

Nutrition Education Challenge



Study Material

Section 1: Motivation

Expectations

People tend to overestimate how much weight loss is normal per week and how much weight loss is realistic overall. People tend to overestimate how consistent the scale will be.

Goals

You should not make a weight loss goal for yourself. People who do not set weight loss goals are more successful than those who do. People who do not set goals lose on average 10 lbs. more than people who do set goals. Having a weight loss goal may lead to you feeling overconfident when you are doing well, and then lowering your guard. Having a weight loss goal may lead you to be discouraged when you are not doing well, and then taking your diet less seriously. It is easier to lose weight in multiple stages than in one stage. For example, 100 lbs. is difficult to lose, and difficult to maintain. If a person were to lose 50 lbs. maintain it for a year, then lose another 50 lbs., it will be much easier than losing all 100 lbs. at once. (It is not just twice as easy to lose weight in two stages; it is eight times easier; eight times easier to lose the weight and eight times easier to maintain the weight). The BMI chart is not an accurate way to know what an appropriate weight is for an individual. It is a way for a medical professional to estimate what an appropriate weight is for a population. The BMI chart estimates appropriate weight, based only on height. (Not on important factors such as gender, age, muscle mass, bone density, shoulder width, health, or where the fat is stored in the body). Instead of having a weight loss goal, a good short- term goal is: To follow a regimented eating plan, even when you don't feel like it. A good long- term goal is: To become a person who predictably follows a regimented eating plan, even when you don't feel like it.

Loss of Motivation

Motivation generally starts off strong in the morning and weakens as the day goes on. You cannot take motivation for granted because it's stronger when you begin your diet but fades as a diet progresses. The solution to a loss of motivation is sustainability. The more sustainable a diet is, the less difficult it is, and the less motivation you need. People tend to be less committed to their diet at its later stages because:

- 1- The diet is less exciting. (When you do something for a while, it becomes less exciting).
- 2- You can no longer lose weight as easily. (The less you weigh, the harder it is to lose weight).
- 3- You are less upset about your weight. (The less you weigh, the less your weight bothers you).
- 4- You have a less perfect record. (The longer you are on a diet, the more chances you would have had to slip up. The more slip-ups, the less motivation).

Solutions for Loss of Motivation

- 1- The diet is less exciting. Solution: Make the diet more exciting; Introduce new foods, new techniques, new behaviors, new types of support.
- 2- You can no longer lose weight as easily. Solution: Realize you have an eating problem, not a weight problem.
- 3- You are less upset about your weight. Solution: Realize you have an eating problem, not a weight problem.
- 4- You have a less perfect record. Solution: You need to correct not one, but several incorrect mindsets. (More on this later).

How to Look at the Scale

The scale is meant to be used for information, though people make the mistake of looking at the scale as a reward. The problem with looking at the scale as a reward, is: 1-You begin your diet with more reward for less work (I.e. you lose more weight without having to work so hard) and with every passing week you do more work and get less reward (I.e. you lose less weight and dieting is harder) 2- The scale does not consistently give accurate feedback. (E.g. even when you stick to the plan and get thinner, the scale may not show weight loss, because you are retaining water). Losing weight is a side effect of following a food plan. Focusing on your eating problem and not your weight problem is necessary because you will not solve your weight problem unless you solve your eating problem.

Section 2: Direction

Direction Requirements

The direction you get should include a menu plan, diet rules, contingency plans, and Jewish calendar guidelines. Direction must be binary, meaning there cannot be any uncertainty as to what a diet requires of you at any given moment.

The “Right” Diet

People fall into a trap of thinking that success is about finding the right diet. Success is actually about sticking to a diet, regardless of what the diet is. Diets may seem different from each other, but all diets are in essence the same; a set of rules designed to get you to consume fewer calories than you burn. (I.e. create a calorie deficit). The two basic ways of creating a calorie deficit are: 1- Limiting your calories (e.g. Weight Watchers). 2- Limiting your carbs (e.g. Atkins). All diets out there may sound different but fit into one of these categories. Some diets are a hybrid of both these categories. Any “new” diet fad is simply a variation of an existing diet. (E.g. keto is similar to Atkins). Limiting carbs gets you to create a calorie deficit by increasing the number of calories you burn. Low-carb diets still make an assumption about the number of calories you will consume; limiting carbs doesn’t get you to burn an infinite number of calories. Limiting carbs gets you to burn about double the calories you would have burned otherwise. The policy on a low-carb diet may be that the food is unlimited, but the diet assumes there is still a limit on the number of calories you will end up consuming.

Whatever dieting technique works for you won’t necessarily work as well for someone else, because people have different strengths, weaknesses, schedules, preferences, and personality types. Most people do better with a diet designed to limit calories over limiting carbs, especially children and especially females.

A diet can have any number of rules. Diets that limit carbs (e.g. Atkins/Dukan/South Beach/keto/etc.) will typically have just one rule; “Eat only these specific foods and nothing else.” A diet that is based strictly on calorie counting may also have only one rule; “only eat “X” number of calories per day. Most diets, however, even if the science behind it is just to get you to limit calories, have many rules.

No Easy Answers

Fad diets don’t work in the long term because you don’t even lose the weight you think you are losing, you simply lose water weight temporarily, and gain it back. Diets that completely eliminate carbohydrates, eliminate solid foods, severely limit calories, or sound wacky for any other reason, will result in some fat loss, but much of the weight loss is from manipulating water out your body. Water loss is only temporary.

