What memories would you like to have? Take a moment to take in your surroundings, your job, your home, and your future. Ask yourself: Is this really me?

**Make a Plan.** You are at point A. Your ideal life is at point B. What path should you take to get there? Make note of what is stopping you from being, doing and having what you want. Be very detailed. Then set out to find a solution for each obstacle. Ask friends and family for ideas and help.

**Take Action.** You're not superman, or superwoman. Don't try to move from your present life into a totally different life in a single leap. Take baby steps. Start making small changes and taking small actions toward your ideal life every day. Change is a daily decision.

**Are We There Yet?** While you're in the process of change, keep living today. Don't wait until "tomorrow" to be happy. Be happy right now. If you want to be a singer, sing today.

**Do It all Again.** Be open and flexible to reinventing your life ten times if need be. You may need to try on many hats before you discover what makes you feel right with the world.

**EVALUATE YOUR Yourself**

Understanding and recognizing your strengths opens worlds of possibilities to you. Having an understanding of yourself, of who you are, your abilities, your weaknesses, your reactions, your feelings, your likes and dislikes is an important self-evaluation and an important tool. Amazingly, most people don't truly know themselves. Do you? Start today by making a list of your abilities, and continue from there.
Many people live in a state of distress and unhappiness, suffering from a host of mental health problems. According to The National Institute on Mental Health, approximately 40 million American over age 18, or about 18% of people in this age group in a given year, have an anxiety disorder. Anxiety prevents us from being happy, can cause physical ailments, and keeps us from taking healthy risks that may improve the quality of our lives.

Another report from the National Institute of Mental Health states that nearly 18.8 million Americans over the age of 18 suffer from major depression. Suicide, closely linked to depression, is the third leading cause of death in people ages 10 to 24.

The Health Resource Network found that 75% of the general population experiences at least "some stress" every two weeks. Half of those experience moderate or high levels of stress during the same two-week period. Millions of Americans suffer from unhealthy levels of stress at work.

According to CNN, sleep problems are reaching epidemic proportions, estimated to be the #1 health related problem in America. Lack of sleep adversely affects mood, school and job performance.

What the heck is going on . . . and how on earth do we begin to heal? Try putting one foot in front of the other!

Exercise can help alleviate anxiety, depression, stress and sleep deprivation because of the changes that occur in brain chemistry. When you work out, the brain’s neurotransmitters send out signals to all parts of the body and play an integral role in exercise’s healing power. The three neurotransmitters that are affected mostly by exercise are endorphins, serotonin, and norepinephrine.

Endorphins can both relieve pain and create feelings of euphoria, commonly know as a “runners high.” It can lower blood pressure and may protect against Parkinson’s disease.

Serotonin is the neurotransmitter that adjusts mood, sleep and appetite. Low levels of serotonin have been deemed to be the cause of clinical depression. Studies have shown that exercise increases the serotonin in the brain much like the new generation of anti-depressants such as Prozac, Paxil and Celexa, but without the side effects of those drugs. Matter of fact, two studies at Duke University indicate that exercise was as effective as the anti-depressants for subjects with major depressive disorder.

Norepinephrine is the neurotransmitter that is involved in our body’s stress response. Exercise helps train the body to become familiar with experiencing stress.

So, exercise brings a sense of euphoria, improved mood and the increased ability to face stress. Amazing changes happen in the brain’s neurotransmitters when exercising. A sense of calmness and self-confidence is created; making it possible to face and work through our emotional pain. It may have been impossible to deal with emotional pain while you were sedentary because looking at your angst was too scary.

You can begin this process by creating an emotional pain question before you begin exercising such as “Why do I feel so anxious?” “How do I feel about the breakup with my boyfriend?” “How do I feel about the recent death of my mother?” Ponder this question while you are working out. You can walk, run, bike, skate or do any other aerobic exercise for as little as fifteen minutes; that is all the time it will take for endorphins to kick in. When you have completed your work out; write down your thoughts and feelings in journal form.

With exercise, you’ll soon discover that you have a greater understanding of what is troubling you and a sense that some emotional pain has been released. Go grab those sneakers and start today!

About the Author

Bob Livingstone, LCSW is the author of the critically acclaimed Body Mind Soul Solution: Healing Emotional Pain through Exercise. For more information, click on www.boblivingstone.com or email him at bobl@boblivingstone.com
As emotional beings, a lot of our behavior is driven by how we feel and what we feel like doing. Anything in life can be accomplished if we truly want it bad enough. Let’s say we want to start a business -- we jump in with passion and drive and give it all we got. With that passionate attitude, we’re sure to get headed in the right direction. Now let’s look at ways we can apply this to create a healthier mindset to help us reach our health and fitness goals.

**Create a strong enough “why” to exercise.**

Any thing that we do in life, we do for a reason or a desired final outcome. It is so important to have a strong desire or reason why you should workout and lead a healthy lifestyle. Grab a small notebook or sheet of paper and start listing all the benefits you will derive if you stuck to a healthy lifestyle and exercise regime. For example, look great in my new black dress, have more energy in the evenings and lower my cholesterol level. When your motivation starts to waiver, pull out your list and rev yourself up to take the necessary actions.

