

AUTHOR'S PREFACE:
WHY DO WE KEEP GAINING IT BACK AGAIN AND AGAIN?

Every year in early spring a remarkable natural phenomenon takes place at California's historic Mission San Juan Capistrano as thousands of swallows wing their way back from winter vacation in Argentina.

A similar but no less remarkable phenomenon takes place each New Year in the diet world, as millions of people return to the \$60 billion dollar weight loss industry. Unlike the swallows, those who return to the world of dieting are not happy. In fact, they return to dieting because the weight they lost has come back. Here is an indisputable fact: A full two-thirds of American dieters regain all the weight they lose within a year, and 95 percent gain it all back within five years—with interest! And don't try relying on the "hot" diet *du jour* to prevent weight regain. Recent research suggests that people gain it back no matter what diet they follow.

Contrary to popular opinion, many of those who gain it back again and again do not lack willpower, strength of character or understanding. They are not devoid of food smarts, or have some sort of psychological impediment to losing weight. Millions of failed dieters are at the top of their respective professions. They fill the boardrooms of Fortune 500 companies. They are the titans of Wall Street, Hollywood and Madison Avenue. They erected the skylines of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. They enjoy meaningful, fulfilling personal relationships. Far from lacking willpower, many of those who fail again and again at dieting are some of the best examples of self-direction and accomplishment this country has ever seen. So what's the problem?

If you are one of millions who have failed again and again, you should not despair: **You haven't failed at dieting; dieting has failed you!**

Indeed, the diet industry stands alone in the history of capitalism as the only growth industry where most of its customers fail. From its inception, the diet industry has been

dominated by scores of experts who have counseled overweight people on what and what not to eat. They've advised millions to "eat less and exercise more" and to "enjoy all foods in moderation." And for more than half a century these "experts" have gotten the same result—failure. It was Einstein who famously defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

This is the diet mindset and it has failed.

And the prevailing thinking hasn't just produced generations of failure; it's also produced generations that feel guilty, ashamed, and damaged. It's produced generations of dieters that have been fed the psychobabble that's there's something wrong or they're crazy because they've haven't learned to eat less and exercise more or enjoy all foods in moderation.

In pointing out where the field has led people astray, we are not criticizing the scores of well-intentioned dieticians, nutritionists, weight counselors and physicians who strive each day to help their patients and clients. However, those who are trained the same think the same. As a whole, the diet industry is missing several critical variables, which are far more important than the number of calories or grams of fat and carbohydrates in the foods we eat.

Many years ago, the standard diet model met a great need in this country. Our parents and grandparents didn't know about the effect of food on our bodies and minds. That was then—this is now. Is there anyone left today who seriously believes that donuts are a diet food? Most dieters have read so many diet books they could write one themselves. They are well aware of calories, carbohydrates and grams of fat. Their label reading skills are without peer. They have the information. That is not the problem. The problem is that they don't know how to stop eating!

Approaching weight control as strictly a knowledge problem ignores a very obvious fact. The knowledge of what and what not to eat has been known for decades. If it were just a

knowledge problem we could all go to our local bookstore, buy the diet book *du jour* and within 30 to 90 days the whole country would be thin.

By focusing exclusively on the most obvious variables—counting calories and grams of fat and carbohydrates—the industry has overlooked the most critical: human behavior and human vulnerability. This is not to dismiss entirely the importance of the number calories in a cookie, roll or potato chip. *But what is equally important is how many cookies, potato chips or rolls you eat. Long-term success isn't about calorie control but craving control.* It's not that we don't know how to count calories. Rather, we don't know how to stop counting when it comes to our favorite foods. A well-intentioned 10-calorie potato chip can quickly turn into 2000-calorie monster if you eat the whole bag. The marketing wizards at Frito-Lay understood this concept best when they warned consumers, "We bet you can't have just one."

It takes far more than the latest nutrition advice about a balanced diet or the admonitions of a self-anointed weight loss expert to conquer a lifetime of social, biological and psychological programming. The diet industry only addresses one variable—food. To focus exclusively on food and counting the calories and grams of fat in a slice of bread or tablespoon of salad dressing while ignoring a lifetime's worth of biological programming and cultural conditioning is like the parable of the blind man feeling one part of an elephant and concluding, "That is all there is."

Just as the field of behavioral economics was created to study the effects of social, cognitive and emotional factors on the spending habits of individuals and institutions, there needs to be a field of **behavioral nutrition** to deal with people's eating habits. As Daniel Ariely observes in his *New York Times* bestseller, *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*, seldom do people behave rationally when it comes to making important, real-life decisions.

