

Ditch the Diet

The first step on this journey is to ditch the diet. You know that diets don't help you to lose weight. If they did, there would only be one and you would only need to go on it once. But how many diets have you been on during your life? How many times have you started a diet on Monday and felt great. But, by Friday, you're already getting bored and, after all, it is the weekend and we all know that calories don't count at the weekend, do they?

Well, you're probably in the grip of a diet mentality.

Diets encourage you to focus on food, to think about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat and it seems that everyone on a diet thinks about food all of the time (apart from when they eat).

Diets fail because diets make you feel deprived. You feel as if you are being forced into not eating the foods you like to eat. You don't feel that giving up these foods is a choice, you have to use your willpower and willpower feels difficult. You can't let your willpower slip for a minute in case you slip up and eat a box of doughnuts.

Willpower involves far too much thought! We think that if we battle the food temptation using willpower, we'll beat it. But if I had to use willpower to stop myself eating that box of doughnuts, the thought would still be there. And we all know what happens when we try not to think of something. Don't think of a purple elephant. What happened? Yes, of course, you had to think of a purple elephant in order not to think of a purple elephant. And this is what happens every time you use your willpower to stop you having something you think you want.

This is like having an imaginary friend sitting next to you and trying to keep this imaginary friend from talking and interrupting whilst you're working. Shush, shush, I'm working, but when you see that the friend is made up, you don't need to control it. Also, when you see that the thought of the box of doughnuts is also made up, you don't need to exert willpower to deal with it. When I accept that I am having a thought, and that it is just a thought, not a command, I can let it go. Thinking, "I must not eat the doughnuts" keeps the thought of the doughnut alive and the thought becomes bigger and bigger until it feels like a compulsion.

Recognising that it is you that is doing the thinking and that there are no messages transmitted from the doughnut, (it isn't really 'calling you'), frees you from the diet mentality. Stop and take time to think about whether you really want the doughnut? How will you feel after you've eaten it? Choose whether to have the doughnut or not? If you choose to have it, you have to accept responsibility for that choice. It doesn't mean you have no willpower, as if willpower was something outside of you that you can't control. It just means that it is the choice you made.

Why Diets make you want more food

When you're on a diet, you deny yourself the foods you think you want to eat and as soon as you stop the diet you go straight back to eating those foods because you haven't addressed where the desire comes from. If you stop eating bags of chocolate buttons because you're on a diet, you still want the buttons but you're being 'good' and not eating them. You're probably saving them to eat when you've reached your ideal weight. Hmmmm, let's think about that one?

The worst diets, in my opinion, are the diet brands that sell their own food, that encourage you to buy their meal bar or shake. How can you develop a healthy attitude to food if you become dependent on these products and you haven't eaten real food for weeks? When you introduce food into your day again, you'll probably go back to eating the way you ate before the diet.

When you're on a diet, if you slip up and eat a 'forbidden' food, you think you've failed and feel like a failure and then you feel bad. And what do you normally do to feel better? You eat the food you're trying to avoid and decide to start the diet again tomorrow. That 'all or nothing' thinking will keep you in the diet trap forever!

You think about food all the time because you're on a diet. You think about the foods you 'can't' have. You think that it isn't fair that you can't eat the food you like and if you're going to stop eating cream cakes tomorrow, then you might as well eat as many as you can right now because you're never going to eat them again. And we know what happens with 'never again' food, don't we? When we feel forced into not eating the cake, we feel deprived and so the next day we go out and buy more cakes to start the cycle again.

But then you get strong and cut out the cakes and you might start to feel good about yourself, so you start to weigh yourself to track your progress. But, if you step on the scales and see that you have put on a pound, your mood will drop. You start thinking that you'll never lose weight and become discouraged and blame the scales, or your weight, for your mood without recognising that you have created the mood. If you were happy before you stepped on to the scales, what changed? The way you think about yourself. And, when you're thinking about yourself negatively, it's easy to say, 'sod it' and go back to eating the cakes to try and get a good feeling. Remember, the scales can't affect your mood, only your thoughts about the number on the scales can do that.

Constantly weighing yourself is as limiting as weighing your food. When you address the effect rather than the cause, you start back on the diet again, and deprive yourself of the food that you think you like again, until the extra pounds drop off. And, as we've mentioned before, at the end of a diet time frame or when you reach a target weight, you congratulate yourself by eating the cake you'd denied yourself and this reactivates the addiction to sugar and fat. I've had clients that

used to get a take away after the weigh in at their slimming club because they'd been weighed, and they could start again the next day.

Imagine if you stop eating bread when you are on a diet, you might not have considered how light and bloat free you feel without bread, nor have you considered how your body reacts to bread, you've only stopped eating it because you 'have' to and you think that you still want it, you tell yourself you love bread but you can't have it. So when the diet finishes, you go back to eating bread again and this starts a mental craving for starch and sugar, and starch and sugar give you an insulin high before causing your mood to drop. So then you feel low and to feel better you look for that high and eat more of the foods that caused your mood to drop in the first place. This is like a dog chasing its tail. You go around and around without end. And this is a sign that you have a diet mentality and is one of the many reasons to ditch the diet.

You've been sold a lie by the diet industry

You know that eating food that is natural and not made in a laboratory will make you feel good and allow the pounds to drop off. So why would you eat processed food that is full of sugar, salt and fat rather than choosing a healthy option that probably tastes better? Because we're surrounded by food type products that contain these ingredients and people that are eating this type of food and it feels normal. Every advert on tv is for processed food and drinks, we never see an advert for an apple on tv do we?

When you start to eat fresh, natural foods, you're motivated to choose these foods because you feel fit and healthy. The more in control you feel, the happier and more attractive you feel and the more you want to eat in this way. It's a no brainer, isn't it?

One of the problems with the diet industry and diet food, or 'healthy' options is that people eat more of these products in the mistaken belief that they are being virtuous.

People mistakenly assume that low fat food is better for you or will help you lose weight. But this is rarely the case. A recent UK study found that 10% of diet foods contain the same or more calories than the non low fat food, and that 40% had more sugar.

Research also has shown that putting low fat on a nutrition label leads all consumers, especially those who are overweight, to overeat and this was proven when researchers presented two groups of people with two tables full of food and drinks. One table contained normal food and the other table contained 'healthy' options or reduced fat products and, even though both lots of food contained the same amount of calories per 100g, the group that were given low fat foods ate more of the food. Each group served themselves what they considered to be the right portion for them, but the people that took their food from the 'healthy' table all served themselves larger portions than the recommended serving size.

