

Making Peace with Food

For a life free of food and weight worries, join us...

Because it's not about willpower

The Top 5 Mistakes People Make When They Try To Lose Weight

Losing weight is so difficult for so many people, and it was for me for many years. The lasting solution came from a surprising source; but more about that later. You asked for the top 5 mistakes, and here they are:

1. If at first they don't succeed, they try, try again.

Forget Monday night football, our culture's favorite sport is the Monday morning diet kick-off. At least with female audiences. Males often play a different, more subtle game which we'll talk about later.

Check every statement that feels familiar:

- 1. I'll do it this time.
- 2. There's this new diet that just came out, and it's the one that will finally work.
- 3. No wonder I couldn't lose weight before, I was eating the wrong combination of foods for my body type. Now I know better.
- 4. I know I keep dieting, but what else can I do; I guess that's just the way I'm built.
- 5. Just about everyone I know is either dieting or talking about it. That's the way it is in this looks-oriented, junk-food-rich, society.

How did you do?

In my dieting career, I would have consistently checked 4 out of 5. (After a while experience taught me not to believe in #1).

Ok, here's another quick test. What do you think is the success rate in dieting?

- A. Less than 5%
- B. From 5 to 20%
- C. From 20 to 30%
- D. From 30 to 40%
- E. From 40 to 50%
- F. Over 50%

To put it in perspective, remember your school days and passing rates? If we put dieters in a classroom and there was a 25% success rate (C), it means that three out of four people in the class would flunk. Wouldn't those odds want to make you switch schools?

Well the answer isn't C. It's A. The exact number depends on the study, but we've often seen quoted a 1% success rate. According to those findings, if you're part of a crowd of 100 dieters sitting in a theater, only one of you will escape the failure trap. Feel confident it's going to be you?

"But I don't know what else to do!"

That's why I kept trying. Oh, and since I'm a notorious diet drop out, I'm a shoe-in for being one of the 99 flunkies. So your odds just improved to 1 in 99.

2. Missing the boat on denial river

Pardon the old pun. This mistake has several versions:

- ◆ "I'm not so bad, especially in the morning, when I hold my breath in. Besides, I can lose weight whenever I really put my mind to it, but there are more important things in life", (they say to themselves as they drag their body around feeling not so great physically and/or emotionally). That one is popular with the male of the species, but women can also be accomplished players.

If you really don't think you have a problem, then nothing will work. But often underneath it all, people know they have a problem, but they also know that they either don't want to put themselves through dieting, or that it won't work. Pretty smart, except the extra bulk is still hanging around, literally.

- ◆ “It’s not the right time to start on a diet, because:
 - I have a lot of issues to deal with right now
 - I’m under too much pressure
 - Holidays, birthday, trip, etc. is coming up, and I won’t be able to stick to a diet & I want to be able to enjoy myself
 - I’m not feeling well enough and I need comforting
 - I have to heal past wounds first”
 - You get the idea.

There is merit in many of these reasons,...if you were planning to lose weight through dieting, which brings us back to mistake #1.

3. Do it to me, Houdini

Nothing is as appealing as the magic solution. How much money have you spent hunting down the latest express answer? I can only fantasize about the luxury trips I could have taken with the money I devoted to the Great Thin Hope. You know, the one that was going to either allow me to eat and still lose, or take away the desire to eat.

I’m being unfair. A lot of times the magic solution doesn’t promise immediate results. It usually is expensive though, and is supposed to somehow finally make you do what you couldn’t do on your own.

I’m really being unfair. There is validity in that thinking. It recognizes the need to do something different, that dieting alone rarely works. And there are many valid programs and products.

Problem is that they often aren’t successful by themselves either, especially if all we do is passively take the magic pill or show up for the magic session.

It’s not all bad, consumer spending is supposedly good for the economy. I for one spent my share, not only on the magic solutions but also on excess food at the same time.

4. Just buck up and do it

We may not look it, but we are chronically deprived, on many levels:

- ◆ The nutritional content of our foods is poor, both because much of it is processed, and because of the state of the soil.
- ◆ We are sleep deprived, tired, and starving for quality down time.

- ◆ We feel an insatiable, if subconscious, need for replenishment, our energy being drained by long commutes, pollution, world events, economic uncertainty, unstable family and community structures, etc.

I wonder, how would most chronically deprived, tired, and insatiable persons react to the idea of demanding even more of themselves and whipping themselves into shape?

Rebellion, resistance, and sabotage make a pretty appealing menu: “OK, even if I let you win this battle and lose 10 lbs., the war isn’t over yet buddy; I’ll regain lost ground.”

5. Ignore Do or Die

All right, it’s a brave new world. But we’re dealing with it, we’re going to work and getting things done.

We think we have gotten used to being stressed, but our bodies haven’t. They perceive themselves under attack, and they react as if their existence is threatened. They want to survive.

And what are man’s primary survival mechanisms?

1. Running away from danger.

How can we; it’s all around us. Granted it rarely is immediately life-threatening, but our bodies’ bio-chemical systems still react the same way.

2. Fighting

Doesn’t everyone seem a little touchy lately? Which makes us feel more under attack, etc.

3. Drinking water.

Many of us drink mainly coffee and pop, which dehydrate us even more.

4. EATING!!!!

That we can do, and do, and do.

The fifth weight loss mistake, is ignoring the impact of human’s basic need: survival.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Something different. We can use the latest research in the field of personal performance; we can work with our knowledge of how humans function, rather than ignore it.

How do I know this? As co-founder of a personal performance training and coaching group (www.supermindssystem.com), I had access to both the science and the practical experience in what propels someone to success in business, athletics, or personal life.

And because life should be enjoyed, we designed programs that brought on success while also reducing stress.

So why wouldn't the same principles apply to weight loss? They could, and I knew that from personal experience.

To have lasting weight loss success, we need to:

- ◆ Learn techniques to defuse our stress and other negative emotions, including food cravings.
- ◆ Train our mind to work for us, not against us, when it comes to weight loss. We have to become mental athletes.
- ◆ The techniques have to be practical in today's pace of life.
- ◆ The process has to be pleasant and easy, to prevent subconscious rebellion.

In terms of what foods to eat, how much exercise to do, common sense applies. Most of us know exactly what we should be doing, we just can't make ourselves do it consistently.

Think back on your weight loss attempts. Didn't they fail because you sabotaged yourself, gave into cravings, lost hope, felt it was too hard, wanted the comfort of old habits, etc.?

What is really needed is a system (like the Making Peace With Food program, for example), to bust sabotage thinking and doing, and to make it feel natural to behave healthily. Then the struggle is over and weight is lost as a natural consequence of the eating and exercising actions you want to take.

Not a pill, but it's almost magic, as long as you do your part.