



FAMILY, WORK, PARTIES: TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

My husband has a challenge when buying me a gift: Because I'm afraid I'll misplace it, I don't wear expensive jewelry. Because I think money should be spent on things less transient, I don't appreciate cut flowers. Chocolate, always an easy answer for some, is out of the question, unless ... perhaps ... well ... maybe today ... it is the perfect gift for me.

And that is just how fickle I am about chocolate. Some days it is a gift from the Gods; other days, it is the bane of my existence.

Is it really his job to figure out which is which?

Renee was telling me about how her husband often liked to order appetizers when they were at a restaurant. "He asks so sweetly if I would like to order an appetizer. I feel like he is really doing it to be nice, and he gets kind of a sad look on his face if I say no. So the other day, I told him, 'you can order what ever you want. Maybe I'll have a little bit of it.' He ordered these nachos that were just brimming with fat calories. I did have a few, and it wasn't so bad - because I just ate less of my dinner. But I'd rather they hadn't been on the table at all."

Should Renee have just said that she would prefer no appetizer be ordered?

Our relationships with other people with regard to food can be complicated, to say the least. Here is a way to make it less complicated: Be consistent in the messages that you send other people. Some folks trying to lose weight complain of “food pushers” in their lives. From my experience, “food pushers” push a lot less if you consistently tell them no. If, however, you are holding out your arm, waiting for them to twist it, while you are saying no ... no ... no ... well okay ... yes, then you are responsible the next time that they try to “push” food on you.

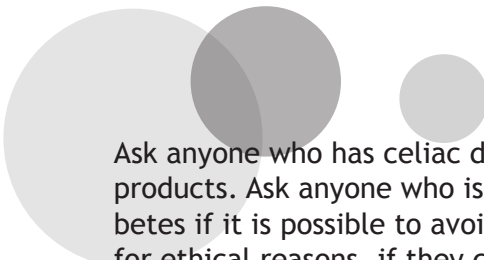
Which is why I have to take complete responsibility with regard to myself and chocolate ... I don't send a consistent message.

*Not everything that is faced can be changed,
 but nothing can be changed until it is faced.*

Lucille Ball

This leads us to the ultimate way to make all dieting less complicated and more effective. Take full responsibility for all of your food choices. To be sure, there are challenges in society and in our lives. It may be easier to just eat what is in front of us than to seek out or even insist on a more healthful alternative. But we need to own up to the fact that we indeed can do this and it is our choice if we don't.

REASONABLE FOOD STRATEGY



Ask anyone who has celiac disease if it is possible to avoid all wheat products. Ask anyone who is in danger of losing their foot from diabetes if it is possible to avoid sugar. Ask a person who is vegetarian for ethical reasons, if they can avoid all meat products. They can, and do.


You can modify how, what, when and where you eat. All of these things are completely within your control. When attending a conference, you can bring your own food. You can eat before you go to a party. You can arrangements with hosts to accommodate special diet requests. One of my clients, Barbara, is redefining herself from a cookie-baking grandma to a playing-on-the-floor grandma.

It is a matter of choice. It is a matter of you taking full responsibility. I'm not suggesting that your actions have to be drastic, but I am insisting that you not blame circumstances or other people for your diet choices. Often it is simply a matter of thinking ahead.

Initially this bit of news may seem like a burden. The last thing you need is another item on your list of things to think about and prepare for. Ultimately, though, if you can shake off your victim mentality and take full responsibility for your diet choices, it will be empowering.

You are free to make your own selections despite your spouse's preferences. You are not at the mercy of what society throws at you. You get to choose in accordance with your own best intentions and your own best interest. You get to choose in favor of your own healthy heart and your own long life.

In order to have diet success, you need to squarely face the fact that your diet is your responsibility and that you can change it.



AT-WORK STRATEGIES

One of the most difficult areas to deal with tempting food is at work. Here are a few strategies that you might want to employ. (Note: Most likely you are going to be resistant to these ideas...because you don't want to call attention to your diet. I get it. I also get that you spend eight plus hours a day there and "willpower" probably hasn't worked consistently, if you've read this far.) Be open minded as you read through the possibilities.

- 1) Clear your immediate area. No food needs to be within reach or your line of sight.
- 2) Limited and define -- as in: "food only goes in the break room" or "birthday's are celebrated once a month."
- 3) If "potlucks" are the order of the day - set a someone-has-to-bring-something-remotely-healthy rule. You may have to be that someone, but it is even better if it is co-opted into the routine.
- 4) Make a no-vending machine rule for yourself.
- 5) Ask. Ask if a fruit salad can be included along with the morning pick-up of pastries. Ask if a sandwich/salad box lunch can be provided instead of pizza at a meeting.
- 6) Make an I-only-eat-my-own-food rule. This is the most effective strategy ... it takes all the drama and temptation out of the ballgame. It forces you to plan and prepare; to anticipate your food needs; and to take complete responsibility for your choices. Do it for a week and observe the results.