

Stop Fooling Yourself

Most dieters have an amazing ability to delude themselves about food. They give themselves a “fake” excuse to eat?

Read the following list of self-deluding sabotaging thoughts and check off those that you’ve had in the past.

It’s okay to eat this because.....

- It’s not a whole piece
- I’ll only eat it this one time
- It’s not that fattening
- I’ll make up for it by eating less later
- It won’t matter
- I’ve paid for it
- It’ll go to waste
- I’ll disappoint someone if I don’t
- Everyone else is eating it
- I’m celebrating
- No one will see me eating it
- It’s a special occasion
- I’m upset, and I don’t care
- I’m craving it, and I’ll probably just eat it eventually

These thoughts delude you into eating when you shouldn’t. After all a calorie is a calorie, no matter when, where, or why you eat it. You might be able to see how irrational these thoughts are right now. Yet, in the moment when you really want to eat something, you might try to convince yourself that these thoughts are valid.

How to Stop Fooling Yourself

The next time you have an urge to eat something that’s not on your plan, notice what’s going through your mind. There’s usually a thought that starts with the phrase, *It’s okay to eat this because*

These are usually fooling-yourself thoughts. You need to prepare yourself in advance for these kinds of thoughts. Create a “It’s Not Okay” Response Card similar to the one below and read it daily.

It's Not Okay

It's not okay to eat unplanned food of any kind. I'm just trying to fool myself. Every single time I eat something I'm not supposed to, I strengthen my giving-in muscle and weaken my resistance muscle. I might feel good for the few seconds I'm eating, but I'll feel bad afterwards. If I want to lose excess weight and keep it off, I absolutely must stop fooling myself

Sabotaging Thought: It's okay to eat this because the amount of food is so small

Helpful Response: Just because it doesn't have many calories doesn't mean I should eat it. I shouldn't! I need to use every opportunity I can to break myself of the habit of eating things I haven't planned.

Sabotaging Thought: It's okay to eat this because otherwise I'm wasting money.

Helpful Response: I'm better off wasting money than gaining weight.

Sabotaging Thought: It's okay to eat this because everyone else is eating it.

Helpful Response: I have to decide whether I want to eat like everyone else and remain overweight or control my eating and lose weight.

Sabotaging Thought: It's okay to eat this because I want it – and, besides, I don't really care!

Helpful Response: I might not care right at this moment, but I'll care in a few minutes – I'll be very unhappy if I eat something I shouldn't. And I sure will care when I find that I'm not losing weight!

Get Back on Track

You are about to learn how to respond to a specific fooling-yourself thought – the one that encourages you to abandon your diet *for the whole day* after you've eaten something you weren't supposed to. You might be saying to yourself:

I can't believe I let myself eat this? I've really blown it.... I might as well eat whatever I want for the rest of the day and start dieting again tomorrow. But there's no reason to wait. Have you really blown it completely? Of course not!

What did you eat? Some chocolate? A burger? A slice of cake? Let's say you ate some food that contained 500 calories. To gain 1 pound, you have to eat around 3,500 extra calories – seven times what you ate. An extra 500 calories is not going to noticeably affect your weight. So you've eaten 500 extra calories – so what? Does it make more sense to stop now or to keep eating? There's no reason to keep eating and take in an extra 100, 200, 300 or even 3,000 calories.

Get Back on Your Eating Plan NOW

- ✓ **Acknowledge your initial slip.** Tell yourself, *Okay, I shouldn't have eaten that ... I made a mistake ... This one mistake is certainly not going to make me gain weight this week.*
- ✓ **Recommit yourself to your eating plan.** Read your Response Cards and your Advantages of Losing Weight card.
- ✓ **Draw a symbolic line.** Don't give yourself until tomorrow to get back on track. Instead say, Here's the line, right here where I stop this unplanned eating. Mark this line by brushing your teeth, going for a walk or something on your distraction list.
- ✓ **Give yourself credit for stopping- at any point.** If you want to keep eating but you don't, you deserve credit so put it on your credit/rewards chart. You need to cut yourself some slack for being human and making a mistake.
- ✓ **Watch for feelings of failure and helplessness.** When you slip, you might start to feel like a failure and believe that you just can't lose weight. It's essential to remind yourself that mistakes are inevitable; it's normal to stray from your diet from time to time. No one's perfect.
- ✓ **Continue to eat normally.** Some people think, *Now that I ate something I wasn't supposed to, I have to make up for it and not eat for the rest of the day.* This thinking may end up making you feel unhappy and resentful or anxious that you'll be too hungry later and you might end up eating everything you want. You need to put this mistake in perspective. It's just not that big a deal. Go ahead and continue with your eating plan for the rest of the day.