Need for a Plan

Losing weight is a matter of following a plan. It's a common belief that if you eat less than you used to, without following a specific plan, you will lose weight. That is false. If you eat less than you used to, you may gain weight, maintain weight, or lose weight. A person needs a diet that provides them with enough calories to function but creates enough of a deficit that they lose weight. You need a specific food plan because: 1- To hit the target; the narrow line that is enough calories but not too many calories. Without a plan, you will either end up having too little or too much. 2- So you can plan ahead 3- So you don't have to constantly make decisions. 4- To be motivated; you should feel you are doing something good when you eat. When you don't have a plan, every act of eating feels like a bad thing or at best questionable. So-called "bad" food (e.g. cake) should also be planned. When food is planned, it won't trigger more bad eating habits. Spontaneous impulsive eating causes people to lose control after eating a so-called "bad" food.

Contingency Plans

You need to have contingency plans for situations that make it difficult to follow your food plan. An example of a contingency plan is if by a wedding you plan to allow yourself unlimited fruit by the smorgasbord, even though that is ordinarily not on your plan. A contingency plan should be realistic, yet at the same time not set you back too much. If a contingency plan is found to work well, it should become your policy for future similar situations/events.

Jewish Calendar

A diet needs to provide guidelines for the 80 days a year where the Jewish calendar makes it impractical to follow your typical diet plan.

Section 3: Accountability

"The lies we tell other people are nothing compared to the lies we tell ourselves." - Derek Landy

Following a Diet "90%"

When you believe you followed your diet 90% you will not lose weight. You often gain weight. What people think is 90% on a diet, is actually the same as not being on a diet at all. When you follow a diet that you believe is following it "100%," you are actually following it 90%. This is because people do not walk around with a food scale, a scientific calculator, and a database of the calorie and carbohydrate content of every food. This is fine because you will still succeed even with taking into account honest human error. However, when you follow a diet "almost 100%," as far as the scale is concerned, you are actually not following a diet at all.

Other Reasons to be Fully Committed

If you follow your diet to the letter, you make on average 15 food-related decisions per day. If you "basically" follow your diet, you make on average 200 food-related decisions per day, which is too much for the brain to handle. When you stick to a plan, you become stronger and better at sticking to your plan; you build your "resistance muscle." When you break your diet, aside from the calories and weight gain, you become weaker, as you strengthen your "giving in muscle." It is better to follow a less restrictive diet 100% than to follow a more restrictive diet "almost" 100%. Being "almost" on a diet is usually a waste of time, and in some cases worse than not being on a diet at all. (Note: Even if you feel 100% accountable to your diet, you will slip up sometimes, because you are human. Hopefully, it will happen very infrequently and you can overcome them. However, if your attitude is that it's okay to slip up, you will certainly slip up too often to be able to overcome them).

Methods for Accountability

Common methods for accountability are: 1- Tracking food. 2- Tracking weight. 3- Answering to someone. 4- Anti-charity. 1- Tracking food. Keeping a log of your food intake makes you accountable to a diet. This is especially effective when coupled with method 3; Answering to someone; when you report your food to a nutritionist. 2- Tracking weight. Weighing yourself regularly and keeping a log makes you accountable to a diet. This is especially effective when coupled with method 3; Answering to someone; when you weigh in at a nutritionist. 4- Anti-charity: You give money to a referee, and if you don't keep your commitment, the money is given to a charity or cause that you specifically dislike.

Tracking Food

Tracking and reporting food is important mainly so you don't break your diet without realizing it. Even when you eat something you shouldn't, you should write it down. You're less likely to slip up again if you write it down.

Tracking Weight

Most people, especially adults, are better off weighing themselves daily. Some people are better off weighing themselves once a week. (I.e. almost 100% of children, 20% of women, and 10% of men). Home digital scales are almost always reliable, but you have to know how your body fluctuates. Your most accurate weight is always. You weigh exactly what you weigh at any given time. There is no one day of the week or one time of the day that is more accurate than the others. People often ask what's the best day to weigh themselves, the answer is "any." A person should weigh themselves regularly (I.e. at least once a week) unless they have an eating disorder or are at risk for developing one. If you don't feel like going on the scale, you should go on anyway. If the scale doesn't show good results, the first thing you should do is ask yourself if you followed the diet properly. (Not if you're wearing heavier shoes, or if you're bloated, etc.). Reasons to weigh daily are: 1- To stay focused. If you only go on once a week you can easily lose focus of your diet. 2- To see discrepancies in bloating. If you go on daily, you can see if your weekly weigh-in was inaccurate. (E.g. if your weekly weigh-in showed no weight loss, but the rest of the week you were trending 2 lbs. down, you will know that you just happened to have been bloated on the day of your weekly weigh-in). 3- To remember what you ate. People who go on daily don't forget what they ate because when you go on the scale you automatically remember what you have been eating. When weighing daily, you don't need to keep a record of your daily weight, only your weekly weight.

Slip-Ups

When you break your diet, you may fall into one of two traps. 1- You may feel you need to fix your mistake by restricting yourself extra, to compensate for your slip up. This is a mistake. After you break your diet, you should just go back to your regular diet. 2- You may feel that if you broke your diet, you may as well give up. People feel this way because they have not one, but a combination of several fundamentally wrong mindsets. (More on this later).

Writing down a slip up helps because: 1- You are more aware of what you did and less likely to repeat it. 2- You start noticing what factors trigger you to slip up (e.g. you didn't eat for 6 hours straight) and you're less likely to allow yourself to become vulnerable like that again.

Rationalization

Rationalization is a defense mechanism in which a wrong behavior is justified in a seemingly rational manner as a way of excusing the behavior. Rationalization typically starts with the following thought: "It's okay if I eat this because..."

Common examples of rationalizations are 1- "I'll start my diet tomorrow." 2- "I ate what was on my diet, I just ate too much, that can't be so bad." 3- "I'll just have one."

