

# To Eat or Not To Eat

Julie Hryniewicz-Hache -- Wednesday, December 13, 2006, 9:53AM



Nanaimo bars, sugar cookies, eggnog, chocolates, and bags of chips are working their way into cupboards, freezers, and fridges around the world as you read. Although this is supposed to be "the most wonderful time of the year", December can also turn out to be very stressful for individuals who are constantly on the path to "losing weight". If you tend to dread bathing

suit season or find yourself perpetually on a diet, then you too, may have a love/hate relationship with food that may actually be the root cause of your problem.

I remember being fourteen years old and drinking three jugs of water the night before a dance recital, thinking that this would help me to lose some weight before getting into the skimpy costumes. Obviously this was ridiculous and crazy but I honestly believed that I was "fat". Looking back at videos of that recital I realize that I was a beanpole! Yes, I had gained a few pounds when I stopped dancing six days a week entering high school, but I was so thin that my ribs were sticking out.

Where did this come from? Why, in my early teens was I obsessed with my weight? How could I have formed such a distorted image of my body that I would go through the next twenty years of my life feeling as if I was "fat" and wearing baggy clothes to hide, even though I was never really that overweight? This cycle of self-loathing, frustration, and constant negative self-talk lasted until I crumbled in my early thirties and I finally put it to rest.

During my nervous breakdown phase, when I immersed myself in positive, self-help literature, I realized that although I appeared very confident on the outside, I actually had extreme low self-esteem. Even when I would receive compliments on my appearance, I rejected and blocked them until it was no fun for anyone to make the effort to compliment me any more. It is interesting that we would never talk as badly to other people as we do to ourselves; this is toxic!

I guess when I started to pay attention to the deeper qualities about myself that I was proud of, I began to change my belief system about my value to the world. I started to realize that if I placed so much of my worth on my appearance, I would be in a real pickle when I started to get older and saggy. I began to focus on my desire to impact the world in a positive way and get over myself. Most people are consumed with their own issues to make much of a fuss over our insecurities.

When a child is hugging you and you are laughing and smiling, do you really think that they care what size you wear? When you are being intimate with your spouse and they are feeling loved and cherished, do you really think they care about your belly? When you are bringing joy to the lives of other people using your unique gifts and passions, does it really matter what the scale says. Throw that nasty thing away!

With all of the rich foods, sweets, and temptations this holiday season it is time to snap out of it and stop denying ourselves pleasurable treats - we usually end up eating them anyways! This season; however, try cutting out the negative comments to yourself afterwards. The downward spiral of negative emotions is what is more responsible for weight gain than indulging in the occasional treat. It is also nature's purpose, this time of year, as the weather turns colder, for our bodies to add weight to protect us from the elements.

Yes, this time of year brings rich foods and drinks to our table. Yes, we may be hindered by the weather because it is more difficult to get outside. If you are taking the action steps to staying healthy, then there is no reason to allow any negative emotions to suck away your energy. If you are choosing to not take the action steps to staying healthy, then that is okay too; however, there is no justification for stressing over weight gain or failure to lose then because you haven't been taking the action steps.

If you are dealing with other stressful issues in your life, that is taking energy away from your mission of a healthier body, then deal with those issues in a constructive way so that you can get your mind clear again for keeping your body functioning efficiently. You will not be able to concentrate on a healthier lifestyle if you are consumed with stress, worry, and confusion over another issue. Once you let go of the negativity that is holding you back, you will increase your energy levels for more productive endeavors.

Walk inside the Steelback Centre if you are in the Sault or find another indoor venue, such as a mall or fitness club to walk or exercise, get or

use a workout video that you enjoy, dress warm and go outside anyways; snow shoe, cross country ski, ice skate, downhill ski, or winter hike. Embrace our seasons and get fresh air because it is beautiful outside and so refreshing. Most of us live in Northern Ontario so there is no use fighting reality!

Work with our snowy climate, find a solution, take responsibility, and take the action. Eating sweets over the holidays can be a pleasurable activity but not if we are going to go into depression mode because we are punishing ourselves and stressing over the weight gain. Do the activity so that you can enjoy the pleasures of the seasons. Use moderation so that you don't deny yourself completely but also don't just give up on all of your efforts because you may have gained some weight. If your goal is to get healthier, any small step is progress.

This time of year is a perfect opportunity to circulate positive energy. Write Christmas or holiday greetings to all of your friends and loved ones. (We love getting any mail that is not a bill!) We feel special when we know that someone took the time to write a greeting for us and enjoy displaying cards around our home. Instead of spending hours in front of that time eating device we call a television, get bundled up and go outside for a walk. Instead of stressing over eating a peanut butter ball, count all of your blessings and have a ton of fun this holiday.

A worthy goal this festive season is to be as happy as you can possibly handle. Spread joy, laughter, fun, smiles, encouragement, greetings, support, love, kindness, charity, time, beauty, and hope to others. You have been blessed with gifts that are to be utilized for the benefit of others. What are your gifts and how will you use them this holiday season? You are that special that you get to impact the lives of other people. Remember that your happiness is contagious. Just choose it... Life is too short to miss out on all the pleasures of the season.

"Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."  
Abraham Lincoln

Some material from this article is from the "Make Peace With Your Weight" course being offered in January at Sault College. Four-week sessions run approximately \$85.00, including care package and GST. For further information about Julie's five Continuing Education courses for women, please visit [www.yourlifeyourpurpose.com](http://www.yourlifeyourpurpose.com) and register at [www.saultc.on.ca](http://www.saultc.on.ca).