The dietetic model assumes that eating behavior is rational. But seldom is eating behavior logical or guided by nutritional information. Far from being rational, much of eating

behavior is irrational but is serving rational needs. The failure of most diet programs shows how little the field understands about human behavior. There hasn't been a diet book written that deals with the critical variable of human vulnerability. Weight control isn't a knowledge problem; it's a human vulnerability problem. And this problem isn't going away.

To reach the Promised Land and finally achieve a lasting thin, we should be less preoccupied with what's on our plate and more concerned with what is in our environment and even more importantly, what is in our head. As Keri Gans, a registered dietician and national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association, said in a recent interview: "Americans are looking for that silver bullet, but they won't change their behavior. That's where the fault lies."

More than ever, dieters and the diet industry alike need to make a radical, paradigm shift in thinking. Diets are secondary. There will always be a new diet. But a diet only lasts so long. A lifetime of bad habits, destructive food programming and faulty thinking cannot be undone with a piece of paper titled "diet."

Study after study shows that those who win at weight control *do not* simply lose weight. They change their thinking. Most dieters have lost weight many times. But they have never changed their thinking. And redefining the very concept of dieting is a good place to begin. The word "diet" comes from the Greek *dietos*, which means "way of living." This is the true meaning of dieting.

STRATEGY

Odysseus, the legendary King of Ithaca, designer of the gigantic wooden horse that brought about the fall of Troy and the end of the Trojan War, and perhaps the greatest and most powerful figure in ancient Greek mythology, was an astute observer of human nature, particularly his own.

On the long sail home to Greece, Odysseus and his men encountered many challenges, but none more daunting than the sirens—seas nymphs who sang a song so enchanting that it lured sailors on passing ships to shore. There, they would sit and listen until they starved to death. Forewarned of the danger these sirens posed, Odysseus ordered his men to plug their ears with wax. But the ever-curious Odysseus still wished to hear the sirens' song. So, rather than plug his ears, he had his men tie his hands to the ship's mast as he approached the sirens' island. Predictably, their song was captivating and beautiful; the sirens entreated Odysseus to come to their island. But he refused. Unlike so many sailors who came before him, Odysseus survived.

What was Homer teaching us in this 5000-year-old epic of world literature that applies to every dieter reading who's failed again and again? By having Odysseus tie himself to the ship's mast, Homer offers us a penetrating insight into the vulnerability of the human condition. We are given to temptation. Odysseus knew this. Rather than depend on bravery or an iron will, Odysseus knew that he could only deal with his vulnerability to the sirens' cries through creative strategy.

Behavioral nutrition follows a similar model. It puts great emphasis on human vulnerability. It recognizes that willpower has failed. Like the siren's cry, it knows that the cry of food is intoxicating, alluring and seductive. Our vulnerability to the call of cookies, breadbaskets, potato chips, and nuts is as real as Odysseus' vulnerability to the sirens' song. These are our sirens. We hear their call. Indeed, there isn't a dieter alive who hasn't heard the call of a breadbasket, cookie, or candy at one time or another. This is why we need creative strategy to deal with our own vulnerability and temptation. We would never have known about Odysseus if he'd steered into temptation. The reason the story has been repeated again and again is because its message is as old as the human condition.

Odysseus story underscores a point that I would repeat everyday in my practice of **behavioral nutrition**. Those who succeed at weight control do not have more willpower than those who fail. Simply, they have better strategies! Everything the winners at weight control do can be distilled to a single simple concept: *Strategy is stronger than willpower*.

Strategy not only makes success possible, but easy. Strategy is the key to unlocking the proverbial door to success at weight control, whether you are working with a doctor, nutritionist, following a commercial diet program, or simply going it alone. The elite five percent succeed because they use strategy not only to control food and correct mistakes, but to change the fundamental thinking and feelings about the place of food in their lives.

Strategy is the tie that binds; it links all of those who have mastered the struggle with their weight. Indeed, even those who have never struggled with a weight problem instinctively use strategy to control their weight. Just as we might develop, learn and master the skills of piano playing, tennis, or gourmet cooking, we must develop, learn and master the essential skills of weight control. Each and every person who struggles with his or her weight has the innate capacity for long-term success at weight control. With the right strategies you can also make the quantum leap from failed dieter to triumphant food strategist.

