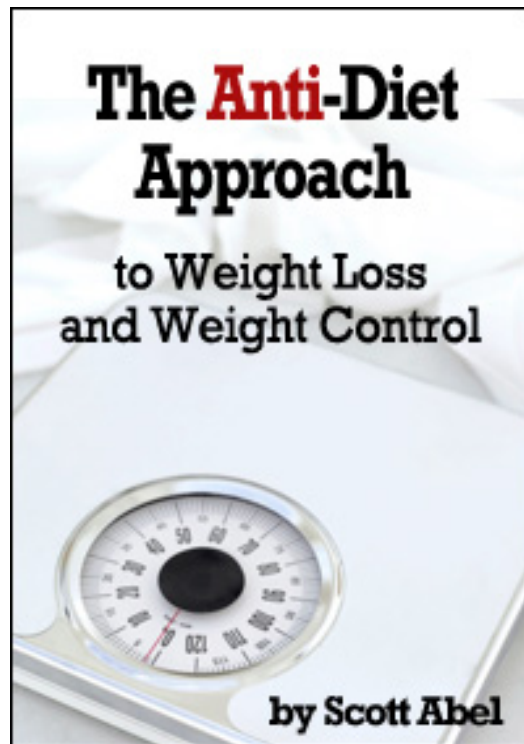


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Chapter 1.

Outlining the Initial Problems and Issues of The Diet-Mentality

There are hundreds and even thousands of ways the diet-mentality can infiltrate your state of mind. But there are two prevailing inroads by which this usually happens. And they go together. These two influences are body-consciousness and marketing. The diet-industry is big business. Check that – the diet-industry is HUGE business, generating billions and billions of dollars every year. And just like an industry built on consumption - marketing is its base. The influence of marketing of the diet-industry is all around you. It is hard not to be influenced by it – whether consciously or unconsciously. Only true awareness will help you filter the intense marketing machine of the diet-industry and allow you to see it for what it is. And one of the central ways the diet industry profits is by connecting itself to body-consciousness. The subliminal message of the diet-industry is that you should care (intensely) about your weight. Most people are prone to a certain level of body-consciousness anyway. It is a biological and cultural imperative. What the diet-industry does is spin this and magnify and exaggerate the emphasis of body-consciousness and put it on steroids. The goal of the diet-industry is one of message.

It's about getting you to buy into a specific message and believe that message and internalize that message. And the message of the diet-industry is that a leaner and lighter you is a better you. The message of the diet-industry is that you can't possibly be spiritually and personally fulfilled unless you are leaner and lighter. And once you buy into that message then you cross a line where body-image becomes forever enmeshed with self-image – but not in a constructive way, but in a destructive one. And from here, internalizing the diet-mentality is but a formality and only a matter of time. And this is the message of the diet-industry and this is the process of the diet-mentality and how it takes over. ->

Because aren't you aware, as the implication goes – that if you just start dieting now, then your own personal and spiritual fulfillment are just so many pounds away? And conversely, the reverse is true without even needing to be mentioned – within this message is another more insidious message. If a lighter and leaner you is a better you – then if you are currently overweight, and you keep getting pounded with this message – then of course you are led to believe that you are not 'good enough' the way you are right now. And from here the personal angst begins. You start scrutinizing your external self just a little more, here and there, and then a little more still. And it's all unconscious. And then at some point you buy into the message that maybe you aren't as happy as you should be – and it's all because of your weight.

You start to confuse the notion that taking care of your body means taking care of its external appearance; even those two are not the same thing. But it is the notion nonetheless that you somehow internalize that you will be emotionally better and spiritually more content 10, 20, or 30 lbs. from now. It's the internalization of the message that of all three realms of the triangle of awareness – physical, mental, and emotion – that if you just control the 'appearance' of the physical realm, regardless of its reality – then this will enhance your mental and emotional realms. Well think about that message for a minute. Because this myth that achieving a lighter and leaner you means a happier

more contented you is actually backwards. But it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter that the truth is that a happier and more contented you is by definition a "lighter" you. And a spiritually lighter you is what leads to that being reflected in the physical world of a cosmetically lighter you. But the notion of the leaner body = a happier person takes on the aura of fact. But if you examine this deeper, you will realize that in 'fact' -> this is the exact lie that makes you miserable and wanting. You stop accepting yourself and stop connecting the three realms of the triangle of awareness within you. And you fail to realize this mistaken notion of a lighter you is a happier you, isn't making you any happier at all. And the fact you have become even more weight-conscious and body-conscious isn't freeing your spirit and lightening it and lifting you up, is it? It's imprisoning your spirit and weighing it down – and weighing you down as well – emotionally and mentally – and more than likely physically as well.