Breaking the Rationalization Habit

To break the habit of rationalization, you can write down all your sabotaging thoughts followed by helpful responses. (E.g. Sabotaging thought: I'll start my diet tomorrow. Helpful response: I need to change. One of the things I need to change is my tendency to push off my diet. If I don't start now, I certainly won't start tomorrow, because every time I make a bad decision, I strengthen my "giving in" muscle. I will be even weaker tomorrow).

Problem with Rationalization

Rationalization prevents you from succeeding because: 1- You can go from failure to success, but not from excuses to success. 2- If you are capable of convincing yourself in any given situation that breaking your diet is okay, you will never change, because you can't "fix something that isn't broken." 3- We are generally motivated to succeed, and capable of succeeding, what stops us usually is that we tell ourselves we don't have to do whatever it is we have to do. If we eat something we shouldn't, we are better off telling ourselves "it's not okay," than telling ourselves "it's kind of okay." The most common reason people break their diets is because they told themselves "it was kind of okay."

Enablers

Enablers are people who say or do things that make it harder for you to stick to your diet.

There are several reasons why someone might enable you. 1- They are dealing with weight issues of their own and are jealous of you. 2- They believe they know better than you and/or your nutritionist. 3- They see you working hard on your diet and want you to relax and enjoy yourself a little.

Dealing with Enablers

The best way to respond to an enabler is to nod your head no. It's important to always respond no to an enabler so they learn that the answer will always be no. Otherwise, they will come up with arguments why you should say yes. It is important to respond no to enablers, even when they persist. Otherwise, they will learn that if they harass you long enough, you will give in. Your feelings are more important than an enabler's feelings because 1- You have every right to choose what goes into your body. 2- An enabler will feel bad for a minute while you will feel bad for much longer. Enablers are insulting you by showing they don't believe you are fully committed. Otherwise, they wouldn't think to try to enable you.

Section 4: Sustainability

Need for Sustainability

Obesity is a problem at this point in history because our food environment makes it extremely difficult to eat properly. Most of the food we have available to us is processed, and higher in sugar, starch, fat, and salt than our bodies are designed to handle. These foods not only don't make us full, but make us hungry. Aside from being high in calories, processed food is habit-forming. Unlike other habit-forming substances, processed food is: 1- Something we have been having since we were children. 2- Something that is very easily accessible. 3- Something that is not at all taboo. These factors make eating behavior more difficult to change than other bad habits. (An example that illustrates how not okay our food environment and societies attitude is: The first ingredient in baby formula is corn syrup, and that 99% of people do not even know that).

Sustainability is working to make your diet realistic, so you are not overly restricted and deprived.

Sustainability involves making sure that the food on your plan is sustainable, and that your environment is sustainable.

FEAT

FEAT is an acronym that describes how the food on your diet needs to be sustainable. FEAT stands for filling, easy, accessible, tasty.

Filling.

Foods high in protein, fiber, and water are more filling. Foods high in sugar (real or fake), processed carbohydrates, fat, and salt make a person hungrier. Artificial sweeteners, especially when consumed in the form of diet soda causes actual weight gain in addition to making you hungrier. (It damages metabolism resulting in weight gain). To get adequate protein, fiber, and water, an important policy is to have protein and/or vegetables with every meal. (E.g. if you like bread and cheese, which is a meal of carbs and fat, you can include vegetables and/or Greek yogurt). Fruits are a good snack as they are high in water and fiber. The size of the source of the food we eat affects our hunger levels. Eating from a portion-sized bag will make you feel fuller than eating that same amount from a larger bag. Eating from a pre-portioned individual plate will make you feel fuller than starting out with an empty plate and eating from platters. Having less variety to choose from at a meal (E.g. having one main and two sides instead of a choice of four mains and six sides) will make you feel fuller. People who are hungry at night, are often hungry because they did not choose filling foods throughout the day. You should arrange that you do not have to endure severe hunger on a diet, but mild to moderate hunger is fine and should be expected. Tolerating hunger is a skill that can be developed.

Coffee is an appetite suppressant. So is spicy food. Foods that take a long time to eat (e.g. popcorn) are more filling.

Easy

Establish a regular pattern of eating so you have to make fewer decisions. Focus on foods that are uncomplicated; foods that don't require too much preparation, are easy to find in a store, are easy to calculate the right portions, are portable, and stay fresh.

Accessibility

To make the foods on your diet accessible, make sure to always be well stocked at home. Consider stocking your office and the trunk of your car as well.

Tasty.

Focus on making the food taste better without having to add calories. (E.g. using fresh herbs and spices). Include a variety of food on your plan and seek out new foods and recipes to keep things interesting.

Willpower

Willpower is your ability to restrain yourself and control your impulses. Willpower can be measured by a simple blood test. The more dopamine a person has, the more willpower they have. Some people have more willpower than others, but that does not determine success. What matters is not how much willpower you have, but how well you budget your willpower. Regardless of how much willpower a person has, willpower weakens as the day goes on, and weakens as the diet goes on. Success is about conserving your willpower, so it lasts throughout the day and lasts week after week. Willpower is a limited resource. When you give in to an impulse, your willpower gets weaker in the future. When you restrict yourself too much, (i.e. challenge your willpower) your willpower gets weaker. Types of restriction are: 1- Food type. 2- Food amount 3- Going several hours without food. Control your food environment so as not to use up your willpower.

Environment

You should not stock your home with tempting food unless you have to (i.e. because of family or guests). You should not attend events or places that have tempting food unless you have to. You should not stay at such events any longer than you have to. If you do not modify your environment, it leads to

three possible bad outcomes: 1- Giving in to temptation and breaking your diet. 2- Not giving in, but using up willpower and giving in to temptation later. (When you eat something you shouldn't, and you have no idea why; the food wasn't even that good, it's because you used up your willpower and had none left at the time). 3- Moral licensing; when you do something you shouldn't, but you tell yourself it's fine because "I could've done something worse." E.g. "at least I didn't eat *that*." "Everyone else was eating so much more." The scale doesn't care what you could have eaten or what other people ate. It only cares what you ate.