Strategy not only makes it possible to succeed on a diet but also to maintain that success for years to come. Though food strategies vary from person to person—each of us has our own unique signature in the world of food—many of these strategies share common themes. Most importantly, the strategies of **behavioral nutrition** have passed the ultimate test: They made the difference between success at failure not just for some, but also for a majority of people.

One of the greatest truths of human behavior is that if you do what you've always done, you will get the result you've always gotten. You can't just wish or will yourself thin. To achieve lasting weight loss you need a plan. Strategy is the crux of that plan. Weight control is never about willpower, but always about strategy. Once you embody this ideal, you will learn to do things in a new way—to find new eyes—and most importantly, to get a new result: success.

FOOD HISTORY

The diet field is the only area of healthcare that ignores the central principle of healthcare—history. Just as each of us has our own unique fingerprint, we all have our own unique history when it comes to food. By looking historically and not just *calorically* at our struggles with weight, predictable patterns and obstacles emerge. For some it a behavior, such as eating when under stress, for others it is food or type of food, such as salty, bite-sized snacks. Food history helps us identify the handful of foods, behaviors, situations and patterns that cause loses of control and lead to weight gain. Those who follow the lessons of their food history and adopt new eating habits lose weight. But just as predictably as the swallows return to Capistrano, those who return to their old habits gain it back. *The same people gain back the same weight with the same foods on the same days of the week at the same times again and again.*

The modern caloric mindset has never appreciated the idea that it is not only about the calories, and grams of carbohydrates in a food. It is about the cravings. How much you eat of a food you have a long history of abusing is the issue. A piece of food itself isn't the problem; it's the cravings that food triggers for more and more. Every day millions of overweight Americans are given one-size-fits-all diets that directly contradict the lessons of their food history, including the idea that there are no good or bad foods. The statement is right but the reasoning is wrong. There are no good or bad foods; there are only good or bad histories with a food.

Take the standard diet dictum about nuts. Diet books, websites, and a long litany of food “experts” trumpet the value eating 7-8 nuts a day as part of a balanced diet. Food pyramids and food plates from the most esteemed names in science, the world's preeminent academic institutions and even The United States Department of Agriculture place nuts high on their list of “healthy foods.” On the surface, this seems like a perfectly reasonable suggestion. Most varieties are packed with fiber, help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol, reduce the risk of developing blood clots, and improve the health of our arteries. And at 50-70 calories, 7-8 nuts seem manageable in anyone's diet. This is a

classic example of sound nutrition but lousy psychology. Human beings do not eat 7-8 nuts. They eat them by the handful. Anyone with a history of abusing nuts may find that this well-intentioned *nutritional* advice causes him to lose control, stop losing weight and gain back the pounds he seemed so intent on vanquishing. The shortsightedness of thinking calorically and not historically can turn those 7-8 nuts into thousands of excess calories.

We would all be better off if we simply got in touch with our own individual *eating print*—a veritable mosaic of the foods, behaviors and situations that make up our food history. *Your eating print is your own unique signature in the world of food.* Thinking historically, not just calorically is the first important step in helping the millions who gain it back again and again realize that what they have done in the past may no longer be serving them in the present. Those who consider their personal history with a particular food before they consider the calories in a particular food have made a paradigm shift in thinking. Recognizing our own pattern of behaviors and habits with certain foods is the first and most powerful step to helping reign in years of out-of-control eating behavior. When you know your history with a particular food, you won't be goaded into eating something just because it's healthy or low in calories.

BIOLOGICAL VARIABILITY AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Who wants to fail at dieting? It is a silly question really with an obvious answer. Yet, every year 48 million of this country's estimated 72 million dieters do just that. Take a survey. You would be hard pressed to find a dieter who was not fully committed to losing weight. But powerful biological and cultural forces chip away at that commitment, causing us to seek out certain foods. In scientific circles it is an accepted fact that our brains still carry the Darwinian desire for high calorie, high fat foods. Researchers speculate that our cravings date back hundreds of thousands of years to when neural pathways were formed that programmed us to seek out calorie rich goodies. This heightened sensitivity may explain why certain foods trigger cravings, increase appetite and cause many of us to lose control. As Nora Volkow, M.D., Director of the National

Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at the National Institutes of Health, says, “We are programmed to pig out on calories.”

Notice what Dr. Volkow said. “We are programmed to pig out on calories.” She did not say we are programmed for moderation. Her findings fly exactly in the face of a central tenet of the diet field and point out precisely why we need strategy. We are not programmed to moderation. Unfortunately, the field says the opposite. For most people, science supports the direction of behavioral nutrition. Certainly, those who eat small to moderate amounts do not have this problem. But these people also have no need of the diet field.