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You become emotionally vulnerable to the diet-industry mandate and the diet-mentality in general. So you also become vulnerable to its marketing methods as well. And year after year this same irony plays itself out for millions of you. You fail to realize the fundamental truth which is that inevitable failure is what drives and sustains the diet-industry. They don't want you to master weight-control, because if you do, they've lost a customer. But you can't see it. You can't see that the mentality involved is just all wrong and discombobulated. The focus on food is also all wrong. But you think there must be magic in that focus. And that becomes part of your diet-mentality as well. So you make yourself emotionally vulnerable to the marketing message. And it's the same kind of marketing that is used across many different industries, only you become blind to how it's manipulating you specifically.

So you become vulnerable to the usual marketing culprits. – 1) relying on uneducated personal experience reported by someone else -> what is termed as '*anecdotal evidence*.' And this is especially problematic for you as a consumer, and it once again puts you in the compare and contrast mode of "competition" when it comes to weight loss. 2) You become more and more susceptible to your own personal wish-bias -> what is termed as '*hope over rationality*'. It's akin to the battered wife syndrome where you keep telling yourself its love, so you keep going back to an unhealthy and disempowering circumstance because you are more emotionally invested in the fantasy of 'hope' than you are rationally invested in the reality of 'reason.' I call this the 'battered dieter' syndrome. 3) Your hope over rationality bias leads you to an unrealistic 'optimism bias' -> and you used points 1 and 2, and create a false hyped-up motivation of "*this time it's going to work*" type of thinking. 4) And finally as a result of this optimism bias you experience over and over again what we call the '*honeymoon period*.' You stick to things religiously at first, and in doing so, you see external reflections of "success" so you tell yourself it's all working and finally "this" is the right diet you've needed. But the honeymoon phase never lasts, does it?

These are all just some examples of *perceptions* of 'what works' that are filtered through a thick, steamy fog of report results. These so-called reported results are composed of personal desires, values, hopes, biases, exposure to marketing hype, and/or mental and emotional pre-dispositions toward superstition and unreliable promise. – The promise of the 'battered-dieter' syndrome. All of the above become things marketers use to market to you dreams in the guise of promises. These things become twisted and this is why someone can swear to you that some diet or supplement "truly works" – when objective and rigorous scientific study proves in fact, that it doesn't. And just

like the battered-wife syndrome – in the battered-dieter syndrome, you believe it, because you want to believe it. And these industries, of diet, supplements, weight- control and the rest of it are profited by your own willingness to pay for and prop up your own false-perceptions. The question becomes – When you are going to get tired of it?

And if the diet-industry did have the answers for weight-loss and weight control then how could they still be in business? Think about it. The industry generates billions of dollars of profit and revenue each year. They do so by selling answers. But if they had the answers, then wouldn't these answers just be copied and pasted and handed out and the industry itself 'dissolved?' Because think about it – if the industry had the answers, and all you had to do was buy these answers, then how could the problem of weight-control still exist – let alone still generate billions of dollars each and every year. – Hope over rationality indeed. The industry creates the desire in you by marketing to you that a better you is only pounds away – and then they sell back to you, what they stole from you to being with. And we'll be discussing what that is throughout this project.

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And yet at seminars and workshops that I do, so many people say they can see right through the diet-industry message and they don't buy into it. But your actions suggest that you do. And so does the research. And while the weight-loss and diet-industry rake in billions per year they also spend millions per year on advertising. Why? – Because it works. You are affected by it whether you realize it or not. So the industries of body-consciousness present you with a message that your physical appearance and your weight are the keys to your "authentic" self- esteem. And you need to consider this message and think more deeply about it as well.