**Get support from others.**

Enlist the help of supportive friends. “Supportive” being the key word. Many friends and family can sub-consciously undermine our efforts for positive change as it can highlight weaknesses in their own life and make them feel like you are leaving them behind. Be specific when you ask for help. Ask them to help you by not offering you treats or “junk” foods unnecessarily.

**Use the power of awareness.**

Allow yourself to think and just be in the moment. Focus on the sensations of working your body or the taste and flavors of food while eating.

**Commitment for success.**

Draw a line in the sand and commit to sticking to a plan of action. When you are committed, something like the weather doesn’t stop you from following through.

**Analyze for success.**

Stop and analyze your behaviors and actions. Ask yourself why you may have stuck to a workout plan in the past. Was it because you had someone to be accountable to? Was it because you got really sick and tired of feeling that way? Whatever the reasons, aim to recreate that situation or condition and see if that helps you succeed again at your plan.

**Enjoy your treats.**

Deprivation will always lead to a binge. When we deprive ourselves of our favorite foods, we set up an unrealistic situation. Instead choose a day of the week you can have this treat. Think about portion sizes and enjoy the treat while you have it. Eat in pure awareness and satisfy the urge for another week. Deprivation is always the wrong way to go about it!

**Reward yourself.**

This is a must. Slot out on a calendar a 90 day period and incrementally put in rewards such as going to the movies, getting a massage or just relaxing. Set the conditions for being able to redeem these rewards, such as you must have completed at least 4 workouts per week for 4 weeks to get the reward at the 4 week mark.

Just these handfuls of tips can be enough for you to start to make a true lifestyle out of eating well and consistently exercising. Remember if you aren’t enjoying your workout, change it. If you don’t like certain foods, change your menu plan. Aim to enjoy the process, think about why you are doing it and seek the support of those around you so you can create the very achievable, well-being feeling.

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**About the Author**

Nalisha Patel is an internationally recognized Health & Fitness expert on Psychology based health & fitness training. She is author of several Health & Fitness books, including *Think and Grow Slim* and sought out health and fitness expert for leading magazines. FREE report download: 49 Secrets to Get the Body You Desire in 12 weeks at www.healthmasteryonline.com
Do you feel emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy on a daily basis? When we think of good health, we generally define it to be the absence of illness or injury. But it’s much more than that. Good health is the condition of bodily, spiritual, and social well-being. How is your health nowadays?

We work in brick and mortar structures, and then we go home to care for families, sometimes so tired we are almost unable to function; and we increasingly lose our connection with any sense of our place in the universe. How do we reclaim our life and begin to feel that we are important in the overall scheme of things? One way is to create our own sanctuary/sacred space.

Creating our own sacred space restores our peace of mind and enables us to stand back from the turmoil in our lives in order to provide a place where we can reconnect with our sense of self and reclaim our power. Our soul longs for us to love, accept, and provide hospitality to ourselves. Spirituality is more than a psychological and emotional need: it is an inherent biological need, as our energy, our spirit, and our personal power is all one and the same force. We need daily sanctuary as our heart and soul depends on it. When we give ourselves the gift of sacred time in a special place, we feed our spirit.

Creating Sacred Space in your Home, Workplace, and Garden

The first consideration in creating a sacred space in your home, workplace, or garden is defining the purpose in doing so. Some of the questions for consideration include:

1. What is it that you want your sacred space to provide for you?
2. Where will your sanctuary be located?
3. What feelings do you want?
4. What attracts you to your sanctuary?
5. What features do you want?
6. What colors do you want?
7. What sounds do you want?

Ideas and Options for Creating Sacred Space

In your place of sanctuary, some of the items you could include are:

- Candles – you can use candles to provide color, and when burning, provide a point of focus for meditation. Scented candles can add a touch of fragrance to your environment.
Plants – your plants will require care, and not only will make the air more healthy, but will encourage you to attend to your place of sanctuary. Plants can also be used to enhance particular colors and fragrances you wish to add to your well-being.

Water – adding desktop water fountains to your place of sacredness will not only provide the soothing sounds of water, but will also block out other noises in your environment.

Music – music feeds the soul. Use music you like, or calming sounds of nature, or instrumental music, to provide a place of soothing for your soul.

Aquariums – live fish and the sounds of water provide healing energy for your sacred space. In the Chinese culture, live fish are thought to be ‘good energy.’

Rocks and stones – are considered in many cultures to be sacred. Use in your place of sanctuary and when you are tired or stressed-out, rearrange your ‘rock garden.’

Walls – walls can be used to act as vision boards, where you can post favorite pictures, quotes, ideas, or goals.

Spend at least 10 minutes a day (20 is better) in refreshing and renewing your spiritual self. Finally, in creating your sacred space, remember you are unique. There will never be anyone on the planet like you and you have a right to spend time caring for yourself. Your uniqueness is the gift to the rest of us.

About the Author

Robyn Sabes is a research writer and staff writer for Going Bonkers. Copyright Going Bonkers Magazine. All rights reserved.

7 Reasons You're Still Hungry

Do you sometimes feel ravenous, even though you just polished off a tasty lunch, a full dinner, or a midnight snack? Some food ingredients can trick our bodies into not recognizing when we’re full, causing “rebound hunger.” But these simple tweaks from the authors of The New American Diet can help quiet your cravings.

