

When people make an appointment with us to discuss nutrition, we're never sure what the appointment is going to entail. Most people know that eating chicken and vegetables is a better choice than eating a hamburger and fries. There is a huge difference in *knowing* and *then choosing* what you want more. Some people think that they know what to eat, but learn that maybe they don't after all.



We've learned over the years of counseling people regarding food, there are more emotional connotations than you can imagine when it comes to food. It seems that as we were raised, food played a huge role. When grieving we turn to "comfort food." When celebrating we turn to desserts. When we accomplish a fete we enjoy a festive type meal. When we gather as a group for social functions; it involves food. Have to get an immunization; let's make it better with an ice cream cone after! We could go on and on with these examples.

Initially, upon meeting, clients admit they expect to be told to stop everything that they are doing and change. Once *we knew* this was impossible, we settled for teaching people how to make choices that they could live with; on their own terms, in their own world. We were still dealing with behavior modification, but the delivery wasn't as painful. Not everyone catches on; as we were still showing them how to change and improve, but ultimately it was up to them to do the work. This isn't always successful though. Change is hard!

We ask our clients to write in a journal to chart their daily progress. It's incredible what information can be gained via journaling. When someone falls back on their old patterns we can literally track it and work on strategies to minimize that from happening again in the future. It saddens us when someone isn't entirely up-front in their journal. You can't learn from your mistakes unless you are ready to confront them. Typically when people stop journaling it's because they don't want to face their choices.

When our clients' come in because they've been less than "perfect," and perhaps had a dessert that they weren't planning on; we ask only these two questions: "why?" and "was it worth it?" "*Because I felt like it*" is an honest answer and easy to see how that happens. And "*yes, it was delicious!*" is an awesome reply. That's so much better than; "*I was so mad at my husband/wife, I ate the bag of cookies, and, they weren't even worth it!*" **That is a bummer!** If you're going to eat cookies you should plan it and you should enjoy it!

There are so many mixed messages these days. "Don't mix carbohydrates with proteins, don't eat fat, wait! Eat fat, not sugar! Eat like a caveman. Don't eat grains, eat as much protein as you want, but not fruit. Eat unlimited amounts of fruit and vegetables. Get in lots of fiber. Drink Coconut Water. Artificial Sweeteners are bad for you. Sugar is worse for you."

The best advice we could ever give? **Relax**. Food is not your enemy. ***Food doesn't make you fat. Too much food makes you fat.*** Exercise is good for you. The right amount of exercise that you can fit into your lifestyle is the right amount. Exercise that you enjoy is the best kind for you.

There are days when you just want a few cookies. It's ok to have cravings and NOT give into them. It's likely that the craving is really a habit and will dissipate in less than an hour. If you still want that cookie in a few days, get it! When you *choose* this way, you'll enjoy it, you won't be upset with yourself and you'll feel more deserving. That is behavior modification that you implemented on your own terms!

Whatever you do, you've got to be able to do "it" for the long term. Don't beat yourself up. No one is perfect and you shouldn't try to be. Just keep on plugging away at being better. Meal to meal and eventually day to day keep on making better choices and you'll not only wind up thinner, you'll be happier, and feel more confident. You have to eat for the rest of your life, why not learn how to do it right? **Food is not your enemy.**

The reason that our clients' are so successful with our eating programs is because we teach them how to create change that they can live with. It's important to understand that unless you believe that you can do it, you won't experience success. Having someone give you a plan that you can take into your

life, grocery store, favorite restaurant, on vacation....etc. gives you the freedom to live the life you want to live! That's what separates us from the pack.

Just decide that you want to learn how to eat not only for today, but for the rest of your life.