Just as the diet field eschews biological variability, it doesn’t recognize cultural programming. After thousands of books and billions of dollars lost, the “experts” still have not acknowledged a simple but essential truth: *Different people live in different worlds of taste*. Our preferences for sweet or salty foods may be inborn, learned or more likely, an interaction of both variables. Whatever the reason, the evidence is clear: We are predisposed to abuse certain types of food and that certain characteristics of food itself lead us to overeat. It was easy to embody this idea into the behavioral nutrition model since I have long held that it is not a character flaw or lack of mental stability that causes us to overeat, but an addictive component to the food itself. After all, you do not have to be crazy to be crazy about a cookie.

The scores of experts that turn out one diet book after another are blind to the reality that food manufacturers have known since time immemorial. There is a reason why millions abuse crunchy foods like crackers or rolls but not sandwich bread. After all, who would have a problem having “just one” potato chip if they were soggy instead of crunchy.

And it’s not just biology that shapes our food destiny. Experiences, attitudes and cultural conditioning dramatically affect our food preferences and desires. External cues trigger us to eat and orient eating toward certain foods. Just look at the modern food environment. Unlike our ancestors who struggled simply to find enough to eat, in 2010

we are awash in food stores, fast food chains, mall and airport food courts, 24-hour a day dinners, and all you can eat buffets.

We are bombarded daily with slick ads, commercials and infomercials that reinforce the belief that foods are our indispensable to a good life. We “treat” ourselves to an extra serving of pasta or a fattening dessert. We “reward” ourselves after a hard day with a chocolate bar, slice of pizza or few glasses of alcohol. Advertisers spend billions on brightly colored, shiny, cleverly worded packaging that is specifically designed to get us to buy and over consume. Thirty years ago there was Julia Childs and the Galloping Gourmet. Today, there are multiple 24-hour food networks, and food oriented reality programs with titles like “Top Chef,” “Iron Chef America,” “The Next Food Network Star,” “Cake Boss” and “Ace of Cakes.” Our mothers and grandmothers had a few well-worn cookbooks on the kitchen counter. Today, an Internet search of the word “recipe” turns up over 150 million hits. We are literally being cued and motivated to eat. Even our everyday language cannot escape the specter of food. Politicians “pepper” otherwise boring speeches with witty dialogue. We add “spice” to our marriage or relationship. We get all “juiced up” before a big event. We call our significant other “cookie” “honey” “sweetie” or “pumpkin.” Many who lose out on a yearend bonus grouse about getting nothing but “crumbs.”

Coupled with powerful cultural and biological programming and surrounded by messages that food is the ultimate reward, it’s not a surprise that so many dieters fail again and again. It’s also no great mystery why dieting and deprivation seem to go hand in hand.

ALL FOODS IN MODERATION

Is there a dieter alive who, at one time or another, has not been counseled to enjoy “all foods in moderation?” After all, why not live a little after months of months of holding back and depriving yourself of the foods you love? You’ve earned it. Diets succeed because they help structure out of control eating and impose limits on food. But diets are finite. Once the diet is over, once the weight has come off, most dieters head back into

the vast food universe with a few general guidelines about a balanced diet and permission to enjoy all foods in moderation.

But stripped to its barest essence, “all foods in moderation” is nothing more than a recipe for disaster. When in all of human history have we ever learned to have a little of a compulsion? Look around. All of human history is evidence of human excess. The statement “all foods in moderation” is more an idealistic than a realistic statement about human behavior. In matters of pleasure, convenience and passion human beings are not given to moderation but to excess. Freud understood this very early on with his work on the pleasure principle, which tells us to do whatever feels good. And few things feel as good as eating. Is it any wonder then why millions gain it all back?

Every highway planner understands what has eluded the groupthink of the diet field, which is why you can travel anywhere in the world and never sees a sign that reads, “Drive moderately.” There would be chaos on the roads. In matters of convenience and pleasure, we need clear boundaries. The world’s highway planners do not conduct elaborate focus groups or academic studies to realize this essential truth about human nature. The advice to enjoy “all foods in moderation” ignores the very obvious fact that most of us cannot eat moderately. If we could then we would not need to diet in the first place.

Is it reasonable to expect anyone to suddenly control a food or eating behavior that has been out of control for years just by giving the green light to enjoy all foods in moderation? Moderation is not enough. Who, as an example, would want to follow the typical restaurant strategy to “eat half and leave the other half on the plate?” There is no greater form of mental torture than to sit in a fine restaurant with half your dinner staring you in the face while your companions leisurely enjoy the rest of their meal. It’s precisely this sort of thinking that creates deprivation and leads to failure.