Craving culprit: YOU DRINK TOO MUCH SODA.

Sodas, iced teas, and other sweetened beverages are our biggest source of high-fructose corn syrup. New research from the University of California at San Francisco indicates that fructose can trick our brains into craving more food, even when we’re full. It works by impeding the body’s ability to use leptin, the “satiation hormone” that tells us when we’ve had enough to eat.

Craving culprit: YOUR DINNER CAME OUT OF A CAN.

Many canned foods are high in the chemical bisphenol-A, or BPA, which the Food and Drug Administration recently stated was a chemical “of some concern.” Exposure to BPA can cause abnormal surges in leptin that, according to Harvard University researchers, leads to food cravings and obesity.

Craving culprit: YOUR BREAKFAST WASN’T BIG ENOUGH.

After following 6,764 healthy people for almost four years, researchers found that those who ate just 300 calories for breakfast gained almost twice as much weight as those who ate 500 calories or more for breakfast. The reason: Eating a big breakfast makes for smaller rises in blood sugar and insulin throughout the day, meaning fewer sudden food cravings.

Craving culprit: YOU SKIPPED THE SALAD.

Most Americans don’t eat enough leafy greens, which are rich in the essential B-vitamin folate and help protect against depression, fatigue, and weight gain. In one study, dieters with the highest levels of folate in their bodies lost 8.5 times as much weight as those with the lowest levels. Leafy greens are also high in vitamin K, another insulin-regulating nutrient that helps quash cravings. Best sources: Romaine lettuce, spinach, collard greens, radicchio.

Craving culprit: YOU DON’T STOP FOR TEA TIME.

According to a study in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition, people who drank one cup of black tea after eating high-carb foods decreased their blood-sugar levels by 10 percent for 2.5 hours after the meal, which means they stayed full longer and had fewer food cravings. Researchers credit the polyphenolic compounds in black tea for suppressing rebound hunger.

Craving culprit: YOU’RE NOT STAYING FLUID.

Dehydration often mimics the feeling of hunger. If you’ve just eaten and still feel hungry, drink a glass of water before eating more, and see if your desires don’t diminish.

Craving culprit: YOU’RE BORED.

Researchers at Flinders University in Australia found that visual distractions can help curb cravings. To test yourself, envision a huge, sizzling steak. If you’re truly hungry, the steak will seem appealing. But if that doesn’t seem tempting, chances are you’re in need of a distraction, not another meal.
Imagine this: no dieting or exercising to lose weight. What if everything we’ve been told by medical experts for more than 60 years was wrong? What if the truth on how to lose weight – especially from the waistline – has nothing to do with eating less or exercising more?

Belly Fat Cure

How to Transform Your Health, Energy, and Waistline.

Jorge Cruise
Belly Fat Breakthrough

What is the most important thing you can do to improve your health and feel more empowered instantly? Lose belly fat. Nothing is as essential in changing how attractive you look. Nothing. Study after study has confirmed that the less belly fat you have, the more attractive you will look. But that’s just the bonus. . .

When you lose belly fat, the number one physical benefit you will experience almost immediately is increased energy. Belly fat has proven in studies to cause fatigue – a higher waist circumference can really zap your energy and your health.

Belly fat puts you at risk for many health problems. It’s directly connected to three of the biggest killers: heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. This scary link is supported by medical experts from the Mayo Clinic and Harvard University. Belly fat has also been linked to additional health conditions such as chronic fatigue, sexual dysfunction, adrenal burnout, sleep apnea, premature aging, and immune disorders. Imagine erasing your concerns and fears of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, or cancer by simply losing belly fat. Your life will absolutely be renewed.

The Critical Key

Now that you know what belly fat does to your body, you’re probably ready to discover how to get rid of it.

There is only one critical key to getting rid of belly fat forever, and that is to lower insulin, the hormone that pushes fat into fat cells. You see, you can’t get fat or stay overweight without insulin. This is a biological
The Carb Swap Secret

My Carb Swap System is my trademarked eating method that guarantees that you will automatically steer clear of foods full of the sweeteners and processed carbohydrates that chronically keep insulin levels high and belly fat present. The secret to the Carb Swap System is that it will ensure that you always hit what I have determined to be the magical sugar and carb values, or S/C Value, each day. Write these two numbers down, since they’re what all my work has revealed, and they will transform your body forever: 15/6. This means that each day your total eating goal needs to be 15 grams of sugar and 6 servings of carbohydrates (120 grams). This combination is called your daily S/C Value.

I suggest that you learn how to apply the S/C value to all of the foods you want to eat. This will allow you to calculate the S/C Value for any food you love and know if it’s a “Belly Good” or a “Belly Bad” item. Having this understanding will help you make this plan a lifestyle. Here’s how the S/C Value works; it’s as simple as A, B, C:

A. Know your sugar. The first number (the “S”) is the amount of sugar in any food represented in grams. Anything under .5 grams is not counted.

B. Know your carbs. The second number (the “C”) is the amount of carbohydrates in any food represented in servings: 5 to 20 grams is 1 serving; 21 to 40 grams is 2 servings; 41 to 60 grams is 3 servings. Anything under 5 grams is not counted. It’s very important to be exact. For example, if you eat something that has 21 carbohydrate grams, you can’t count it as “1” carb serving – it’s “2” carb servings.