The question you really need to ponder is one of actuality – and a question of what is real and true personal growth? What are the components of real and true self-confidence and self- esteem? Are these really outside-in things you reflect out to the world? Do you really think your soul is only going to feel as good as your body looks? – Or as indicated on the bathroom scale? Do you honestly think that your personal feelings of salvation and deliverance lie with-thin? Or is the lie of desired thinness what keeps you from these very things? You need to address how many ways you think and act that demonstrate you actually believe this outside-in message of wellness. And then you need to also address in how many ways you think and act that prove the exact opposite. You need to ask yourself if you truly embrace, assimilate, and internalize that true salvation lies within – and not with-thin. So it all becomes a question you need to pose to yourself about how real you are about being real.

Do you think and act in a way that reinforces substance over form? - Because if you do, then the lie of the diet-mentality message can't ever get to you or affect you. And if you truly think and act in ways that nurture who you are over how you look then you are exercising the difference between the diet-mentality and the self-compassion mindset. And the difference is the heart of what this project is all about. Some of you "think" you get it. But how you think and feel about your diet and your weight and your body prove that while you may "understand" it – you are not living it. And that is because the diet-mentality is still in control. There are no "yeah buts" to the self-compassionate mindset that frees you from the prison and restraints of the diet mentality.

And research shows as well that many of you live the lie of the diet-mentality message while at the same time claiming it has no effect on you. You are actually under its influence but at the same time you live in denial of that influence. The real truth, backed up by research is that many, if not most, of your food choices and food habits have little to do with “nutrition” – even though you lie to yourself that they do. These choices really have more to do with emotional, mental, and physical factors that you merely “equate” to wellness. And most of these things are marketed to you for you to believe in them. Things like probiotics or Greek Yogurt are just the vogue hipster health emphasis of the day. And like all vogue trends they come and go. Real wellness habits would transcend being told what to eat. But at the top of the list for why you choose to eat the foods you do - the vanity insanity of weight-control over diet-health and well- being is the primary focus of your food choices.

For instance, a 2007 Australia study showed that “the desire to improve cosmetic appearance” was THE most influential and driving force for food purchases among 18-30 years old women. And this force ranked way high above other listed items like “blood pressure benefits”, “health benefits” and “lower cholesterol.” So the truth, backed up by research, is that you talk a lot about wellness and balance but when it comes to being truly honest about what forces actually shape your diet choices – it is almost always a cosmetic and external ideal reference. And the irony here is also one of the general ironies of the diet-mentality. This demographic mentioned in the study above – women aged 18-35 – is also the demographic who report the most digestive-related complications and issues as well – things like bloating, constipation, IBS, gluten intolerance etc. All these things are interconnected within the diet-mentality mindset of cosmetic focus and the pressure all of that kind of thinking produces within you. Because the truth is the digestive track is one of the key indicators and measuring sticks for stress. You don’t have food issues causing digestive issues – you have thinking issues and stress about food – that are causing digestive issues. And only a realization of the self-compassionate mind is going to reduce any or all of these psychosomatic symptoms.

You simply have to realize that food is meant to sustain and support you. It is also meant for your indulgent enjoyment and good health and well-being via your indulgent enjoyment. Food was never meant to be vaulted to a level of importance where it could be personified and construed as being your enemy, your evil demon, your lover, your friend, or whatever other surrogate or substitute you use it for.

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The diet-mentality and its requisite emotional connection to fear, worry, and anxiety keeps you buying into a dogma of matter over mind -> this false illusion that food can create fear. The diet-mentality heightens and excites your emotional focus when the real solution should be in calming your emotional focus. So, the result of this diet-mentality is an emotional contradiction. You are not working and owning how you eat – but instead, what you eat is working on and owning you. No sane person will want to live that way for long in connection to food. And while you are indeed meant to be connected to food – this is supposed to be a positive and calming connection of a biological requirement for survival. It is never meant to be an intimidating or stressful connection.