Restraint Bias

Restraint bias is our tendency to underestimate how challenging an upcoming situation is. When a challenging situation comes up, if people would know in advance how challenging it is, they would either avoid it, or prepare properly. However, since people greatly underestimate how challenging upcoming situations are, they predictably go into such situations unprepared.

Strategy question: Should I eat before an event? Eating before might get me to eat less at the event, but it might not. It's not like I eat because I'm hungry. I may overeat anyway, and then I'll have had extra calories before for no reason. Answer: It's a good policy to eat before because more often than not you will end up eating fewer calories overall.

Section 5: Education

The trouble with most people is not that they don't know much, but that they know so much that isn't true
- Will Rogers

The Need For Education

People may think they know what they need to know to succeed at dieting, but what people do know is not enough, irrelevant, and often completely wrong.

Nutritionists do not argue with each other. Science does not "change its mind." If it seems that trained professionals are arguing with each other, they're not. If it seems that science "changed its mind," it did not.

Nutrients

A nutrient is a substance needed by the body for growth, energy, repair, and maintenance. Six types of nutrients are carbohydrates, fat, protein, water, vitamins, and minerals. Carbohydrates include starch, fiber, and sugar. Americans typically consume too much starch, sugar, and fat, and not enough fiber, water, vitamins, and minerals.

Calories and Weight

Calories are a way to measure how much energy is in food. If you consume too few calories, you will not have enough energy. If you consume the proper number of calories, you will have enough energy. If you consume too many calories, you will not have *extra* energy, because extra calories turn into fat. Calories can come from carbohydrates, fat, or protein. The way food companies know how many calories are in a food is they burn the food and calculate how much energy it produces. Weight loss happens when a person consumes fewer calories than they burn. If a person consumes more calories than they burn, they gain weight. If a person has been maintaining weight, they had to have been consuming the same number of calories that they burn. All extra calories a person consumes, get stored in the body in the form of fat. The body stores extra calories as fat, and not carbohydrates or protein, because fat is the most dense, so it takes up the least amount of space. (If the body would store extra calories in the form

of protein or carbohydrates, people would be huge! Also, an overweight person would be called “protein”). Metabolism is the number of calories you burn while existing. You are always burning calories, every moment you are alive. The brain alone burns 500 calories per day from thinking. Factors that help estimate the number of calories a person burns include: Age, height, gender, and weight. The older a person is, the fewer calories they burn. A shorter person burns fewer calories than a taller person. Females burn fewer calories than males. The less you weigh, the fewer calories you burn. Therefore, the more weight you lose, the harder it gets; the less you weigh, the harder it is to lose and the easier it is to gain. A lb. of fat is 3500 calories. For you to gain a lb., you have to consume 3500 extra calories. If a person who burns 2500 calories per day, gains a lb. in a week, they must have been consuming 3000 calories per day. 3500 extra calories add up to a lb., 7 days a week means 500 extra per day to get to 3500, and 3000 is 500 extra per day for someone who burns 2500 calories. Calories are an exact system to the calorie, to the decimal, to the billionth of an oz.

When you gain weight, your fat cells increase in number, (you get more fat cells) but when you lose weight, your fat cells decrease in size only. (Fat cells never go away, they just shrink). People who lose weight have to work hard to keep it off, as the shrunken fat cells make a person extra hungry, as they want to be fed. When you are on a diet for a while, and you stop losing weight, it’s not because your body “got used to the diet.” Bodies don’t get used to diets. People stop following diets, and that’s why they stop losing weight.

Metabolism

90% of people have normal metabolisms. They burn a similar number of calories as others of the same profile (i.e. height, weight, age, and gender). 5% of people have slow metabolisms; they burn far fewer calories than others of the same profile. 5% of people have fast metabolisms; they burn significantly more calories than others of the same profile.

A thin person is just as likely to have a slow metabolism as an overweight person. People who are overweight, are not overweight because they have a slow metabolism, but because they eat too much. People who are thin, are not thin because they have a fast metabolism, but because they eat very little. 5% of overweight people have slow metabolisms and 5% of thin people have slow metabolisms. 5% of thin people have fast metabolisms and 5% of overweight people have slow metabolisms.

Overweight People	Thin People
5% have slow metabolisms. They eat very little.	5% have slow metabolisms. They eat <i>less than</i> very little.
90% have normal metabolisms. They eat too much.	90% have normal metabolisms. They eat very little.
5% have fast metabolisms. They eat <i>more than</i> too much.	5% have fast metabolisms. They eat a lot.

The 5% of overweight people who have fast metabolisms, are overweight, not because they eat too much, but because they eat *more than* too much. The 5% of thin people who have slow metabolisms, are thin, not because they eat very little, but because they eat *less than* very little.

People underestimate their food/calorie intake by an average of 700 calories per day. The heavier a person is, the more they underestimate how much they eat.

Water Weight Vs. Body Fat

The scale measures body weight, not body fat. It's possible to lose fat but not see a difference on the scale, because you are retaining water. (I.e. bloating). There are many factors that can make a person lose or gain water weight. (I.e. exercise, weather, carbohydrates, protein, caffeine, alcohol, salt, water, a stomach virus, and volume of food eaten). When someone loses or gains water, it is only temporary. People typically lose more weight the 1st week of a diet, because they lose water in addition to fat. Weight put on quickly can come off quickly because weight put on quickly is typically from water in addition to fat.