What people don't realise is that the fat that is taken out of the diet food is replaced by other ingredients, such as additives and sugar, to stop the product tasting of cardboard. Another ingredient that is added is methylcellulose. Methylcellulose is used as a thickener in low fat food. It's also used in soap, shampoo and wallpaper paste.

Count the chemicals, not the calories.

There aren't any chemicals in natural food, a pineapple doesn't come with an ingredients list but lots of diet food does.

Look at the ingredients in a well know diet club's Raspberry tart yoghurt:

Raspberry Tart:

Reconstituted Skimmed Milk, Skimmed Milk, Water, Raspberry (5%), Skimmed Milk Powder, Fructose-Glucose Syrup (2.5%), Elderberry Juice from Concentrate, Biscuit (Egg, Wheat Flour, Butter (Milk), Sugar, Salt), Gelatine, Modified Maize Starch, Flavourings, Stabilisers: Guar Gum, Carrageenan, Acidity Regulators: Sodium Citrates, Citric Acid, Sweeteners: Acesulfame K, Aspartame, Yogurt Cultures.

This yoghurt contains 2.5% of Fructose-Glucose syrup which is High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) by another name. I've spoken at length about the dangers of HFCS in other courses and books but let me remind you that HFCS has a huge list of harmful side effects. If you find "high fructose corn syrup" on the label you can be sure it is not a whole, real, fresh food. And then, the yoghurt has Aspartame added and I can bang on at length about the dangers of aspartame and how it turns to formaldehyde in your body. What's wrong with some unsweetened natural yoghurt, or coconut yoghurt, with a big handful of fresh raspberries stirred in to it? Or freeze the raspberries and swirl the juice in to the yoghurt too as they defrost.

Diet food keeps you trapped in the diet mentality. Ditch this type of food and Ditch the Diet.

Listen to Your Body, Not Your Head

You know what it's like. You sit down with a book, ready to immerse yourself in the story and then realise that you've got to the end of the page but you have no idea what you've just read?

Or you sit down at the computer to do a bit of work but can't seem to get started.

Because all you keep thinking about is the packet of biscuits hidden in the cupboard that you keep for 'guests' and you can't concentrate on anything else because thoughts of the biscuits keeps popping up.

So you go and get a biscuit (or five) before you settle down again. Now, did you eat because you were hungry? No, you ate because even though your body wasn't telling you that you wanted to eat, your head was. And you listened to your head instead of your body.

Not only is there a relationship between the way we think and weight control, but often, the way we think, is the determining factor of whether we manage to lose weight or not. The people who don't change the way they think about food and about themselves are the ones that fall off of the diet, and then decide that they have must have chosen the wrong diet, and so they search for a new, better diet. These are the people who are on a diet forever and diets will only ever provide a temporary fix.

Even the *idea* of going on a diet comes from your head and not from your body. Yes, your body might be telling you to lose weight, you might be feeling heavy, have back or knee problems or even be pre diabetic. But your body is just telling you to drop weight - not go on a diet!

Your body, and your mind, is a self regulating machine, left to its own devices without the introduction of salt, trans fats and refined sugar and a headful of thinking about how fat you are and lots of should's, your mind and body would regulate itself. When you stop listening to the diet thoughts shouting in your head, you can hear your body's quiet wisdom guiding you to eat what is naturally right for you, you will be drawn instinctively to what your body wants.

Oh yeah, you might be thinking. 'Left to my own devices I'd eat every biscuit in England.' But would you?

Your body really doesn't want a plate full of fake food that will give it nothing. That will stretch your fat cells to bursting but will leave you starving at a nutritional level. I've had clients that have been on diets that have consisted of shakes and meal replacement bars and they long for fruit. Your body will guide you to satisfy its nutritional needs if you listen to it. If your body had a voice, what food would your body choose?

Is your mind your friend?

And as your body gets heavier, your head gets heavy with thoughts about how awful you look, how much you hate yourself for not sticking to a diet and your self-esteem plummets.

Your mind can be your best friend or your worst enemy. Would you put up with a partner or a friend who told you the destructive, harmful things that you probably tell yourself. No! You'd get rid of them so why are you hanging on to these thoughts?

You might tell yourself that you can't let go of unwanted, negative thoughts? Let's try something. Count all the thoughts you have had in the last minute. How many? You may have counted five and yet you might have had forty, fifty or a hundred. Experts tell us that we have between 60,000 to 100,000 thoughts a day so how could we possibly hold on to them all? You only count the thoughts that you decide are important but the only reason the thought feels important is because you noticed it, you've thought about the thought! That thought is no more important than the hundreds of thoughts that drifted away before it. The thoughts that you've already let go.

It's easy to be critical, judgmental and harsh on ourselves in a way we would never be with anyone else. When someone tells themselves that they are overweight, that's all they see when they look in the mirror. Constant self criticism is a habit that stems from a habit of thinking.

Maybe someone told you when you were small that you have a big appetite, or maybe you heard your mother telling people, proudly no doubt, that you 'like your food' . Or you may have been put on a diet at a young age (in an innocent attempt to help you I know, but oh, so wrong) and then you reinforce these messages every day in your mind. If you think that you have a big appetite, you might look at a portion of food and imagine that the portion size could never fill you up. You've told yourself, and others, that you have a big appetite so many times that it's become a truth for you.

If you mentally tell yourself that you can't resist cake or biscuits, then it doesn't matter what eating plan you're on, it doesn't matter what you say to other people about your diet, the thoughts you're having about not being able to resist cake are going to reinforce the feeling that you can't resist cake.

I'm not asking you to tell yourself that, you are strong enough not to eat cake, or that you can resist cake, ten times a day. I'm asking you to recognise when you have the thought that you can't resist cake and laugh at yourself. Say to yourself, 'oh look, there I go again' and allow the thought to disappear like smoke in the wind. Trying to resist a thought is actually keeping it in place.

You may not even realise the effect of listening to your thoughts is having on your body. But the way we think about ourselves absolutely influences the way our body behaves. I'll give you an example.