You are all told and you all understand that a good diet is a powerful weapon against disease and illness. But that is the physical and biological realm of “healthy” influence. However, under the

influence of the diet-mentality there is another reality for you to consider. If that “good and healthy” diet is accompanied by a mindset of fear, paranoia, and obsession – exactly the kinds of things the diet-mentality engenders in you –then these ‘health benefits’ of eating right are lost to a form of stress that underlines the diet itself. We all know that stress is the number one cause of ill-health and disease in the modern world of abundance and convenience. And yet, very few people, because of your own perceptual bias – very few of you are able and willing to acknowledge your own “diet-mentality” as one of your constant and prevailing modes of stress. This cannot ‘work’ long-term, although as a real form of stress, it can certainly be avoided. But in fact, if you think about it, you will understand that one of the main reasons you cheat on or sabotage your diet is as a form of subconscious emotional protest against your diet-mentality stress – and you ‘cheat’ to seek momentary release and relief from it. In short it is just unnatural to be stressed over a biological survival demand. And yet, this is exactly what the diet-mentality initiates in you.

And research is showing this to be true. We are starting to see and prove in research that stress can be just as harmful to your weight as it is to your heart – and what a paradox this is for those who are stressed about trying to lose weight – but who don’t realize that stressing over the issue, can itself cause weight-gain. Research is proving that stressors and emotion-focused coping are two co-factors found to be associated with low self-esteem. And low self-esteem in turn, is strongly associated with disturbed eating attitudes. As we see again, this has nothing to do with “nutritional knowledge.” Stressors are directly related to disturbed eating attitudes (Fryer, 1997) regardless of knowledge of nutrition or health.

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In essence, all this carb phobia, macro/ratio focus and the rest of what goes on with this notion of diet precision – these become emotional stressors in and of themselves – and as such they produce disordered eating patterns and weight problems. The devil truly is in the details, when it comes to the pressures of the diet-mentality. So, the diet-solution often is itself the source of the problem! These findings have been reproduced over and over. (For instance see the studies in my book **Beyond Metabolism**).

The point here is that chronic stress, even stress over diet and weight control can lead to food/eating and/or weight-control issues. So, is the solution to this dilemma another new diet then, to stress over and fuss about? Isn’t the definition of insanity doing the same things over and over and expecting a different result? Or could it be that the solution is to replace diet- induced stress with a self-compassionate mindset – and within that, relinquish the actual and true causative factor → the diet-mentality – which is the source of stress itself – or at least the perceptions surrounding it are the source of stress. And doesn’t the weight-loss systems industry focus on these very things? – creating more and more stress about how you eat and how you look and therefore more stress about how you *feel* about how you eat and how you look.

As we’ve already discussed, under the influence of the diet-mentality you are taught to fear fat or fear carbs – sometimes both. But this ‘fear of fat’ or ‘fear of carbs’ presents an eventual paradox that is now well-documented. It unfolds like this -> you try to deprive yourself of even healthy foods of whichever macro food group you are told to fear the most. For example, if you are led to believe

carbs are bad then you fear them, and you try to cut out potatoes, yams, rice, whatever. These become your 'fear foods' and it can get quite ridiculous. People who buy into the notion of high vs. low glycemic carbs are told to cut out carrots for example, so carrots - a completely healthy and useful food becomes a 'fear food.'

But when you do this, a sort of counter-effect happens in your mind, and this is well- documented as I said. Eventually, even the foods you are "allowed to eat" become both less appealing and less filling. This is the law of "less and less." Less food choices increases the appetite for other foods and the awareness for wanting other foods. And less food intake, of course, also increases actual physical hunger. You end up usually falling into this cycle -> At first you start eating more of the "allowable" foods thinking you will be satisfied. But this denies you the emotional component of the feeding experience. (Something we will be discussing in great detail in a later section.) Then you end up eating even the foods you were supposed to deny, the ones you have internalized as "bad" – and in so doing you end up feeling "bad about yourself." And in the end, instead of helping you to lose weight, this diet-mentality mandate to "fear" a whole macro food group like carbs – actually causes you to gain weight – because of both psychic and physiological rebellion against this kind of mental and emotional 'self- deprivation by fear.' And this is called the "fear of fat phobia paradox" that leads to weight gain. And many of you are all too familiar with this cycle.