How can we persevere with this advice such as “all foods in moderation” when it’s contrary to all of the evidence and everything we know about human behavior? Clearly, it taps into something endemic in the American psyche. It’s the notion that we can

accomplish anything if just put our minds to it, that we can master any situation and that we can have it all. These statements are part of a cultural zeitgeist, which gives us license to say, “yes” to everything. Who can object? It’s also part of the unique American version of hope that we can have it all and we don’t have to live with a single “no” or consequence. It’s part of the American pursuit of happiness, especially in the world of food. Like robots, we just keep repeating this advice. The problem, of course, is that robots don’t get fat.

Weight control is the only area of human behavior where people are taught that they should be able to have it all. But all of life is about trade-offs. We are sorry to announce the obvious but in life you really can’t have it all. At least, not unless you want to look like you are wearing it all! Actually, it is not that you cannot have it all. You can have all you want. But you will never have the life you want if you do.

The field teaches dieters that if they do not have it all they will feel deprived. Really, the opposite is true. For some, true deprivation is eating those foods they have a long history of abusing because having “just a little” reactivates cravings, leading to obsessive thinking and a loss of control. It may be more helpful to “Box Out” a small handful of foods that historically have reactivated cravings and compulsive eating than spend a lifetime trying to enjoy all foods in moderation, especially when the latest scientific research indicates that for some people certain foods are no different than addictive drugs. One of the most powerful lessons we can learn from the elite five percent who succeed is that it’s easier not to start than to have a little. The winners live by the motto: *If I don’t begin, I don’t have a problem.* The weight control field needs to say and teach this concept without apology.

Never say, “I can’t have it.” Say instead, “It doesn’t work for me.” Part of this critical cognitive switch is recognizing that eating the foods you have a long history of abusing will ultimately deprive you of a lifetime of being trim. Perhaps the most important cognitive switch of all is giving up a food because you can’t have it versus making an adult choice to let go of a food or “box it in” because with it you can’t have a life of

being trim. Feeling that a food is being taken away from you only increases deprivation, as opposed to making an adult choice to let it go or use the strategy of “box it out” because that food does not work for you. True deprivation is eating a food you have a history of abusing because it will deprive you of a lifetime of being trim.

The good news: In today’s food environment, the choices for great tasting, low calorie substitutes are so vast that there are enough alternatives to accommodate every taste and preference. And studies show that when most people do not have their favorite food, they are better able to control their second favorite. Some people, as an example, who love chocolate cookies may find chocolate mousse a satisfying alternative that does not have the crunch that triggers compulsive eating and a choice they don’t encounter in their day-to-day life.

THE SUCCESS SWITCH: THINK SUBSTITUTION, NOT DEPRIVATION

Dieting is the one area of our lives where we do not seem to be able to handle success. Look at your own life. How many times have you reached the summit only to return to the foods, behaviors and thinking that cause you to gain it back? What would cause you to return to your old eating habits and ways of thinking about dieting? What would cause you to undo months of work and wantonly throw your hard earned money down the drain? Why do dieters sabotage their success? Perhaps the single greatest reason why people fail again and again is that they associate dieting with deprivation.

The sense of feeling deprived—that you are missing out on something, that everyone else is eating whatever they want, that you will never eat normally again—creates a failure mindset. Dieting is pain motivated and pain is a great motivator. No one goes on a diet because they are happy or having nothing better to do. We go on diets because we are miserable, desperate and will endure anything to lose weight. However, once the weight comes off and the pain subsides we forget. We are programmed this way. Our minds are trained to distance us from the memory of painful and unpleasant experiences. This is why so many who lose weight also lose their motivation. They are happier. Happiness

breeds contentment but sometimes erodes motivation. As many dieters become happier, they become heavier as well. The thought of missing out, of being deprived, or never eating normally again is simply too powerful a drive to resist. It is the mindset—the inability to change thinking—that creates the behaviors that lead to failure.

Historically, dieting and deprivation are two words that have always gone together, like flipsides of the same coin. But deprivation is a learned behavior. It is not part of our genetic code. While the average dieter may feel deprived if she cannot have a Snickers Bar or bag of M&M's, billions of people the world over have never tasted the thousands of foods we can't seem to live without. And here's the best part. Anything that is learned can be unlearned. When it comes to dieting, we can teach ourselves new tricks. The habits and mindset formed from our learned experiences can be changed if we change our thinking and our behavior. The deprivation mindset is a conditioned response. It comes from a culture that says you can have it all. It comes from a diet industry that is ill equipped or simply unwilling to help dieters cope with their feelings of deprivation or provide the tools to help overcome and prevent them. But the evidence is clear: Mastering the deprivation mindset is critical for lasting success at weight control.