C. Track it. There is a tracker available in my book, or create your own. Cross off one sugar box per gram consumed and one carbohydrate box per serving consumed. Once you’ve checked off all of your boxes, you’ve reached your daily limit.

Let’s look at an example. Let’s say you want to eat chips. According to their food label, one serving is about 14 chips. That one serving has zero sugars, and 17 grams of carbs. That means your S/C value of these chips is a 0/1 (zero sugar, 1 serving of carb).
cantly drive up your insulin level (which is why we don’t track them on this plan). Sugar and processed carbs, on the other hand, cause a rapid and dramatic increase in insulin levels, which directly causes your body to store fat.

Does this mean you can eat a whole cow or ten sticks of butter because it won’t trigger insulin production? No. You need to use common sense – but the good news is that proteins and fats satiate your hunger fast, so it’s almost impossible to over eat them. A great pick for proteins are lean meats, and my top picks for fats are those that come from egg yolks, raw butter, extra-virgin olive oil, flax oil, or fish oil – and never dangerous hydrogenated oils. I hope that by now you can see how important the hormone insulin is to regulating fat accumulation. When you limit your carbs and your sugar, you’ll ensure that you keep your insulin response low. Plus, the great news is that once you begin to lose belly fat, you will actually improve your body’s response to insulin and will have perfectly controlled fat regulation.

Bottom line: to lose belly fat, you must keep your insulin levels low. Since sugar and carbs have the biggest impact on insulin, we only track sugar and carbs on the Belly Fat Cure – it’s that simple, and it’s the only way you’ll lose weight.

Like my mentor and good friend, Gary Taubes, author of the groundbreaking Good Calories, Bad Calories, put it: “The only non-pharmaceutical remedy [to obesity] is to restrict or remove the cause – sugar and refined carbohydrates.”

**Start Today**

With the Belly Fat Cure, you’ll regain control of your confidence, your energy, and the most important part of your life: your health. The brand-new vitality you feel will empower you in every area. You’ll reacquaint yourself with a level of confidence and security that will carry over into all areas of your life. Plus, you’ll achieve a level of health that will ensure you end fatigue forever. You’ll show your kids and loved ones how amazing living a healthy life can look and feel. Additionally, your risk of premature death will be significantly decreased, as will the threat of several diseases. And, of course, you’ll lose up to four to nine pounds of belly fat a week. Get started right now!

**Editors Note:** This article, in part, is an excerpt from the #1 New York Times best selling book, The Belly Fat Cure by Jorge Cruise, which includes dozens of BFC approved recipes. It is published by Hay House, Inc. and available at all bookstores or online at: www.hayhouse.com. The information given here is designed to help you make informed decisions about your body and health, and it is not intended to replace appropriate or necessary medical care.

**About the Author**

Jorge Cruise is recognized as America’s leading weight loss expert. He is the author of four consecutive New York Times best-selling series, with more than five million books in print in over 15 languages. He has appeared on Oprah, Regis and Kelly, The View, Good Morning America, The Today Show, Dateline NBC, and CNN. Visit The Belly Fat Cure website to join Jorge’s FREE e-mail club and receive your free Belly Good Menu™, as well as the latest tips for fast, healthy weight loss.
Hold your applause when your friend tells you he’s dropped three pants sizes. The super-sized weight loss may be temporary. Nearly all weight strugglers have dropped pounds at sometime in their lives, but then gained them back. One reason is that they dare to cross the “pizza line.”

The pizza line is no threat to the naturally thin, but to those of us who sport the fat gene, or comfort ourselves with carbs, it’s a culinary landmine. For us, there’s life on the pizza side and life beyond. The pizza side has a closet crammed with ill-fitting clothes, canceled plans, and adjusted dreams. From our point of view, the other side has a first-class, no-restrictions ticket to anywhere this side of the stars. The trick is to surround the pizza line with red flags and never, never, never, never cross over.

Almost four years ago, I cut my weight in half, from 297 to 145, and lots of people have asked how I made the transformation, and how I’ve kept the weight off. I tell them that I haven’t had pizza in four years. I haven’t had a cookie. I’ve had one bite-sized Milky Way and promptly vowed never to transgress again. People say: “But you can find healthy pizza versions with veggies and whole wheat crusts, and two large slices could be a filling 500-calorie meal. What’s wrong with that?”

For me, the answer was easy. Sure, pizza can be healthy, but to me, pizza represents an eating style that once nearly killed me. I didn't eat one or two slices. I ate an entire extra large pizza. I didn't eat whole wheat cheese pizza. I ate meat-lover’s extra-cheese versions.

I had to draw a fitness line and promise myself that I’d never cross it. If I have just one slice of "healthy" pizza this week, I’ve official put pizza back in my diet. Next week, it will be easier to have one slice of regular pizza with the works. Then why not two slices of regular pizza the following week?

I have the same rule about cookies. If I cross the cookie line by eating a super healthy no-fat, no-sugar cookie, I've still eaten a cookie. And I've opened the door to other cookie versions.