But there is something even more insidious going on beneath the surface when the diet- mentality dictates to you that there are "good and bad" foods. You start judging yourself as "good or bad" based upon your compliance to this level of thinking. You start confusing real feelings for false- perceptions. For instance how many of you have ever used the statement, "I feel fat?" Have you ever examined the surrounding environment that cues you to use such a statement? Has it ever occurred to you that the statement, "I feel fat" is reflective of you adapting the diet-mentality? Because, if you think about it – the statement, "I feel fat" is patently absurd and not possible. "Fat" is not a feeling, is it? In this context, if "fat" is not a feeling - then what is it? Well, it's a judgment isn't it? And therefore what does the statement "I feel fat" really mean? Well if you remove the diet-mentality that obscures what you are really saying – you find what you are really saying is "I feel bad" – or worse and more importantly – "I feel bad about myself." And this sentiment is almost always a result of the diet- mentality and your sense of failure and judging yourself from within its influence.

Over the years I have had dozens, if not hundreds of clients, who reported 'feeling' great and doing great with their eating regimen and workout program. Then they get on the scale – and suddenly all those "good feelings" evaporate. Why? – Nothing else has changed? Only now, they have a number to judge themselves by and the number is never good enough. This is reflective of the diet-mentality controlling the mind. These clients "feel" good until they weigh themselves. Then for weeks afterwards they suddenly "feel" fat. The scale literally "changed their minds." This is the diet- mentality and how it influences self-judgment and self- recrimination, and moves you away from self- compassion.

But as if this stress over diet and food issues were not enough, the diet-mentality exerts greater control over who you are by connecting these stressors with an emphasis on body- consciousness as well. And sometimes it may be subtle; and other times it may be substantial – but nonetheless, the diet-mentality is intimately connected with "stressing" body- consciousness as well – usually reflected

with an emphasis on the weight scale. And this over- emphasis on body-consciousness can also negatively impact eating behaviors and food issues. And it impacts these things emotionally, well beyond anything that “a diet” is likely to solve – even though your diet-mentality tries to convince you that “a diet” is the cure all for the problems that it itself, has set in motion. But in terms of body-consciousness along with the diet-mentality, this is like a one-two knockout punch of crushing your self-awareness and self- compassion. You lose your inner self-connection and start focusing and thinking that what matters are external reflections – the mirror, the weight scale, your dress size – these all become ways and means – not to ‘think’ about yourself, but to judge yourself. And between the diet-consciousness stress of the diet-mentality, and its component body-consciousness emphasis and stress, this can add up to stress levels that compare to the death of a loved one or a lost relationship.

As Dr. Sandra Sassoroli put it: *“In female individuals stress can bring out previously absent associations between some psychological predisposing factors for eating disorders: and an actual desire or plan to lose weight. Such findings suggest that stress may stimulate behaviors related to eating disorders in a pre-disposed personality. (2005)”* – In other words, body- conscious stress can induce eating disorders or disordered eating where these things never existed before. Once again, perceiving your own body as an external attachment to stress about can only be relinquished by restoring the self-compassionate mind. And although Dr. Sassoroli was gender specific in the quote above, I see the same thing in regards to male clients as well.

So, the point is that “stressing” over diet and body-consciousness BOTH or EITHER can lead to stress issues of anxiety, depression, angst etc. But more importantly these things can also lead to food issues, eating issues, and weight-control issues.

So the obvious irony and paradox becomes one of pointing out the dominant message of the weight-loss systems industry and the vanity industries in general, like physique competition. These industries create a mindset that tells you to focus intensely on and concentrate intensely on specific details of your diet, and your body – the very things that remove you from your self- compassionate mindset. So you replace a healthy and adaptable mindset, with an unhealthy and rigid one. Does that sound logical to you?

The weight-loss systems and their meeting groups continue to reinforce the fear-factor while assuming that the group affiliation is “esteem-building.” Let me be clear – there is absolutely nothing in the diet-mentality that is ‘esteem-building.’ And here is another counter-intuitive tactic used in these so-called “support groups” for weight-loss. You weigh yourself in front of the group. This is supposed to be a sort of accountability tactic. It is also meant to be perceived as being emotionally “supportive.” But is it? Isn’t the fact of being weighed in front of others also a means to deepening the fear-factor involved in the whole process? Think about it – if you have had years and years of existing weight-control problems then would having yourself be weighed in front of the group be something you would look forward to?