Learn from your mistake. Review your mistake and use it as an opportunity to learn so you can limit similar occurrences in the future. What might have led to your slip, did you:

- ✓ Forget to review your Advantages, NO CHOICE, and it's No Okay Response Cards?
- ✓ Neglect to plan your food?
- ✓ Forget (or not bother) to have your planned food available?
- ✓ Meet up with someone who pushed food on you?
- ✓ Try to eat like the other people you were with?
- ✓ Encounter an unexpected trigger?
- ✓ End up surrounded by food you hadn't planned to eat?

Sabotaging Thought: I can't believe I ate that! I'll never lose weight!

Helpful Response: What would my weight-loss coach tell me if she knew I ate this? She would say. "Don't feel bad. Everyone overeats from time to time. You can start again right now. It's not such a big deal. Give yourself a break."

Sabotaging Thought: This is too hard. I can't do it. I'll never be able to stop myself from eating like this; I may as well give up.

Helpful Response: Okay, so I made a mistake. This was inevitable. It's unreasonable to expect myself to be perfect every single time. I'm not a failure. I can learn something from this experience to help me the next time.

What is a binge?

Bingeing is an extreme form of overeating. When people binge, they feel a desperate urge to keep eating. They block out their voice of reason and feel out of control, sometimes as if they're almost in a trance. They eat an abnormally large amount of food-often quickly-and become uncomfortably full. Many people have been able to get control over their bingeing by using the techniques they have learned on the programme. If you have been following this programme faithfully but still experience frequent binges, you might need to consult a professional who specialises in eating disorders.

Weighing In

Weekly weigh-ins can help in the following ways:

- ✓ **They allow you to celebrate and build up your confidence** when you've lost weight. It's important for you to recognise how your hard work has directly led to your weight loss.
- ✓ **They keep you honest if you've gained.** If you haven't been following all the steps in the programme, regular weigh-ins make you face that you can't get away with doing only the parts of the programme you feel like doing.
- ✓ **They help you stay committed to the programme.** If you're happy with your weight loss, you'll feel motivated to continue doing what you've been doing. If you're disappointed, you can declare that you're going to figure out where you went wrong, reread parts of this book, and start fresh.

But be careful: Weighing yourself can erode your motivation more than it helps if you step on the scale with the wrong mind-set:

Think of times you have weighted yourself and felt unhappy. Does this scenario seem familiar?

The scale shows a higher weight than you'd hoped to see. You say to yourself. I can't believe it. This is terrible. You end up getting upset, angry, sad, demoralized, hopeless. You then embark on a "Bad eating day"

It's important to you to start using the scale as a guide but it is not Judge and Jury.

- **If the number on the scale doesn't go down-** or doesn't go down much- and you suspect you've been eating too much, don't waste time blaming yourself and having negative thoughts. Consider what you might be doing wrong and do something positive to solve the problem. Maybe you have become lax about measuring food or counting your Carbs. Maybe you need to take more exercise.

- **If the scale doesn't go down and you know you've been following your diet and exercise plans faithfully, don't panic.** You can easily go up or down 2 pounds on any given day due to hormonal or other physiological reasons. If so, you'll undoubtedly lose weight next week if you continue to follow your plan.
- **If the scale has gone down, be happy, even if you've lost only a small amount of weight.** We celebrate every half pound.

Don't expect your weight to go down every week, it won't

Don't weigh yourself at home as your scales cannot tell you if you have lost fat, gained water or muscle so you are not getting all the information you need. It's best to weigh-in once a week at your consultation.

Sabotaging Thought: I don't want to weigh in, I think I've gained weight

Helpful Response: I may or may not have gained weight. If I have, it's not the end of the world, but I do need to know so I can figure what to do. I need to get over my fear of the scales, it's very important that I don't avoid facing facts.

Sabotaging Thought: I'll feel terrible if the number on the scale goes up!

Helpful Response: I'll only feel terrible if I let my sabotaging thoughts convince me that I'm bad or weak for gaining weight. At worst, gaining weight means I might have made mistakes that I can correct during this coming week.