I know that lots of people say they must have one piece of chocolate a week or they’ll feel deprived. Good for them, but that’s not what works for me. Know what makes me feel deprived? Not fitting into my skinny jeans.

Healthy, no-fat, sugar-free versions of fattening foods would pull me over a line I can’t afford to cross. Once over the line, these foods would tell me that some versions of enemy foods were okay. It would be the first step back to old eating habits.

Are there lines you need to draw in your fitness plan? Foods you can never eat, regardless of how stripped-down the version? To stay fit forever, draw the line and tell yourself you’ll never cross them. Sound tough? It is. But it’s not as tough as a lifetime of obesity.

About the Author

Taylor LeBaron is the author of Cutting Myself in Half: 150 Pounds Lost, One Byte at a Time (HCI Books, Jan. 2010). His original fitness plan is high-adrenalin, safe, effective, fun, and – most of all – a forever lifestyle.

Respect is what we owe; love is what we give.
What does smoking have to do with weight loss? Everything!

If you're like most smokers, you know that smoking is really bad for you. It increases your risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis – diseases that cause the greatest number of deaths. You don't want to end up in a wheelchair and hooked to an oxygen tank. You're tired of stinky clothes, hair and breath. Perhaps you worry that your kids will follow your bad example and start smoking cigarettes. Maybe your spouse is nagging you to quit. The good news is that 50 percent of Americans who have been addicted to nicotine have quit smoking permanently – and so can you.

If you're discouraged because you've already tried to quit, you should realize that five to seven serious tries is average for former smokers. So if you've tried to quit and had relapses, look at them as learning experiences, not as failures.

What made you go back to your smoking habit? Was it being around other smokers? Was it a stressful event, such as a job loss or being dumped by a girlfriend or boyfriend? Was it thinking that you could smoke "just one cigarette"? If you analyze what triggered the relapse, you can guard against relapsing under similar circumstances. This article will describe the best ways to quit, and unusual – even bizarre – ways that have worked for some people. Among these quitting methods is something that will very likely work for you.

Try Cold Turkey

Some smokers just throw away the cigarettes and never smoke again. This method probably works best for light smokers. While cold turkey isn't for everyone, many people, even those who smoked heavily, have been able to quit this way. With cold turkey you have to be really motivated, really sick of all the problems smoking causes, and really determined.

Cold turkey can be rough for people addicted to nicotine because smoking changes brain chemistry. Your brain is used to a certain amount of nicotine and it has to gradually change back to the way it was before you took that first puff. Smokers going cold turkey may suffer insomnia, irritability, nausea, sweating, anxiety, restlessness, or hunger. Nicotine cravings may be constant. Smoking cessation may activate depression in people prone to depression. Coughing may increase for a while (but this is actually good... continued next page
because it means that your lungs are clearing themselves of the debris from cigarette smoke).

If you want to try cold turkey, go for it. But if it doesn't work, you have other options.

Get Medical Help

Doctors can give you both counseling and treatment, as appropriate in your case. A number of medications have proven effective in getting people off cigarettes. Nicotine replacement is one. It comes in several forms – skin patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers, and nasal spray. But you should commit to gradually reducing the amount of nicotine you absorb. Follow the recommended "step down" process. Some former smokers stay on nicotine replacement for years, and, while this is better for you than smoking, it's not good. Nicotine raises blood pressure.

Your doctor might prescribe other medications that can help you stop smoking. For example, Zyban is an antidepressant that has helped many smokers quit. It works on brain chemicals to reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms, including cravings. If smoking cessation makes you depressed, Zyban can help this, too. Chantix is a medication that works on brain chemicals to make quitting easier. Let your doctor be your guide.

Join a Smoking Cessation Program

Adding a comprehensive smoking cessation program to medication makes quitting permanently more likely. Smoking cessation programs teach you how to cope with situations that trigger your urge to smoke. The more intense the counseling provided, the more likely you are to succeed in quitting.

Some hospitals, churches, employers, schools, and health maintenance organizations offer smoking cessation programs. Inpatient treatment programs help smokers severely addicted to nicotine. Individual therapy, provided by a health professional such as a psychiatrist or psychologist, appears to be the most successful for the average smoker. Group therapy has helped many smokers quit. Telephone counseling is effective for others. There are online smoking cessation programs. Self-help materials may be enough for those smokers who are highly motivated to quit. And consider a support group, such as Nicotine Anonymous.

Count the Costs

If you're concerned about the cost of smoking cessation medications and programs, add up what you're spending on cigarettes. Cigarettes are currently running $5.50 or more a pack, unless you live in NYC, you're paying $10 or more. Smoking can cost you in lots of other ways, too. In this tough job market employers are in the driver's seat, and some are refusing to hire smokers. Insurers charge smokers more for life, health, disability income, and sometimes even home or auto insurance. Over a lifetime, medical care costs the average smoker more than it costs the average nonsmoker.

How about trying to sell your house or car if it reeks of stale tobacco smoke? The price will go down, down, down. And good luck on getting your security deposit back if you've been smoking in your rental apartment. The landlord will have to do a major cleanup because tobacco smoke can permeate even wallboard. And what about the cost of replacing your clothing, furniture, or auto upholstery when they get cigarette burns?