The science bit

In his book, *The Wisdom of your Cells*, Dr Bruce Lipton, a cellular biologist, describes how he placed one pluripotential stem cell, this is a cell that can become anything when it grows up, into a Petri dish, and nourished it with cell culture medium until it divided into many genetically identical cells. Lipton then split the cells into three Petri dishes and exposed them to three different environments. What he discovered was that the environment to which the cell was exposed determined whether the cell became a muscle cell or a fat cell or a bone cell. Even though all the cells were genetically identical, they expressed themselves differently. What controlled the fate of the cells? Not the genetics. They were all genetically identical. The sole difference was the environment that the cell was exposed to. The environment that includes our thoughts, beliefs and nutrition.

So our cells respond to our thoughts and our emotions, our mind's perception of the world changes the biology and chemistry of our body which changes the cells in our body.

How amazing is that?

This is because your blood's chemistry is largely impacted by the chemicals sent from your brain. Brain chemistry adjusts the way the blood is made up based upon your thoughts. So this means that your thoughts about any given thing, at any given moment, can influence the brain chemistry, which, in turn, affects your cells. In other words, your thoughts have a direct and overwhelmingly significant effect on cells.

So you can literally change the fate of your cells by altering your thoughts. Your body believes what your mind tells it.

You might tell yourself how hard it is to diet, how difficult it is to give up the things that you think you like, how you can't possibly lose weight, and guess what? Yes, it becomes hard. Change things around, tell yourself what you want and not what you don't want. Allow you mind to let go of the self-destructive diet mentality that you may have and when it comes to the food you eat, trust the physical signals in your body not the thoughts that you're having.

It's all made up

We forget that the thoughts we have, the voice in our head is made up! We don't follow every thought that we have, do we? If you think about winning the lottery and what you'd do with the money it can feel very real but you know that it isn't real. You don't go out and attempt to buy a new car with your imagined winnings. So why, if you think about eating a cake, would you feel as if you were compelled to go out and buy a cake? The only reason is that when you're daydreaming about spending your imagined winnings, you enjoy the fantasy and then you let the thoughts go whereas if you're thinking about buying a cake you don't let the thought go but, instead, you add more thoughts to the pile. And then, because we are always feeling our thinking, it feels as if you're compelled to follow through.

So again I say, listen to your body instead of those thoughts. A healthy body can tell when your insides aren't working properly but we often don't listen to those internal signals. We have so many different signs to tell us when we have eaten enough but we just ignore them and plough through our meal because we tell ourselves that it's too nice not to finish, or we have to fill our stomach to bursting point because we might have to go for a few hours without eating.

Or, you might eat as a response to feeling a strong emotion like anger, fear or upset. But are you hungry? If you stubbed your toe you wouldn't scratch your head to distract yourself would you. You'd deal with your toe. If you're upset or angry, that has nothing to do with food. So how can eating a biscuit help you to stop feeling angry? The only possible way is because you let go of your angry thoughts to have a thought about a biscuit and then, because you've let the thought go and you feel a little less angry, you attribute the feeling to the biscuit.

Or, are you eating because you're hungry or because it's 'time' to eat? Is your body telling you that you're hungry or is your head telling you that it's dinner time? I know that it's difficult not to eat a regular times if, for example, you have a set lunch break and can't eat outside that time. But how much are you eating at lunch time? Are you eating more than you need, or want, just because it's lunchtime?

Your body wants to work properly

Your body wants to work properly, it's a machine designed to work properly. Your body is designed to be healthy. It's common for people to worry about the subcutaneous fat around their body and to never think about the visceral fat around the organs inside the body. Picture your skeleton for a minute. Once you're fully grown, your skeleton doesn't change size, your ribs and bones are meant to keep your organs safe and there is a small amount of visceral fat helping to cushion your organs. But now think about someone who's obese. Think about how much fat there is around the organs, squashing them and squeezing them. It's like the 'how many people can you get inside a mini cooper car' competition inside there. And then we expect our body to work at optimum efficiency and wonder why we feel slow and sluggish or, even worse, get weight related illnesses.

One of the ways that our body tells us that we have had enough to eat is that the food doesn't taste as good as it did when we first started to eat. So many people tell me that they want to continue to eat their meal or cake/chocolate bar because it tastes so good and this is one area where we are definitely listening to our head and not to our body.

Digestion starts in mouth as you chew your food and when you start to eat, chemicals in your saliva start to break down the food in your mouth and send a message to your brain to prepare your stomach to secrete digestive juices. Then, as you continue to eat and you become full, your stomach lining starts to stretch and the message is sent to the brain that you're full. Your taste buds respond to this message and stop picking up the taste of the food so if you continue to eat, the taste doesn't get better. In fact, the food doesn't taste of anything at all. You're eating the memory of the first bite.

Your body tells you when you're tired and you need to rest, when you're hot and you need to cool down and when you're hungry and you need to eat. Your mind tells you that having another shot of tequila is a good idea. Which do you trust?

Make One Small Change

If you have a lot of weight to lose, the prospect can feel overwhelming. You might look at the stones you'd like to shift as a huge mountain to climb and you can't imagine how you would ever manage it. So you don't bother.

But how about if you looked at the process as one step. At a time. If you walk from your sofa to the kitchen, it's unlikely you'll get there in one stride, you'll get from here to there in a series of steps and that's what I'm encouraging you to do with your weight loss.

We've all heard that it's best to lose 2 lb per week rather than 8lbs but most dieters want to lose all their weight quickly and that's why they go on calorie restricted diets guaranteeing fast weight loss. Yes, they do lose the weight, if you're only eating 500 calories a day, the weight really will drop off. And this is what people do when they diet to fit into a wedding dress or to look good for the prom. But this isn't sustainable and what happens when you start to eat normally? Yes, all the weight, plus more goes back on.

So rather than change everything you do and eat overnight, let's start with one change. At a time.

As you make changes something wonderful will happen. Because you are instigating the change rather than relying on something outside of you, like a diet sheet or list of foods that you can and can't eat, you'll find that, naturally and organically, your tastes will change. When you start to eat cleaner foods, you'll feel bloated and uncomfortable when you eat processed food. You'll start to dislike the way that sugary, fatty foods cling to your teeth and the roof of your mouth and, without any effort, you'll be on the road to healthy eating.

You're not on a diet after all, you're choosing the food that you want to eat so there's nothing to fail or fall off of.

So what change are you going to make?

How about starting with breakfast?

What do you have for breakfast every day? Do you grab a couple of slices of toast as you run out of the door or do you eat a quick bowl of cereal? Have you thought about what's in the breakfast that you're having?

Soft white bread contains 35g of sugar in 100g of bread. There are 23g of sugar in a bowl of so-called 'healthy' cereal per 100g. So how about making breakfast your first change? What could you have instead?