Fortunately, mastering the deprivation mindset has never been easier. Thanks to behavioral nutrition, dieters now have powerful new psychological techniques and cutting edge strategies to change the very thinking that is at the root of most weight problems. Most dieters have lost weight many times before, but they've never changed their thinking. This is crucial, for it's the change in thinking that moves dieters from deprivation to liberation.

The other good news: There is now a low calorie substitute for virtually every high calorie food people love. A central theme of behavioral nutrition is that in 2014 dieting is not about deprivation but substitution. Through hundreds of great tasting lite foods, lists of restaurants serving low calorie alternatives, and dozens of five-star gourmet recipes dieting never again has to be about deprivation. The exceptionally blessed who fill my

office waiting room never complain that they are missing out, can't eat normally or feel deprived. Indeed, many enjoy a greater variety of delicious choices today than at any time in their lives. Equipped with the right foods and creative strategies and techniques for losing weight and keeping it off, they truly live by the mantra: *Dieting is about substitution, not deprivation.*

A NEW BLUEPRINT

It was the legendary Carthaginian general Hannibal who instructed his soldiers during the long war with Rome to “find a way, or make one.” No one, including Hannibal's enemies, assumed he could ever cross the icy peaks of the Alps. But Hannibal employed a new strategy. He literally made a way. And for the first time in history, mankind crossed the frozen Alps and Hannibal marched into history.

It is impossible for us to accept that a people who can decipher the human genome, paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, redefine the nature of matter, gravity, mass, and energy, and create a piece of music of such colossal grandeur and unequalled technical complexity that it take fifteen hours to perform are destined to a 95 percent failure rate when it comes to their own weight. When smart people lose to a piece of food it does not mean they are not motivated, ready or cannot do it. It just means they are doing something wrong.

There is a reason the elite 5 percent succeed where millions of others fail. It is not, as the diet industry claims, that they have more knowledge about the calories and grams of fat and carbohydrates in the foods they eat. They haven't been counseled to eat like a caveman, count points, be in the “zone,” or choose foods according to their blood type. They don't exercise three hours a day. They don't follow the philosophy of “all foods in moderation.” They don't work harder than everyone else. Rather, they have mastered the two elements critical for success: They're food smart—they know they can eat more, weigh less and never feel hungry or deprived; and they've mastered smart strategy—for strategy is truly stronger than willpower.

Behavioral nutrition will help you succeed where most others fail because its advice doesn't come from some one-size-fits-all program, the latest diet craze or the mouth of a self-anointed expert. Rather, it comes from you—from your own life history and experiences with food. It doesn't squeeze you into an arbitrary pyramid or nutrition plate but considers you as a whole person and accounts for the many variables that make up your food environment. **Behavioral nutrition** is not about fitting you into a model. Instead, it constructs the model around you.

If you're reading these words and are still believe that saying "giving up" a cookie, piece of cake, potato chips or dinner roll will leave you feeling deprived; if you are convinced that the answer to your weight problems still resides somewhere out in the vast diet universe then consider this idea. *Being thin may not make you happy but being fat will make you unhappy.* In the long run, you may find that being out of control with your weight and your food choices will always leave you more *deprived* than turning down a piece of cake. You will find that dreading to look in the mirror or weigh yourself on a scale is far more upsetting than saying no to an extra cookie or candy bar. And you will discover that not fitting into your clothes, shopping the "plus sized" racks at a nearby department store, struggling to climb a flight of stairs, and being stuck in the revolving door of your doctor's office is far more distressing than forgoing "all foods in moderation."

Winston Churchill said, "We only need to win one battle—the last." It is my greatest hope for you that by the time you finish reading this article that you will never need another diet book. Unlike the swallows, you will stop returning year after year to the weight loss industry. You will stop looking to the "wisdom" of others for answers to questions that can best be answered by you. You'll stop ignoring the lessons of your food history, and start honoring the beauty of your own unique eating print. You'll no longer fall prey to the siren's cry. You will once and for all abandon the junk theology of "all foods in moderation." You will realize that strategy, substitution and success are preferable to calorie counting, deprivation, and failure. And you will discover that living thin is a far better blueprint for your life than gaining it back again and again.