Good Calories And Bad Calories

Certain types of calories cause more weight gain than others. Calories from carbohydrates can cause more weight gain than other types of calories because carbohydrates raise blood sugar and easily convert to fat. Foods high in fat can cause more weight gain than other types of food because fat is easily stored in the body as fat and is very calorie-dense. Protein is difficult for the body to convert to fat, so the body burns extra calories when doing so. "Good calories" include protein and vegetables, the body burns extra calories when it processes them. "Regular calories" include "good" carbohydrates (e.g. whole wheat bread and fruit) and fat. The body burns calories at its usual pace when it processes them. "Bad calories" include processed carbohydrates (e.g. white bread and dried fruit). The body burns calories slower than its usual pace when it processes them.

The metabolism works 25% faster after consuming "good calories," so 100 calories of chicken is equal to 75 regular calories. The metabolism works 25% slower after consuming "bad calories," so 100 calories of cake is equal to 125 regular calories.

What Makes a Food Dietetic?

To determine how dietetic a given food is, look at the following: (In order of importance) 1- Calories. (Fewer is better). 2- Sugar. (Less is better). 3- Protein. (More is better) 4- Fiber (More is better). 5- Fat. (Less is better). Calories need to be looked at in context to how filling the food is. Sugar is only a concern if it is added or processed sugar. Unprocessed sugar is sugar that is in its original form; Nothing was changed. The sugar in fresh fruit is not processed. Dried fruit and fruit juice are processed sugars. "Low-fat" foods are overrated because: 1- Fat is the last thing you need to look at. 2- When companies manufacture low-fat foods, they usually add sugar, starch, and calories to compensate for the loss of taste. 3- Unlike sugar, your body actually needs some fat.

Labeling Foods as "Carbs," "Fats," and "Proteins"

Foods are not easily divided into categories such as "carbs" "fats" and "proteins." All foods contain all three macronutrients; carbohydrates, fat, and protein. Labeling foods as such may give you an idea about a given food but is not enough information. (Labeling foods further as "fruits" "vegetables" and "milks" may further be misleading). Foods that are lumped into the same category vary greatly in terms of their calorie, fiber and protein content. Calorie, fiber, and protein content are very important, what "category" people consider a given food to be is less important.

Protein

The purpose of protein is to provide structure, transport materials throughout your body, and help your immune system. There are many foods widely to be considered "proteins" but aren't.

Food Type	What it Actually Is
steak, ground beef (even lean) ground chicken, ground turkey, salmon	Fats (with some protein in them)

Cheese, peanut butter, nuts, and avocado	Fats (with insignificant protein in them)
Beans. Chickpeas	Carbs (with some protein in them)
Chumus. Protein bars. Protein shakes	Carbs and fat (with some protein in them)
quinoa	Carbs (essentially no protein in it)

Foods high in protein include chicken, turkey breast, egg whites, lean steak, (e.g. oyster steak), ground white meat chicken or turkey, tilapia, flounder, tuna steak, barramundi, bronzini, perch, canned tuna, Greek yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese, soybeans, and certain vegetables. Eggs and so-called “extra lean” ground beef are moderate to high in protein but also moderate to high in fat.

Fat

Fat in the diet is important to keep your skin and hair healthy, and help you absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K. Oil is pure fat, and has more fat than any other food. Olive oil might be less unhealthy than other oils, but is still pure fat.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates include starch, fiber, and sugar. The purpose of carbohydrates is energy and digestion. Foods high in carbohydrates include bread, potatoes, and rice. Quinoa is especially high in carbohydrates, higher than bread, potatoes, and rice. “Good” carbs refer to carbohydrates that are not processed. Processing takes away the fiber and/or protein, water, vitamins, and minerals. “Good” carbs are “regular” calories. “Bad” carbs refer to processed carbohydrates. A simple way to tell if a carbohydrate is processed is to look at the fiber content. Fiber is important as it keeps you full without causing weight gain. Fiber is a substance that cannot be digested. Fiber promotes the movement of materials through the digestive system and helps the body eliminate harmful substances.

Water

The body needs water much more than any other nutrient. The average food is 50% water. Seltzer, unsweetened herbal or fruit tea, and unsweetened decaf coffee count as water.

Vitamins and Minerals

Your body needs vitamins and minerals because they help carry out metabolic reactions. Metabolic reactions refer to everything that goes on in the body to keep it running smoothly.

Alcohol

Alcohol contains 7 calories per gram. Even though alcohol contains calories, it is different than carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, in that it is not a nutrient. The body does not need alcohol. Alcoholic drinks are very high in calories. Whiskey does not contain any carbs. All calories in whiskey are alcohol calories.

Timing of Food

The timing of your food intake does not affect your weight, only the number and type of calories consumed. (I.e the food you eat throughout the day). So, it does not matter if you: 1- Eat late at night. 2- Start your day with breakfast. 3- Skip a meal. 4- Eat two meals together. 5- Eat your meals out of order. 6- Eat less than what is on your diet. 7- Don't eat a whole meal. 8- Split up a meal in two. 9- Go a long time without eating. The only reason to concern yourself with the timing of food is if it affects your ability to stick to your diet.

Healthy and Unhealthy Food

A nutrient-dense food is one that is high in nutrition and low in calories. A processed food is one that was changed from the way it was originally created. Processed foods are not as good for you as whole foods, as they are not nutrient-dense.

So-Called “Healthy” Food

There are many foods widely considered to be healthy and/or dietetic, but aren’t, such as: Raisin Bran, frozen yogurt, diet ice cream, diet soda, diet ices, (truthfully almost any so-called “diet” food), low fat muffin, Vitamin Water, acai bowls, granola, (aside from being high in sugar, granola is very high in oil, that’s why it rhymes with Mazola and canola) granola bars, PAM, and olive oil. Healthy and dietetic aren’t necessarily the same thing. (I.e. quinoa is healthy but not dietetic).