How about a smoothie or a juice? I'm always encouraging my clients to add more fruit and vegetables to their daily intake and I'm passionate about smoothies and juices. Make your smoothie or juice with lots of vegetables, rather than mostly fruit.

People get really worried about the sugar in fruit and I know that there are many reports telling us that the fructose in fruit is bad for us and our ears will drop off if we eat too much of it. Well, ok, they don't say exactly that.

But there is a belief that eating fruit will cause blood-sugar problems, especially sweet fruit. It's true no one wants high blood sugar and the problems that come with that including diabetes, hypoglycemia, chronic fatigue and candida that accompany too much sugar.

I don't want you to eat too much sugar, in fact I don't want you to eat refined sugar at all and I have chapters in other courses helping you to cut refined sugar out of your diet. Nor do I want you to eat anything containing High Fructose Sugar which is the opposite of anything good and healthy.

But fruit is a natural source of all the enzymes the body needs for digestion. It's like an instant vitamin hit. The sugar from fruit has to be absorbed through the digestive system because the body cannot use fructose in its original form and so has to convert it into usable glucose. The time it takes to convert fructose to glucose is essential to keep the blood sugar levels correctly balanced. Your body knows what to do with natural fructose, you are designed to take what is needed from it.

The white refined sugar in your bread or cereal on the other hand, goes straight through the stomach lining and into the bloodstream without going through the digestive process. There aren't any nutrients to absorb in refined sugar and so the sugar is stored as fat.

Many people tell me too that they don't have time to make a juice or a smoothie in the morning but I'm going to challenge that. If you have a high speed blender, you can throw some chopped fruit and a big handful of organic spinach or kale in to the blender and drink it at home or take it with you to drink in the car or when you get to work - how time consuming is that?

Or how about making yourself a healthy bowl of muesli? I'm not talking about the packets you buy in the supermarkets that are full of sugar and additives. I'm talking about the original Bircher Muesli. Bircher Muesli (muesli is the Swiss word for mush) originated in the late Nineteenth Century when Dr Maximilian Bircher, who was head of the Life-Force Sanatorium in Switzerland recognised the amazing powers of raw food for his patients and came up with a fruit/nut/grain mixture.

Bircher believed that a diet of real, uncooked foods improved the health of his patients, even those who were thought to be dying. I know that I've included this recipe in other courses but that's because it's too good not to mention again.

The wonderful thing about this breakfast is that you can play with the quantities and ingredients and it takes a minute in the evening to put together and a minute in the morning. You can either eat it before you leave for work or throw the fruit and nuts in to the container the oats were soaked in and eat it when you get to work.

You need:

1/2 cup of rolled oats

1 cup milk (oat, almond, coconut) sprinkle cinnamon

Put the ingredients in the fridge overnight to soak

In the morning, add berries, chopped or grated apple, chopped banana and chopped nuts (I buy bags of organic raw nuts and whizz them in a food processor and then store them in a container to use in my breakfast).

This breakfast will keep you full for longer than your normal breakfast and will stop you looking around for something else at 11am because it's low GI. You probably know, the speed that insulin and glucose is released is known as the Glycaemic Index (GI). This index shows how quickly foods release their natural sugars into the bloodstream and shows how much these foods raise your blood glucose levels in the two or three hours after eating.

Foods with low GI release their natural sugars over a long period and provide a constant source of energy. These foods drip feed you natural sugars minute by minute which means that your blood sugar doesn't climb too high or fall too quickly. High GI foods, like toast and jam, are the

opposite, they release the sugar quickly which makes you look longingly at the vending machine at 11am.

Please don't get fooled into thinking that a packet of instant oats will be quicker and as good. Rolled oats are a food rich in complex carbohydrates that release energy slowly but this isn't the same as instant oats. Both have the same calorie content but there is a big difference in the amount of fibre they contain. This is because instant oats are finely chopped to cook quickly but they also release energy quickly so are best avoided.

Lots of clients tell me that when they have a healthy, satisfying start to the day, it makes their food choices easier and healthier for the rest of the day. Changing your breakfast really can be the first one small change you can make in your weight loss journey and a habit that will sustain you forever.

Plan and Prepare

As life gets busier, it's become easier to pick up a packet of something from the supermarket, take something from the freezer to microwave, or order a takeaway rather than cook a meal with fresh ingredients.

You might start the day off with good intentions aiming to make today the day you eat healthier. And you might be 'good' all day and avoid the biscuits in the office and not have crisps with your lunch.

But then you go out for a drink after work or you get stuck in the office, or on the motorway, and it's late by the time you get home and there's nothing in the fridge, or you can't be bothered to think about what to cook. And that's when a takeaway, ready meal or even a packet of biscuits looks appealing and you lose your enthusiasm and motivation to eat healthily.

So be prepared. If you leave healthy eating to chance, it isn't going to happen. Without planning, you're always going to be catching up with yourself, trying to figure out what to have to eat and meal times will feel like hard work. When you're weaning yourself away from a diet mentality, it really pays to be structured. Planning puts you back in control. Planning sets you free.

And it's easier than you think to be prepared. Write down a list of at least 10 meals that you can cook from scratch. I can't tell you how many clients have groaned or rolled their eyes when I suggest this. But they all come back the next week and tell me what an amazing difference it's made to their life. Now, at this point don't flick through recipe books or think about trying new recipes, this is the time to do what you know. I want this process to be as easy and simple as it can be. Lots of people that have weight issues eat mindlessly and I want this to be mind-less in the best way. This is all about making your life and your weight loss journey easy.

You don't have to sit down with a pad and rack your brains and try hard to think of meals. If you do, I guarantee that your mind will go blank, especially if you've had months, or years, on diets of prescribed foods and you can't even remember what foods you like to cook.

So, when a meal that you like pops in to your mind, make a note. I like to have a list on my phone that I can add to when something comes to mind. Obviously, the bigger the list the more choice you have. Don't think that these meals have to be elaborate, you're not planning a dinner party. If you like baked beans on rye bread, add it to the list. Pitta and hummus? Add it.

Make it easy

Make sure that these meals are easy, effortless and don't take long to make. There isn't anything worse than planning something in the morning that seems like far too much trouble to bother with in the evening.

If you cook something that freezes well, like chilli or soup, make a big batch of it and freeze the extra portions for the days when you know you're going to be late home. It's far better to get something homemade out of the freezer in the morning, than fall into the trap of buying fast food. You'll feel better for it mentally and physically.