Shouldn’t the ongoing process of weight-control be positive and enticing - not negative and scary and intimidating? Isn’t being weighed in front of others just another way to add on emotional pressure to the whole process of dieting? Can you imagine the level of intimidating self-consciousness involved in

even a subconscious acknowledgement of the potential for humiliation of being weighed in front of others – especially if your numbers somehow don't "measure up?" In fact, doesn't this ritual just reinforce that it's all about the numbers, while pretending to be supportive and esteem-building? Can esteem-building even be measured? And oh sure, just like on the television program everyone applauds the momentary success hero of pounds lost for that week or month. This is a useful marketing tactic. These individuals are held up with the usual – "see, our system works" – industry agenda and reinforcement.

But what if you are one of the ones whose numbers don't measure up? How would that make you feel? Is that esteem-building? Not to mention – the whole idea just leads yet again to a compare, contrast and compete mode of thinking. All this does is yet again, add even more stress and pressure to the whole process. This is the insidious underlying nature of the diet- mentality. And even if you are the hero of the day at the group weigh-in, what happens when your weight-loss inevitably slows down and stalls? Are you going to feel like a success in that moment? Or is the whole ritual of success and failure now going to leave you feeling like you have failed? This is the lie of the diet-mentality. And it's reinforced by all these systems of weight-loss out there. And yet none of it is esteem-building, and none of it makes any sense in the real-world. I call it the *"sisterhood of the travelling misery."*

The reality is that the number one behavioral trigger to an episode of overeating or binge- eating comes after weighing yourself. This behavioral trigger represents just how much emotional stock and emotional judgment the diet-mentality has you putting on yourself – and it all becomes projected onto the weight scale and the weigh-in process. I call anyone who falls for this trap "the biggest loser" indeed – because what you lose is a lot more important than pounds counted off (or on)!

And this doesn't just apply to overweight people who sign up for these commercial systems of weight-loss. It also applies to people who consider themselves "fit" but still live under the misguidance of the diet-mentality. Far too many people who consider themselves to be "fit" perceive eating as "bad" or something that must be "earned" – rather than a survival requisite the body needs in order to function. And just as many "fit" people report binge-eating after weighing themselves → either as a "treat" and "reward" for being "good" – or as a self- indulgent "punishment" because of a judgment of themselves for not losing enough weight. There is nothing "fit" about this kind of mindset. It is not compassionate, it is not reasonable, and it is not productive. All it does is once again falsely imply that a weight scale has the power to make you feel good or bad about yourself – or to feel like a momentary success or failure within yourself. What kind of emotional pressure does that put on you – and in you, for you to try live with and abide by? Can you not see how utterly ridiculous this is?

And if you re-read the above section and truly understand it, then another glaring reality also becomes obvious. Nutritional knowledge has nothing to do with any of this. All of this is reflective of a faulty mindset that increases emotional pressure about everything surrounding a biological imperative. Animals don't "feel" good or bad about themselves based on what they eat? They are not emotionally invested by food – even though all mammals are emotionally connected to the feeding process. So, nutritional knowledge has little to do with any of this – and often it just deepens the effects of the diet-mentality and the grip it holds on your mind. Nutritional knowledge will not ever be able to stop you from self-sabotaging eating behaviors because of a faulty personal psychology

and psychic imprint of the diet-mentality.

I often interact with people who make the fundamental mistake of confusing a “good knowledge of nutrition” with an understanding of metabolism and the biology of weight control. These two things are profoundly different and distinct. Moreover – every one of these things is a consideration only of the physical realm of the triangle of awareness – namely, diet, food, eating, metabolism and body-weight. But as we’ve been discussing the diet-mentality fuses all of this by over-burdening the emotional realm with it. Therefore how does knowledge of nutrition ease that kind of stress in you? – Answer, it doesn’t.