Vegetables

Vegetables can be divided into five categories, ranging from most to least dietetic.

Category	Type of vegetables
1- Vegetables most diets consider “free”	cucumber pickles lettuce cabbage celery
2- Raw salad vegetables	tomatoes peppers onions
3- Cooked, non-starchy vegetables	broccoli cauliflower zucchini, string beans, spaghetti squash, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, hearts of palm baby corn
4- Cooked, medium starchy vegetables	butternut squash carrots beets eggplant turnip
5- Cooked, high starchy vegetables	parsnip sweet potato corn peas

Raw vegetables are more dietetic than cooked because: 1- Vegetables that are typically eaten raw, have fewer calories to begin with. (E.g. cucumbers have fewer calories than sweet potatoes). 2- Raw vegetables require the body to work harder to process. 3- Cooking a vegetable makes it easier to eat more of it. (It’s easier to eat a 50-calorie onion when it’s cooked than when it’s raw). Frozen vegetables are just as good as fresh. (Same thing with frozen fruit). When a given food on a diet is considered “free” it doesn’t necessarily mean it has no calories, but for one reason or another, the policy is that you don’t have to count it.

Nutrition Labels

A gram is an amount of something. A gram weighs 1/28 of an oz. (For visualization, a gram takes up about ¼ of a teaspoon). A gram of fat is 9 calories. A gram of carbohydrate is 4 calories. (Therefore, a gram of starch is 4 calories, a gram of sugar is 4 calories, and a gram of fiber is 4 calories). A gram of protein is 4 calories. If a food contains 27 calories from fat, the total fat for the food is 3 grams. $27 \text{ (calories)} \div 9 \text{ (calories per gram)} = 3 \text{ (grams)}$. An oz. of carbohydrates contains 112 calories. $4 \text{ (calories per gram)} \times 28 \text{ (grams per oz.)} = 112$. The ingredients on a nutrition label are listed in order of weight. The serving size listed is usually smaller than the amount people eat. This can fool people into thinking that a given food has fewer calories than it does. If a food has 90 calories, 30 calories from fat, the remaining 60 calories have to be from carbohydrates, protein, or a combination of carbohydrates and protein. Carbohydrates on a nutrition label refer to the total number of grams of

starch, sugar, and/or fiber. Sugar and fiber are specified on the nutrition label. Starch is not specified, but can be figured out by taking the grams of carbohydrates and deducting the grams of sugar and fiber. “Net carbs” are total grams of starches and sugar.

Some companies take advantage of the nutrition label to market foods as healthy when they are not. You can spot an inaccurate nutrition label by: 1- Using your knowledge of how to read it. You’ll see discrepancies. 2- Being suspicious if it seems too good to be true. 3- Being less trusting of small companies. 4- Being suspicious if it is a gimmicky type of food. (E.g. ice cream, muffins, granola, protein bars, acai bowls, etc.)

Exercise

Exercise can help you lose *fat*, improve your health, and maintain weight that was already lost. However, it generally doesn’t help people lose *weight*. E.g. you may lose inches but not lbs.). If you want to get rid of fat specifically from the stomach area, you should do cardio. The type of exercise you do doesn’t matter that much. What matters is which exercise will actually happen. The intensity of the exercise matters a lot; the more intense the better. However, when beginning to exercise it’s important to start off slow because: 1- Not to put a strain on the body. 2- Not to put a strain on your appetite; going from not exercising to a lot of exercise will make a person hungry. 3- Not to put a strain on your willpower.

Individuality

Orthodox Jews are less overweight than the general population because: 1- Dairy foods, which are more fattening than meat, can’t be eaten with meat or soon after eating meat. 2- Kosher food isn’t as easily accessible as non-kosher food. (Non-kosher take-outs are everywhere, open 24 hours, and offer drive-thrus).

Disease Prevention

Type 2 diabetes is caused by being overweight. (Not by eating too much sugar). You can lower cholesterol by losing weight, eating oat bran, and avoiding foods that contain cholesterol. Too much sodium can cause high blood pressure.

Section 6: Change

Change

In order to be successful, you need to change your eating habits. In order to change your eating habits, you have to change your mindset. Change is when you become a person who predictably follows a regimented eating plan, even when you don’t feel like it. Change is hard work.

Mindset

There are mindsets that lead to failure and mindsets that lead to success.

1- Perfectionism

People have a mindset that if they slip up, they cannot be successful. This is one reason people feel that if they break their diet they may as well give up. Also, people feel that they have to get to a perfect ideal weight, which may not be realistic.

2- Diet vs Lifestyle

When you look at your food choices as being “on a diet” it can lead to failure. It allows you to make more excuses and wrong choices. You can start your diet tomorrow. You can turn it off for a weekend, or for a party. However, when you look at your food choices as a *lifestyle*, small hiccups won’t lead to a complete derailment of your healthy eating habits. You can “go off” a diet but you can’t “go off” a

lifestyle. People who have lost weight because they went on a diet don't maintain their weight loss; as soon as they lose the weight, they go off their diet. If it becomes your lifestyle you won't have a hard time maintaining a healthy weight.

3- "Good" Foods and "Bad" Foods

(Note: For low-carb dieters, this mindset is an issue during maintenance, not during weight loss).

Another mindset people mistakenly have is to label certain foods as "good" and others as "bad."