Each week, pick at least five of the meals on your list and then when you do your weekly shop, you can make sure that you have everything you need to cook that meal, including herbs, spices etc. Try an online shop that will save you time and also help you to avoid getting sucked in by the BOGOF offers or buying foods full of sugar and fat because you're hungry when you shop. Setting up your online shopping list may take a while the first time that you go online but then each week you can tick the foods that you want. It's a great way to make sure that you always have enough fruit and vegetables and, with delivery saver deals, you can shop twice a week to make sure that your fresh goods are always fresh.

Make sure that at least one of the meals on your list is a store cupboard meal like black bean curry or porcini risotto so that you're never stuck for something to cook if the things in your fridge are running low.

Sometimes people tell me that they can't possibly plan their meals for the week because they might not want the meal they've planned, they might change their mind. Great! It's lovely to change your mind, that's why I ask you to pick five meals and give yourself some leeway to go out or choose something different a couple of nights of the week. This reinforces the feeling that you are choosing what you eat.

Are you choosing your food?

Without planning and preparing you aren't really choosing your food. Of course I choose my food you might say, no one else puts it in my mouth.

But, let's think about how you choose your food. Do you grab a sandwich and bag of crisps or a baquette at lunchtime because that's all the closest shop to the office sells? Or because you're really hungry by then and think that's what you need to fill up.

So, are you choosing your lunch? Or are you eating out of habit? I've had lots of clients tell me that enjoy eating the same food for breakfast and lunch every day, they like the fact that they don't have to think about it and there's nothing wrong with eating the same food if you're choosing it. But it's important to recognise that you have a choice and you don't have to eat a sandwich for lunch every day just because you always have.

This is where planning and preparing help you to change these habits and to lose weight. The thought of preparing your meals might seem boring. People sometimes say that they prefer to be spontaneous but we've all heard the saying, 'you have to plan to be spontaneous'. You've also heard, 'if you fail to plan, you'll plan to fail'. And it's strange that the people that tell me that its too much trouble, or it's boring to plan, are the same people that have spent years following a diet meal plan.

You don't have to get up an hour early to make your lunch, throw a few things in a container the night before. Buy little tubs of hummus and cut up some vegetables to dip in. Make your evening meal slightly bigger than you need and take a portion to work the next day for lunch. Have a packet of crispbreads at work and grab an avocado to have mashed on top, the list is endless. So first make your list of ten meals and then let's look at getting a few staples in your cupboards. There's nothing worse than getting home and realising you've run out of a vital ingredient for your meal. Once you've stocked your cupboard, you're prepared!

Four Simple Myths

Myth: You need to be on a Diet to lose Weight

On one level, you know that diets don't work. How many diets has the average person been on and how often has the weight stayed off after the diet has finished?

People make changes when they're on a diet that are temporary and temporary changes don't lead to permanent weight loss. It's far better to find a satisfying eating plan that you can live with long term, one that satisfies you and doesn't make you feel deprived.

Another problem with a diet is that when you have a list of prescribed foods, your choice is taken away and that can be a problem in itself (back to the feelings of denial), and it also takes away food decisions so when the diet is finished, the dieter can't think what to have to eat and food decisions can feel difficult. So rather than feel overwhelmed, the dieter goes back to eating the familiar way he or she ate before the diet because it's predictable and easy.

And then there are, of course, those special diets that are going to be the 'one' that is going to melt the fat away forever and so I thought that it might be a good idea to look at some of these diets.

Gluten Free Diet to Lose Weight

Reality: There have been reports stating that gluten free products are causing weight gain because people incorporate these products into their daily diet and wrongly assume that because they are gluten free, they are calorie free, whereas the reality is that the products are stuffed with fat and sugar to make them tasty. People embark on a gluten free diet and eat gluten free biscuits, cakes, pasta and bread with abandon and then are confused why they are putting on weight. Use gluten free products sparingly, for example, use gluten free pasta instead of regular pasta to stop the bloat but still use a small amount in the same way you would with regular pasta.

Low Fat and Low Carb Processed Food to Lose Weight

Reality: These foods are packed with chemicals and artificial sweeteners. They don't provide the body with the nutrients it needs and so you will always crave more food because they body isn't satisfied. If you're tempted by a 'light' or 'low fat' food, check the nutrition label. Look at what this food contains and then consider having a small amount of the real thing. You may end up consuming fewer calories if you eat the full fat version because fat is satisfying. Plus you won't be tempted to have a 'treat' because you've been 'good' and had a low fat meal or snack.

Alkaline Diet to Lose Weight Reality: This diet has positive points because it requires you to cut out sweets, caffeine, alcohol and processed foods and encourages you to eat more fruit and

vegetables, nuts and seeds. This in itself will help you to lose weight but as the body is incredibly efficient (when you eat a healthy diet) at keeping your pH levels stable, this diet won't actually affect your pH levels. Plus there isn't any research proving that pH affects weight in the first place. This diet is strict, complicated and difficult to sustain.

The Blood Type Diet to Lose Weight

Reality: This diet claims the foods you eat react on a chemical level with your blood type. Famously used by many celebrities (who then go on to try a different diet) who eat lean meat, vegetables and fruits and avoid wheat and dairy if they are blood type O. Blood type A must become vegetarian and those with type B blood must avoid chicken corn, wheat, tomatoes, some nuts and sesame seeds. There is no scientific proof that this diet aids weight loss and I'm not sure what you're supposed to do if your blood type AB positive or negative?

Master Cleanse Diet to Lose Weight

Reality: This diet is called by a variety of names, 'the maple syrup' diet, the 'cayenne pepper and water' diet and a host of other titles. But, in essence, what you're doing is drinking diuretics which means that you'll drop a ton of water but, as soon as you start eating solid food, the weight goes back on again. The negative points are that you'll also lose muscle which is not what you want to lose, plus the side effects can be pretty nasty, like fatigue, dizziness, dehydration and nausea.

The Grapefruit Diet to Lose Weight

Reality: This one goes back a long way, doesn't it? The diet claims that if you eat just grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice, the fat busting enzymes in the fruit will help you to lose over 10 lbs in as many days. And if you only eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice you are probably only eating around 1000 calories a day and so, yes of course, you will lose weight. As you will with any type of food when you're only eating 800 to 1000 calories a day. Until you start to eat normally again.