When you count the costs, smoking cessation medications and programs are a bargain in every way. Moreover, some employers and insurance plans cover these costs. If you have to pay these costs yourself, you can include them as a medical expense for federal income tax purposes.

Forget Weight Gain

Some smokers are hesitant to quit because they're afraid of weight gain. But smoking to control your weight is an exceedingly bad bargain. You would have to gain 60 to 80 pounds to equal the health risks of continuing to smoke. The average weight gain for people who quit smoking is ten pounds. Moreover, one study showed that, a number of years after quitting cigarettes, the average former smoker weighs about the same as the average lifelong nonsmoker.

Some former smokers lose weight because, now that they've quit, they feel like exercising. Also, there's a psychological phenomenon called "cluster behavior" that may work in your favor after you quit smoking. A number of studies show that both poor health practices and good health practices tend to cluster. For example, a person who smokes is more likely to drink heavily. It's a popular observation that "smokers drink and drinkers smoke." Conversely, people who stop smoking often become committed to a healthier lifestyle – drinking moderately, exercising regularly, sleeping enough, and eating properly. If you're overweight, good habits like these can lead to weight loss.
Try Something Unusual

Smokers have tried all manner of things in an effort to get off cigarettes. Hypnosis has worked for some. Others swear by acupuncture. One woman says aromatherapy worked for her.

Being in a place where it's impossible to smoke helps some people quit, and might help you, too. A woman whose husband had quit smoking, and was urging her to quit, agreed to go with him to an isolated mountain cabin for two weeks so that she could wean herself off cigarettes. She says, "After several days, I was threatening divorce if he didn't drive me to where I could get cigarettes. Several days after that, I was threatening murder. But at the end of the two weeks we were at the cabin, I was thanking him for standing firm. That was years ago and I haven't smoked since."

Another smoker who wanted to quit had himself locked in a motel room until his cravings let up. One man had himself delivered to a deserted island, along with lots of food and water, but no cigarettes. Still other smokers have gone on nonsmoking cruises or to nonsmoking spas in order to conquer their smoking habit.

Financial necessity motivates some smokers to quit. One smoker on a tight budget had an old car that she drove to work. When the car broke down, and she was told that it was beyond repair, she was in despair as to how she would get to work. So she went over her budget and saw that the only thing she could stop spending money on was cigarettes. She added up what she spent on cigarettes in a month and it came to $300 – the exact amount that she needed for car payments. It was the cigarettes or the car, and that settled it in her mind. She stopped smoking and bought the car. You may want to see what you could buy with your cigarette money. It might increase your motivation to quit.

Some quitting methods work only in limited circumstances. For example, one man, who had often expressed to his wife his desire to quit smoking, started losing his memory as he got older. One day he asked his wife where his cigarettes were. She told him that he had just run out of ciga-

## Patience

Today's high-tech world of 'instant everything' allows us to obtain, experience, and consume practically anything we want, almost immediately. Everything EXCEPT losing weight. Patience never did come easily to most of us anyway, but it's harder now to be patient than ever before in history. What's the benefit of having patience? And do we even need it anymore?

Patience is the ability to tolerate waiting, delay, or frustration without becoming agitated or upset. It's the ability to be able to control our emotions or impulses and proceed calmly when faced with difficulties.

Patience lets us hang on when everyone else has given up. It's the ability to release our need for immediate gratification and wait for things to come in their own time. Patience develops committed relationships in marriage, family, community and career. It helps us look before we leap, think before we act, and considering before we decide. Patience is the mark of maturity. And yes, we still need it -- especially when it comes to reaching our fitness goals!

### Tips on How to Develop Patience

- Take a day where you make patience your goal for the entire day. Make an effort to take your time and think about everything you do. Be mindful and live in the moment.
- Slow down. Take several deep breaths before you act or make a move.
- Practice delaying gratification. When you want to reach for that dessert, stop and think about it first.
- Practice thinking before you speak. At times we blurt out the first thought that comes into our head without considering the consequences. Instead, pause and consider what you want to say.
Mystics teach that there is in each of us the capacity for mystical experience that transcends reason. There are mystical qualities involved in the experience of healing, too. You can move beyond the need to find logical reasons for an illness and begin the task of personal transformation.

When we think of gravity, images come to mind of Isaac Newton resting under a tree while an apple falls from the branch above, symbolically containing the inspiration for the law of gravity.

The laws of the universe, including the law of gravity, can function symbolically. To understand this requires us to train our minds to perceive beyond the limitations of reason and logic. First, we need to understand the word "gravity" through its other meanings, such as "seriousness" or "heaviness."
“The real secret to health is not to retrieve your power from all the injuries of the past, but to become so clear and wise as a soul, that you do not lose your power over illusions in the first place. Focus on the present and on the spiritual journey that is your life.”