Labeling healthy foods as "good" causes people to think they can have that food whenever they want because it is "good". Even these "good" foods contain calories. People will gain weight and wonder why. "I didn't break my diet; I didn't eat anything I wasn't supposed to," they say. They weren't careful with the amounts because it was a "good" food. In reality, even with so-called "good" foods, portion control matters. Same with labeling foods as "bad". When a food is "bad" it causes you to think you can never have it. Avoiding foods you like can lead to what is known as the abstinence violation effect. When you finally do cave in, you will spiral out of control and not be able to get back to healthy eating. Obviously, there are foods you should consume more of when trying to achieve a healthy lifestyle and foods you should consume less of. However, everything needs to be with a balance.

4- So-Called "Normal" Food

There is a notion that there are two categories: 1- Normal/regular, and 2- Healthy. People call white bread "regular bread" as opposed to whole wheat bread. The healthier option is considered abnormal. There are so-called "normal" people, those that eat pizza and french fries, and there is the health "nut"; the one that orders a salad. People who eat properly are considered "nuts." To consider processed food as normal is actually strange as it is a relatively recent invention; only about a century old, and it is terrible for you. This year 19 million people will die from a heart attack. The number of heart attack deaths before processed food became available is zero. The first heart attack death ever was in 1925. It is sad that people consider unhealthy to be "normal." If you learn to consider healthy eating as normal you will have a much easier time maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

5- Easy Answers

There is a mistaken notion that there are easy answers to our weight/eating problem. Thinking that way will influence you to try a quick fix. Even if you don't try a quick fix, and follow a proper food plan, you will feel cheated and jealous when you see others trying quick fixes. You will try to rush to lose weight. You will not make your diet a high enough priority. You will not see the need to get outside help. When given instructions on how to change your eating habits, you will dismiss those instructions because they feel unnecessary. You will not see the need to invest the time, money, and effort necessary to be successful.

6- My Fault I'm Overweight

It is not an overweight person's fault for being overweight, and we need to know that.

Success requires us to take certain actions that we won't do if we believe it is our fault for being overweight. We will feel like we are not entitled to spend money or get outside help. We will hesitate to "impose" on other people and seek out their support. Because we identify ourselves as the enemy and not our environment, we won't create walls between us and fattening, habit-forming food. We won't avoid challenging situations. (*It's not the situation's fault, it's your fault. Stop being a cop-out!*) Because we feel guilty, when we slip up, we will make excuses and rationalize away our behavior. (Why should you have to make excuses for a perfectly normal occurrence)? We'll punish ourselves for our failures. (We punish ourselves by going to an extreme, either continuing to indulge in the wrong foods or by overly restricting ourselves until of course we are so deprived that we binge again). (Why should you have to punish yourself for a perfectly normal occurrence)? We won't feel good about our successes. (*You didn't succeed. You're just not so bad like you used to be*). We will feel shame for being on a diet

instead of being proud. We may eat fattening food in private. We will not be assertive when enablers try to sabotage our efforts. We will not feel justified in turning down invitations to attend events. We may hide that we're on a diet and we wouldn't display our menu plan on the fridge because we don't want others to see it. We'll avoid the scale because we were ashamed.

7- Weight Problem vs. Food Problem

View your problem as an eating problem, not a weight problem. Otherwise, you'll try to change your weight instead of your eating habits. You won't take your problem seriously. (*Weight is a serious problem? I can fix it in a few months!*) You won't look for long term solutions. You won't connect your eating to your weight (*This food? Nah. It won't matter. It won't show up on the scale*). A small "slip up" may not matter so much weight wise, but matters big time eating habits wise. When you do slip up, you might say "the day is killed" or "the week is killed," because you gained weight anyway. "When I'm done, I get to enjoy myself." You may try to "fool" the scale; take off your shoes, only weigh yourself on Friday, or only weigh yourself in the morning. As soon as you lose some weight, you won't be as upset about your weight, and not be as motivated to continue. You won't be motivated after you've lost some weight and you're no longer losing as quickly. You certainly won't be motivated to maintain weight- then you're not losing at all! Plus, your problem is "solved."

8- Food Is Everything

We live in a society that uses food for everything: Enjoyment, entertainment, to not be bored, distraction, way to get people to an event, why we go to events, way to connect to people, celebration, commemoration, kindness, comfort ourselves, reward ourselves, reward others, help us focus, energy, stay awake, fundraise, activity, relax/unwind, show appreciation/gift, and make a business deal.

9- Change is an Event vs. Change is a Process

An incorrect mindset is that weight loss is a job you do and get over with. The reality is it's always work. It may be very rewarding and well worth it. You may be able to create good habits that make it more manageable, but your job is never over. Acknowledging that makes it much easier. Everyone knows that it's worth it even though it's work, what makes it difficult is thinking it's not supposed to be difficult anymore.

Triggers

Loss of control eating is when a person is motivated to eat properly, knows what they should be doing, but can't control themselves. People are especially vulnerable to losing control the longer they have been dieting and the more weight they lose. There are several triggers to losing control, and it's important to identify and control for them when possible. It typically takes more than one trigger at a time for you to lose control. Common triggers are 1- negative mood (sadness, stress, boredom, loneliness). 2- Food availability. Being around tempting food. 3- having broken a diet rule. The bad feeling of having broken a diet makes you lose control. 4- Restriction. Three types of restriction are: A- A food being off-limits completely. B- Eating too little. I.e. overly restricting portions. C- Having gone a while without eating. 5- Free time. 6- feeling fat.

Some of these triggers create cycles that are very difficult to break out of. I.e. triggers 1, 3, 4, and 6.

1- Negative Mood

You may lose control because you're in a bad mood, overeat, then be in a bad mood again because you overate, and lose control again.

3- Having Broken a Diet Rule

You may lose control because you broke your diet, break it again, then spiral out of control because you broke your diet again.