The Five Bite Diet to Lose Weight

Reality: This is another low calorie diet, with the biggest bites in the world you can only consume around 800 to 1000 calories a day. The idea is that you take five bites of lunch and five bites of dinner and with every other calorie restrictive diet, you will lose weight while you following the diet. But this diet isn't sustainable on any level and can trigger feelings of guilt and anxiety when the dieter starts to eat normally again.

The Baby Food Diet to Lose Weight

Reality: Now this has to be one of the strangest diets that any adult embarks on. The idea is that you eat up to 14 jars of baby food for breakfast and lunch and then eat a low calorie dinner. As an adult, why would you eat baby food? How is that empowering a dieter to have a healthy relationship with food?

The South Beach Diet to Lose Weight

Reality: This diet attempts to break the cycle of getting too hungry and then overeating. The diet cuts out simple carbohydrates and focuses on low fat dairy, lean protein and good carbohydrates. The diet has three stages, the first stage aims for rapid weight loss but there are reports that this stage is too restrictive and may result in a loss of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Side effects of the first stage include bad breath, a dry mouth, tiredness, dizziness, insomnia, nausea and constipation although these lessen as the diet continues.

Stage 2 is a long-term weight-loss phase. You begin adding back some of the foods that were prohibited in stage 1, such as wholegrain breads, wholewheat pasta, brown rice, fruits and more vegetables. You stay in this phase until you reach your goal weight.

Stage 3. This is a maintenance phase meant to be a healthy way to eat for life. You continue to follow the lifestyle principles you learned in the two previous stages. You can eat all types of foods in moderation.

The South Beach Diet is thought to be very difficult to maintain in stage 1 but at least it encourages dieters to find a maintenance diet that suits them.

The problem with all diets is that as soon as someone is on a diet, all they think about is food.

Whilst eating food we enjoy is pleasurable we should be eating to live and not living to eat which is just what happens on a diet.

So ditch the diet.

Myth: Obesity is Genetic

You can blame your genes for your eye colour but can you blame your genes for the size of your jeans?

Well, no. Sadly not. While there are some rare genetic conditions that can cause obesity, such as Prader-Willi syndrome, there is no reason why most people cannot lose weight.

Only 1% of obese people can blame their parents and researchers believe that obesity is behavioural rather than genetic and that the government policy on obesity should be re thought.

Much of the focus of obesity study in the UK has been targeted at younger age groups in the belief that obese children become obese adults. But researchers say that this ignores the fact that 8 in 10 obese adults were not severely overweight when they were children - in fact they say that the opposite is true, that obese adults lead to obese children.

The International Journal of Obesity reported on a study that took weight and height measurements of children and their parents over a three year period. They found that 41% of the eight year old daughters of obese mothers were obese compared to 4% of normal weight mothers, and 18% of the boys in the group with obese fathers were obese. And obesity was up to nine times higher in children where both parents had also been overweight in their childhood. But rather than blame the parent's genes, the researchers believe that the children were copying their parents behaviour around food.

The subjects were found to have 'behavioural sympathy' where daughters copied their mothers and sons copied their fathers. It transpired that since the early 1970's, childhood risk of obesity had increased equally across the board for all children irrespective of their parent's weight. So what has changed over the past 40 years that has caused the obesity explosion?

So what has changed over the past 40 years that has caused the obesity explosion?

Environmental changes have made it easier for people to overeat, and harder for people to get enough physical activity, and these factors have triggered the recent surge of obesity. Some experts also point to the introduction of High Fructose Corn Syrup to the food market in 1971. Cheaper and sweeter than sugar, HFCS soon found its way into almost all processed foods and soft drinks. HFCS is not only sweeter than sugar, it also interferes with leptin, the hormone that controls appetite, so once you start eating or drinking products containing HFCS, you don't know when to stop.

Meanwhile, in 1970s Britain, food manufacturers first used advertising campaigns to promote the idea of snacking between meals, adverts specifically targeted at children.

But is it possible that obesity is genetic?

Since 2007, researchers have known that a gene called FTO (fat mass and obesity associated) was related to obesity, but they didn't know how, and couldn't link FTO to appetite or other known factors.

Experiments revealed that a faulty version of the gene causes energy from food to be stored as fat rather than burned. Genetic laboratory experiments on mice and on human cells suggests this can be reversed, giving hope that a drug or other treatment might be developed to do the same in people.

The work was led by scientists at MIT and Harvard University and leads the way for new drugs to be produced to combat the findings. Manolis Kellis, a professor at MIT who jointly led the study, said having the glitch did not automatically make people obese but made it more likely. However, having the glitch doesn't predestine you to become obese but may predispose you to it. People who were found to have two faulty copies of the gene (one from their mother and one from their father) weighed an average of 7 pounds more than those without them.

There are several obesity drugs already on the market, but they are generally used for short-term weight loss and are aimed at the brain and appetite and there is a worry that these findings will lead to another pharmaceutical expensive pill whilst at the same time allowing overeaters to continue to eat too much of the wrong food, expecting that the pill will keep their weight down to an acceptable level.

In addition, research into the relationship between certain foods and obesity is shedding more light on the interaction between diet, genes and obesity. A 2014 study found that consumption of fried food could interact with genes related to obesity, emphasising the importance of reducing fried food consumption in individuals genetically predisposed to obesity.

What's clear from this research is that genetic factors identified so far make only a small contribution to obesity risk—and that our genes are not our destiny.

Many people who carry these so-called 'obesity genes' do not become overweight, and eating healthy, natural food as well as getting some exercise can cancel out these genetic effects. A report of 45 studies in adults and 9 studies in children, nearly 240,000 people in all, found that people who carried the obesity promoting FTO gene variant had a 23% higher risk of obesity than those who did not. But being physically active lowered the risk. Active adults who carried the obesity promoting gene had a 30% lower risk of obesity than inactive adults who carried the gene.

Genes may point to who becomes obese, but our environment determines how many become obese. That's why obesity prevention efforts must focus on changing our environment to make healthy choices easier choices, for all.

RAND (Research and Development) Corporation scientists dispute the study on the obesity gene, saying being fat 'has absolutely nothing to do with genetics' and experts, like Dr. Deborah Cohen, believe that the reports claiming that scientists had found the obesity gene that makes people fat are exaggerated. While applauding the scientists' work, Cohen, senior natural scientist at the RAND Corporation, termed the report, 'someone's hype about the potential for a genetic intervention to solve the obesity crisis.'