~ Caroline Myss
Symbolically, we might say that Newton discovered the law of seriousness, the law of the relationship between reason and the symbolic "weight of thought," along with the conventional law of gravity. Certainly it can be said that Newton made a scientific discovery in identifying the law of gravity, but from another and far more intriguing perspective, the case can be made that Newton had a mystical experience in which he was given a glimpse into the essential oneness of the universe. He saw through the veil of ordinary sight this one day of his life to comprehend the functioning of but one of the physical laws—which he named the law of gravity—which reflects the constant mystical truth that, "What is in one is in the whole." He saw "into the whole" on that one day in his life and noted that all things are subject to one law, related to weight and force. That he applied his mystical insight to science was just part of his task, but the mystical consequence was that energetic weight—psychic weight—began transferring more "seriously" into thought as well as science grew more and more into prominence, eclipsing the value of emotional and intuitive knowledge.

Here are simple but powerful guidelines to help you defy gravity and build a healthy life through becoming ever more aware of your mystical nature and your spiritual senses.

1. Develop a Practice of Inner Reflection

Spend time each day in teachings that are transcendent of ordinary thought and that bring light to your soul. Apply these teachings to the choices you make each day. For example, a simple line written by Thomas Merton had a transformational impact on my life. Merton was a great writer and devoted to journaling. On a hot summer afternoon, as he gazed upon the hillside from his hermitage window at the monastery, he noted how the warm breezes bent the flowers, and how the sunset made the color of the hills look bluish-purple. He wrote that it was so hot that day that a bull was lying down under a tree, just waiting for the sun to set. But as he jotted down the small and precious details, he ended by writing, "This day will never come again." That one line went straight through my heart and into my soul as I realized that same truth, looking around my office. That night, as I looked across the dinner table at my friends, I melted them into my memory, thinking, "I will never again be here with you in just this way. This evening of our lives will never come again." My love for them exploded in that instant as I realized it could well be the last time I would ever see them, for who knows when we shall be called to leave this life? Each day never comes again for me now, and even each minute sometimes. I look at strangers and think, "I will never see that face again," and wonder why I am seeing that face at all. And suddenly the face of that stranger is beautiful to me.

Such reflection takes you deeper and deeper into the values that matter and away from dwelling on the insignificant and the useless. Go in search of these rich writings. Discover the wealth that the mystics of all the great traditions have left us; choose but one line and jump into it with all your might, like Alice falling down the rabbit hole.

Here's one more that I adore, which comes from my favorite, Teresa of Ávila: "Let nothing disturb you. With God, all things are possible." Dwell on that and see if it doesn't make your soul just a bit lighter.

2. Decide Whether You Will Learn by Wisdom or Woe

Use these two options as guideposts for your decisions. Are your choices wise or will they result in woe for you or others? Wise choices come in many forms. Draw on your experiences in which you have already learned this, and blend them with the constant flow of intuitive guidance that filters into your thoughts. Study the wisdom of the great masters, the wise teachers such as Buddha and Jesus, who knew the obstacles of the human journey. These obstacles have not changed. Respond to the intuitive signals coming through your biology. Stress in your solar plexus is a signal that you are losing your power to something. Identify that something and take action before it consumes you. This is wise action. Woe is the choice to wait until your fears consume you, to deny your intuitive warning signals in hopes that the winds of change will pass you by. But they won't. Wisdom rises to meet the challenges of life. Woe is the result of thinking others will take care of your problems or that they will magically disappear. Your problems have your name on them because they are for you to resolve. And each time you resolve them through wise action, you allow more light and grace into your life.

Ask yourself before making a choice or taking action: Is this a wise choice or am I courting woe?
3. Don't Have Expectations of Others or of Outcomes

Expectations come from your dark passions and from feelings of entitlement. When you sense an expectation arising in your ego, review your dark passions to see which of these forces is energizing that particular situation. Then choose a corresponding grace and pray for that grace to clear out the perception created by your dark passion. Expectations inevitably lead to disappointments. Make no judgments. Have no expectations. And give up the need to know why things happen as they do.

4. Actively Cultivate Your Graces

Come to know the power and authority of your graces with the same precision with which you have come to know your brokenness and pain. Remember that without conscious effort, you will easily succumb to the gravity field of your pain. You have to work at staying in your field of grace, because it is not natural to your ego, which knows its base of power more in the shadow than in the light.

5. Be of Service to Others

All the great mystics have acknowledged that genuine enlightenment manifests itself as a desire to be of service to others. If you want to imitate the masters, there is no better way. Healing the self can lead to making the resolution of your own problems easier. Without service, your life becomes an experience of self-service, a journey of taking without giving back. Finding a way to be of service to others is the highest path of your soul.

6. Learn to Pray

Pray beyond petitioning for the stuff you want for yourself. Learn to be present to the grace of the sacred. Open yourself to the mystic that you are by nature. Your intuition is not a skill to be honed so that you can figure out how to stay safe and avoid losing money. If you think that, you will never develop more than your gut instincts. You need to challenge your fear of life becoming unreasonable – because it is already unreasonable. In truth, your life has never been reasonable; it's just that you keep hoping tomorrow will be different and that you will find a way to bring more control into your world. Prayer and trust, and your capacity to reason as a mystic give you the wisdom to recognize that life will always be full of challenges and crises. The wise way is not to attempt to find the one path that promises you will never have to endure the pain of loss and illness, but instead to learn how to endure and transcend when unreasonable events come your way. Learning to defy gravity in your world – to think, perceive, and act at the mystical level of consciousness – is the greatest gift you can give yourself, because it is the gift of truth. And as we are bound to learn again and again in this life, the truth does indeed set us free!