4- Restriction You may lose control because you restricted yourself too much, overeat, then restrict yourself again to compensate for messing up, then lose control again because you restricted yourself.

6- Feeling Fat You may lose control because you feel fat, overeat, then feel fat again because you overeat, then lose control again.

Solutions to Triggers

1- Negative Mood

Solution: Food is used for negative mood because it is both distracting and soothing. Find other activities that are distracting, soothing, or both. (Note: You will not find anything that does as good a job as food does, so don't expect to).

2- Food Availability

Solution: Modify the type and amount of food you have at home to the extent that you can without hurting family members or guests. Limit how often you go to events and how long you stay there. Plan ahead when traveling.

3- Having Broken a Diet Rule

Solution: Change your mindset of perfectionism, diet vs. lifestyle, easy answers, it's my fault I'm overweight, weight problem vs. eating problem, and change is an event vs. change is a process. Also, consider if the rules on your diet are too restrictive, as maybe you are breaking your diet because it's just too hard. Also, you may need to be more committed to your diet, as maybe you are breaking your diet because you are not committed.

4- Restriction

Solution: Make your diet less restricting. A diet can have rules and/or guidelines. Rules must be followed. Guidelines are less strict. Rules have an advantage over guidelines in that you are less likely to break them. Guidelines have an advantage over rules in that when you do break them, you are less likely to spiral out of control. See if any of the rules you are following should be changed to become guidelines.

Solutions for specific types of restriction are:

A- Food types. Solution: Make a point to include so-called "bad foods" on your plan. Be very careful to control for all triggers when you eat these so-called "bad foods." (I.e. eat it when you are in a good mood to control for negative mood, only have one portion of it around to control for food availability, eat it when you have something else you need to do right after, to control for free time, put it in your plan to control for breaking a diet rule, etc.) As you introduce so-called "bad foods" into your plan, you will find that you get better at learning how to eat otherwise habit-forming foods and be able to stop after one portion. You only get better at stopping after one portion if you control for the triggers. Otherwise, you get worse. As you get better, you will not need to control for the triggers as much.

B- Food amounts. Solution: You may need to give yourself larger portions on your plan.

C- Going several hours without eating. Solution: Realize that unlike the first two types, this restriction is unique as it is pointless. The first two restrictions are necessary to an extent. You cannot be a healthy weight unless you restrict yourself of food types and food amounts to some degree. The job you have is to find the sweet spot where there is enough restriction that you are successful, but not too much that you lose control. The restriction of fasting has no value. The scale does not care about the timing of your food.

5- Free Time

Solution: Get busy

6- Feeling Fat

Solution: Learn to not place so much value on weight, shape, and appearance. One can still make an effort to eat healthy without judging their self-worth based on their weight, shape, and appearance.

Maintenance

Maintenance is when you are no longer creating a calorie deficit and losing weight. You eat the same number of calories you burn and maintain weight. You need a special type of training to learn how to maintain weight

Maintenance Challenges

Maintenance is challenging. When people get to their new lower weight, they are hit by two unexpected disappointments: 1- Their weight wasn't such a big factor in their quality of life. 2- Maintaining weight is more work than they thought. Maintenance is harder than you think because: 1- You think it's easier than it is, so you lower your guard. When your guard is down, it becomes much more difficult. 2- You weigh much less; you burn far fewer calories, so you only get to eat very little. 3- You get no reward. Maintaining weight doesn't feel good. People overeat because they get a good feeling; a "high" from food. People are willing to forgo that "high," because of the "high" they get from losing weight. They are not willing to forgo the "high" they get from food just to maintain weight. 4- There is no end. People are able to endure a diet because there is an end. Maintenance does not end.

How difficult maintenance will be, varies from person to person. Factors that determine how difficult maintenance will be are: 1- How much weight you lose. The more weight you lose the more difficult it is to maintain. 2- How similar your diet is to a proper maintenance plan. The more similar a diet is to what you could sustain for life, the easier it will be.

Strategy question: Should I lose extra weight because I will probably gain some weight back? I want some wiggle room. Answer: No. Losing additional weight will make you more likely to gain weight back, and a lot more weight. This offsets the benefit of having some "cushion." (E.g. if you lose 50 lbs. you may have to struggle to not gain back 5 lbs. If you were to lose 60 lbs., you will have to struggle to not gain back 20 lbs.).

Maintenance Solutions

Solutions for maintenance are: 1- Weighing every day (unless you have an eating disorder). 2- Skepticism. Being skeptical of your ability to maintain weight. Healthy skepticism ensures that you will be sufficiently on guard. 3- Tracking your food. 4- Exercise. Exercise plays a very big role during maintenance because: A- Metabolism slows with age. B- Metabolism slows with inactivity. C- You used to get exercise by existing when you were heavier. Walking was exercise. Talking was exercise. Breathing was exercise. Thin people do not get a workout from existing. 5- Set a "panic weight;" a number that when you see it, you stop whatever you're doing, and make weight loss the biggest priority. Otherwise, nothing will stop you from continuing to gain weight. (*What's the difference if I gain one more lb.?*) The number for the "panic weight" should be around 5 lbs. higher than your realistic maintainable weight. That number should take into account the Jewish calendar, certain times of the year that should allow for some weight gain.

Critical Phase and Lifestyle Phase

The beginning of maintenance is a critical time; when you set yourself up to be able to maintain weight for life. The critical phase lasts for one week per lb. lost. (E.g. if you lost 20 lbs. The critical period is 20 weeks). The five solutions for maintenance (i.e. weighing daily, etc.) are more important during the critical phase. The objective during the critical phase is to learn how to be healthy and maintain weight, while being somewhat normal and less rigid. The rest of your life is the lifestyle phase; when you have the tools and training to be successful long term.