Cohen says that the report published online by the New England Journal of Medicine., 'completely overstated what the scientists said in the original article' and she went on to say, 'The obesity epidemic has absolutely nothing to do with genetics.'

'Our environment makes people eat too much and influences them in ways they're unable to resist, Cohen explained. "People are designed to feel hungry when they see food. If they're served too much, they eat more than they should. We should be doing things like standardizing portion sizes. Every time you eat out, you're putting yourself at risk for chronic disease because restaurants generally serve too much."

This is also the view shared by Dr Bruce Lipton, cellular biologist, who says that there are no specific genes that cause obesity; genes are NOT the causes of obesity because they are correlated to obesity.

So the bottom line is you are not your genes and you can't blame anyone else if you can't fit into your jeans.

Myth: Drinking Coffee can help you to lose weight

We've all heard of supermodels drinking coffee instead of eating, haven't we? But using coffee as an appetite suppressant is never going to help you to lose weight. And what are you putting in to your coffee? If you're adding milk, cream or sugar to your coffee you have to take those calories in to account. Yes, you're probably groaning, I know all that. But have you considered that a medium Starbucks Cafe Mocha can contain 330 calories! And a sachet of instant coffee can contain anywhere up to 110 calories! What's more, you're still going to be hungry quicker than if you'd had something solid to eat.

Some people believe that drinking coffee helps with weight loss because it keeps the bowels moving. And it's true that the first cup of the day can trigger a need for the toilet. That's because caffeine stimulates and increases the contractions in the bowel, which pushes out waste faster than normal.

But this also means that nutrients have less time to be absorbed as they pass through the digestive tract, which could be harmful if you're not eating a healthy balanced diet. Contrary to common belief, coffee does not ease constipation. Although it may cause temporary spasms and urgency feelings, it won't cure any underlying problems. In fact, in the long term coffee drinking can make constipation worse because caffeine can lead to dehydration, making waste hard and difficult to pass.

But a cup of freshly brewed black coffee has no calories and might be the drink you reach for when you're cutting back on calories. I love one cup of good coffee a day but is coffee good for you at all? Whether you're trying to lose weight, are stressed, or just love the taste?

Well, there is one type of coffee that was reported to be a weight loss aid and that is green bean coffee extract.

Green Bean Coffee Extract

Following a 22 week study of 16 overweight men and women, researchers found that those that had been given a green coffee bean extract had undergone a significant weight loss with 37.5% of them transitioning from being at a pre-obesity weight to a normal weight range. Green Coffee Bean Extract became one of the world's most popular weight loss supplements. But when something appears to be too good to be true it generally is, and we'll look at why.

So what are Green Coffee Beans? This supplement, as the name implies, is extracted from green coffee beans. Coffee beans are naturally green, but they are usually roasted before being sold to the consumer and it is the roasting process that turns the beans brown.

Coffee beans are loaded with antioxidants and pharmacologically active compounds, two of the most important compounds are chlorogenic acid and caffeine. Chlorogenic acid is believed to be the main active ingredient in green coffee beans and is the substance that produces the weight loss effects.

Sadly, for those of us who enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee, most of the chlorogenic acid is removed when coffee beans are roasted and so our cup of coffee won't have a weight loss effect.

Some studies suggest that chlorogenic acid can reduce the absorption of carbohydrates from the digestive tract, which lowers blood sugar and prevents insulin highs. So the effect would be like eating slightly less carbohydrates.

So how can Green Bean Coffee Extract affect how our body absorbs and uses carbohydrates and reduce glucose absorption?

Studies undertaken on mice and rats show that chlorogenic acid can reduce body weight, reduce fat absorbed from the food, reduce fat stored in the liver and improve the function of the fat burning hormone, adiponectin. Chlorogenic acid is also thought to improve cholesterol and triglyceride levels in rats. So how about human studies?

There was a study that claimed to be a randomised controlled trial that included 30 overweight people over a period of 12 weeks. The people were divided into two groups and one group were given regular instant coffee and the other were given instant coffee enriched with 200mg of Green Coffee Bean Extract. Both groups were instructed not to change their diet or exercise habits.

The group taking the Green Bean Coffee Extract lost 11.5 lb while the group consuming normal instant coffee only lost 3.7 lb. The Green Bean Coffee group also had a body fat percentage drop of 3.6% compared to 0.7% in the other group.

However, some participants dropped out of the study due to headache and urinary tract infections.

Also, the people that lost weight, lost weight during the placebo phase of the study which suggests that the extract had no bearing on the weight loss. Participants are known to feel encouraged to slim down when their weight and diet are monitored as part of a study. The study was later retracted.

Does the extract still sound like the magic pill it purported to be? It was studies such as the one we've mentioned, and celebrity endorsement, that sent Green Bean Coffee Extract flying off of the shelves of health food shops. Interest was further excited when USA tv guru, Dr Oz claimed that this was a miracle product. Dr Oz conducted his own trial on the supplement using 100 female

volunteers. The trial found that women using the supplement lost an average of 2 lb in two weeks whereas the women taking the placebo lost an average of 1 lb in two weeks.

However, Dr Oz failed to explain how the women were recruited for the experiment and experts agree that two weeks is far too short a time to assess the value of a study. There was no statistical analysis or raw data. Since criticism of the experiment was heaped on his head, Dr Oz's website has been entirely wiped of every mention of the study and of Green Bean Coffee Extract and the episode has been pulled from youtube.

In June 2014, Green Bean Coffee Extract was discussed by the US Senate sub- committee on Science who found that the extract was an example of a phony product sold to consumers. So how about a cup or two of our regular fresh brewed coffee? Well, again, whether coffee is good for you or not still appears to depend on who is funding the research. Here are a couple of examples of how reports can give you a different idea.

Heart

Some reports say that just one or two cups a day may significantly reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease related deaths and a Japanese study of more than 76,000 participants found that men who consumed one or two cups a day reduced their risk of dying from a cardiovascular disease by as much as 38%.

But just one cup of coffee can raise the heart rate to 100 beats per minute (normally it's between 60 and 80) and it can take up to an hour to get back to normal. Dr Graham Jackson, a consultant cardiologist at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust says that It can also cause the arteries to constrict, which tends to raise blood pressure.

And people with heart disease should avoid instant coffee because it contains high levels of potassium, which can cause dangerous changes in heart rhythm, says Dr Jackson. And if someone has suffered any type of heart failure, coffee may put their heart under greater strain and Dr Jackson advises they consider giving up coffee altogether.