7. Defy Gravity

Live as if you were liberated from ordinary thought, beyond the boundaries of logic and reason. Be bold in your decisions and creative and imaginative in your thoughts. Think and live with the soul of a mystic, seeing the world as a field of grace in which you walk as a channel of light. Live these truths. Become these truths. This is your true highest potential. And remind yourself each day of your life, "This day will never come again." You will never see the same sunrise or sunset. You will never sit at the same table twice with the same people in exactly the same way. You will never look upon the faces of the people you love in exactly the same way tomorrow, for you might not even be here tomorrow. You will never walk down the same street in precisely the same way. Such tiny realizations are also the most profound soul-awakenings. You have resources yet to be unleashed. Make bold, outrageous choices. Live as though you have the power to change the world – because you do!
**HOW TO CONQUER BINGEING AT NIGHT**

- Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. The large majority of people who struggle with night eating are those who skip meals or don’t eat balanced meals during the day. This is a major setup for overeating at night.
- Eat your evening meal in the kitchen or dining room, sitting down at the table.
- Drink cold unsweetened raspberry tea. It tastes great and keeps your mouth busy.
- Change your nighttime schedule. It will take effort, but it will pay off. You need something that will occupy your mind and hands.
- If you’re eating at night due to emotions, you need to focus on getting in touch with what’s going on and taking care of yourself in a way that really works. Find a nonfood method of coping with your stress.
- Put a sign on the kitchen and refrigerator doors: “Closed after Dinner.”
- Brush your teeth right after dinner to remind you: no more food.
- Eat without engaging in any other simultaneous activity: no reading, watching TV or sitting at the computer.

**Bonkeroids**

*bonk’e-roidz*  *n.* amazing, but useless facts acquired through Going Bonkers Magazine

- If shop mannequins were real women, they would be too thin to menstruate.
- There are 3 billion women who don’t look like supermodels and only 8 who do.
- Marilyn Monroe wore a size 12.
- If Barbie were a real woman, she'd have to walk on all fours due to her proportions.
- The average American woman weighs 144 lbs. and wears between a size 12 and 14.
- One out of every 4 college aged women has an eating disorder.
- The models in the magazines are airbrushed - they are not perfect!
- A psychological study in 1995 found that 3 minutes spent looking at models in a fashion magazine caused 70% of women to feel depressed, guilty and shameful.
- Twenty years ago models weighed 8% less than the average woman, today they weigh 23% less.

“Welcome to the Weight Loss Forum. To lose one pound, double-click your mouse six million times.”
It's Only Too Late if You Don't Start Now

Staying motivated can sometimes be a struggle. Even the most confident and energetic people will frequently find their drive being attacked by negative thoughts, fears, anxiety or self-doubt. What separates the “doers” (those who succeed) from those who give up too soon? The “doers” keep on “doing.” They keep moving forward, no matter what.

**Why We Lose Motivation**

There are three main reasons one might lose motivation.

1. **Lack of focus** – You don’t know clearly what you want and haven’t identified a detailed goal.

2. **Lack of direction** – You have no plan to reach your goal and see no clear path to get there.

3. **Lack of confidence** – You believe you can’t succeed, and feel there’s no reason to really try.

**Staying On Track**

Here are some very practical, easy-to-follow and helpful tips you can use to get on track and stay motivated.

**Boost Your Confidence**

Set aside time to focus on everything positive in your life. Make a list of your strengths, past successes and current advantages. We tend to take our strengths for granted and dwell on our failures. With a little effort, you’ll realize how competent and successful you already are. This will re-ignite your confidence and get you motivated to acquire more successes.

**Focus & Define**

Define your goal. What exactly do you want? If your goal is to lose weight, then define it in more detail. For example, a well-defined goal would be: I want to lose 40 pounds over the next 20 weeks, at the rate of 2 pounds per week. Focusing your energy on a well-defined goal with measurable results, will help you create your action plan. The key is to move from a vague desire to a concrete goal.

**Create Realistic Timelines**

Once you’ve determined your detailed goal, now establish a realistic time-frame. For example, if you can write one chapter of your book each month, how long before you can realistically complete the book? Set a date for completion. When your goals are written down with realistic time frames, you’ll know what to expect from yourself, and you’ll avoid negative thoughts like, “I’ll never reach this goal.”

**Accept Obstacles**

You will undoubtedly stumble across obstacles, so not only expect and prepare for obstacles, but plan for them. By planning, you’ll be less tempted to give up when an obstacle crosses your path, and less likely to give in to the fear and self-doubt that comes with it.

**Create a Plan**

Finally, create a step-by-step action plan to reach your goal. The key is to identify the specific activities that will lead to your success. If you are at Point A and you want to get to point Z what exactly are the day-to-day steps you’ll need to take to get there? Write it down in detail and you’ll have your action plan. Be sure to take into account your established time frame and any obstacles you may face.

It’s inevitable that you’ll encounter periods of low energy, bad luck and even the occasional failure. By guarding against the reasons you lose motivation, you can ensure that you’ll propel yourself successfully forward, with plenty of motivation to keep you going strong.

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**About the Author**

**Lou Isaacs** is a staff writer at Going Bonkers Magazine.
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