Diabetes

Between 1986 and 1998, Harvard researchers tracked the coffee consumption of type-2 diabetes in 40,000 men. They discovered that long-term coffee drinkers had a significantly reduced risk of developing type-2 diabetes and the risk decreased with the more they drank.

However, studies also showed that in people with type-2 diabetes, coffee intake corresponded with insulin spikes and increased blood sugar after a meal. And further research showed that the caffeine in coffee could be responsible for the secretion of higher levels of insulin from the pancreas. Not so good then?

So you can see that coffee really cannot help you to lose weight. Enjoy a cup of coffee because you like the taste, sip it slowly and savour it. Have one cup of good coffee a day because you want to.

And make the change to drink herbal/fruit teas or water for the rest of the day. Your body will thank you if you do.

Myth: A Calorie is a Calorie

The idea that a calorie is just a calorie is misleading and is potentially damaging if you think that counting calories will cause weight loss - regardless of where the calories come from. It's true that all calories have the same amount of energy (4184 Joules of energy), so in that sense a calorie is a calorie. But if you have 150 calories from an apple and a 150 calories from a packet of M & M's, are they the same?

The Thermodynamic effect states that the energy of an isolated system is constant. So, in a scientific setting, the calories from an apple or from a packet of sweets are the same. Both would release the same amount of energy but this doesn't hold true when it comes to the body. Where the calories come from will have a different effect on your body, where the calories are stored, or whether the calories are lost as heat. We need to look at the way the body breaks down protein, fat and carbohydrate calories and the effect that these calories have on the body.

Fat is an important source of energy, it can slow down digestion, make you feel full and carry hormones and fat soluble vitamins around the body. Now we know that fat from avocado or nuts are a source of good fat which has powerful anti-inflammatory properties and these omega 3 fats are heart-healthy, whereas the artificial fat from trans fats cause inflammation and trans fats clog your arteries leading to heart attack. For every 2% of calories consumed from trans fats daily, the risk of heart disease goes up by 23%. So the calories from fat aren't all the same.

How about the calories in protein? Protein keeps us feeling full by slowing digestion and it maintains and builds new cells. Protein is beneficial during weight loss because it makes us feel full and can offset the amount of muscle that is burned for energy.

Protein calories provide about 9 calories per gram but, like fat, it depends on where the protein is coming from to see the effect it has on our body. Protein from real food can optimise muscle recovery whereas protein from junk food can cause metabolic disease and insulin resistance. So it does matter where your calories of protein come from.

Protein generally reduces appetite more per calorie than fat and carbohydrate. Therefore a person who increases his daily protein intake without making any conscious attempt to eat less is likely to eat less anyway due to reduced appetite. This is another important sense in which protein, carbohydrate and fat calories are not equal.

In a recent study from the University of Washington School of Medicine, 19 subjects were put on three different daily diets. For two weeks they followed a weight maintenance diet comprising 15 percent protein, 35 percent fat, and 50 percent carbohydrate.

For the next two weeks they followed a high protein diet of equal calories. The macronutrient breakdown of this diet was 30 percent protein, 20 percent fat, and 50 percent carbohydrate. Finally, the subjects switched to a high protein diet with the same macronutrient breakdown but no calorie restriction (subjects were allowed to eat as much or as little as they pleased). They stayed on this last diet for 12 weeks.

The study found that when subjects switched from the low protein weight maintenance diet to the high protein weight maintenance diet, they started feeling much fuller despite the fact that they were consuming the same number of calories. Even more significant, during the unrestricted high protein diet phase, the subjects voluntarily reduced their daily eating by 441 calories per day and lost almost 11 pounds, including more than eight pounds of body fat, on average.

What about calories from carbohydrates? Carbohydrates are used by the body as a quick source of energy, particularly for the brain, muscles and liver. All carbohydrates provide 4 calories per gramme and, like protein, it depends on where these calories are coming from. Fibre (which is not a source of calories) is considered a high quality carbohydrate and we get this carbohydrate from foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains. If you eat 160 calories in almonds, you only absorb 130 calories because the fibre in almonds delays absorption of calories into the bloodstream, instead sending these calories to the bacteria in your intestine which eats them up. Lower quality carbohydrates are the empty calories we consume in junk foods, processed foods and alcohol.

Carbohydrates come in many varieties but they are all, technically, sugar or starches which convert to sugar in the body. High fibre, low sugar carbohydrates like vegetables are slowly digested and don't lead to blood sugar and insulin spikes whereas white bread and pasta are quickly digested and spike your blood sugar. As I've mentioned, fibre is a form of carbohydrate that contributes to a feeling of fullness without contributing calories, because it is not absorbed into the body. Consequently, a 100 calorie high fibre food will reduce appetite, and subsequent eating, more than a 100 calorie low fibre food. Likewise, a person who increases the daily fibre consumption without making any conscious effort to eat less will end up eating less anyway due to reduced appetite.

So, a calorie inside a high fibre food is not equal to a calorie inside a low fibre food.

As you can see, the calories from fat, protein or carbohydrates are not all the same but the calories from different types of sugar are even more different.

The two main sugars that we get our calories from are glucose and fructose. These two simple sugars seem almost identical, they have the same chemical formula and they weigh the same. But they are completely different.

Glucose comes from starchy foods like rice, potatoes and pasta, this is a simple sugar that can be burned for energy by every cell in the body. We store glucose in our liver and muscles ready to jump into action and run away from the sabre toothed tiger. Too many calories from glucose can lead to weight gain and an accumulation of subcutaneous fat.

Fructose is the sweetest sugar and can only be broken down in the liver. In fruit, fructose is bound tightly to indigestible fibre that slows its absorption in the body, but in processed food and artificial drinks this isn't the case and the artificial fructose can overwhelm the liver, contributing to nonalcoholic fatty liver disease and insulin resistance.

There is another reason that calories aren't equal. You would find it really difficult to eat a plate of 1000 calories of broccoli, wouldn't you? But, if you did, the vegetable contains so much fibre that few of the calories would actually be absorbed and those that were absorbed would be absorbed really slowly. There would be no blood or insulin spike and no fatty liver. You might feel full and your brain would get the message that you're full and you'd have to stop eating. But if you ate 1000 calories from simple carbs, like a big bowl of white pasta and sauce, you would get the blood and insulin spike and the calories wouldn't fill you up, so you could carry on eating.

So a calorie really isn't a calorie. Stop looking at the calorie count and start looking at where calories are coming from.