The truth is most of you reading this do not have a ‘diet-issue’ – in reality, you have a ‘thinking issue’ about diet. (Or dieting) And this is the fundamental problem. You need to connect all three realms of the triangle of awareness when it comes to diet and eating behaviors. And you need to not only ‘connect’ them – but put them in a proper level of importance. The diet- mentality is one that leads you to overemphasizing the emotional realm in relation to diet, dieting, and weight-control. And it does this by having you think in negative terms and negative emotional constructs -> worry, fear, stress, guilt etc. Inflating the emotional realm of awareness when it comes to weight-control and weight-loss, is just a no win situation because of all the stress and importance – false stress and false importance – that this emotionality creates. And no knowledge of nutrition is going to correct that. In fact, it may deepen it by falsely misleading you that knowledge of nutrition is “doing something” about the way your diet-mentality is controlling you. But in fact pursuing a study and knowledge of nutrition may actually be proof of just how deep your diet-mentality is controlling you. The distinction lies in the level of the emotional component that is driving your pursuit of nutritional knowledge.

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And I’ve seen it a thousand times over. A working knowledge of nutrition more often than not just becomes another lie you tell yourself. I have had hundreds of clients who remain perpetually overweight, but they know the nutritional content and calories content and macronutrient breakdown of every food in a grocery store – even fast foods. Yes, even with me as their Coach, they remain way overweight and constantly struggle and battle with weight- control. They go to every diet symposium and conference there is – and yet they remain overweight and always in a battle within themselves – and they just can’t see the lie they live under and abide in.

Like them, maybe you’ll relate to the truth that while your obsession with diet and nutrition tells you that you control food in your life – the reality is that all this obsession and study of nutrition just proves that mentally and emotionally, food in your life is controlling you. Furthermore you need to examine the action/behavioral elements of this truth as well – as it plays out in your life. Just because you can say ‘no’ to certain foods as you undertake yet another attempt at dieting for weight-control – the real question is - in that same instance of being able to say ‘no’ to certain foods – have you lost the self-compassionate ability to say ‘yes’ to yourself, within that self-deprivation state of mind? And this is an important question. You don’t even realize that each and every diet, under the influence of the diet-mentality robs a little more of your self-compassionate ability to say ‘yes’ to yourself, because of your efforts of losing weight. And what you really lose in that equation is far more

important than any lost pounds that may show up *for a little while*, on the weight scale.

When your life's focus becomes taken over and swallowed by food and diet – what to eat, how to eat, what you can't eat, what you 'have to' eat, what you weigh, the right vs. the wrong foods, the good vs. the bad foods, the healthy vs. the indulgent foods, the right diet vs. the wrong diet, what other people will think – then doesn't this list make it obvious that food and diet become a black-hole of thought and emotion – and of wasted spiritual focus and psychic energy?

And while the diet-mentality overemphasizes and amplifies the emotional realm in connection to weight control – it also mutates, and distorts what should be the proper mental realm in association with weight management and weight-control. There is a Zen expression that states – "*resistance is hell.*" And a mindset of resistance is hell because it places your mind in a state of torment. And yet isn't the diet-mentality based completely on creating and encouraging a mindset of resistance – and therefore a mindset of torment? Think about it – Under the influence of the diet-mentality you are supposed to '*resist*' temptation, '*resist*' your cravings, '*resist*' your hunger, '*resist*' indulgent foods, '*resist*' forbidden foods, '*resist*' cheating – and on and on it goes. So, while the diet-mentality grossly amplifies the emotional realm of awareness in terms of attempted weight-control – it also mentally mutates and distorts the mental realm of awareness in relation to weight management and weight-control as well. And as obviously futile then that the diet-mentality obviously is – you still can't help yourself from buying into its false notions of 'diet-delivery' to a new and better you.

Most of you are imprisoned within the diet-mentality because you remain in denial of it. But look at the facts. When food and diet dictate to you each and every day – how to be, how act, what to want, what to think, what to think about, what to need, what to focus on, at the expense of all other components of emotional health and attention – then this is mental/emotional prison. It is NOT freedom. This is unnatural and self-conscious '*oppression by obsession.*' This is NOT the discipline of self-control – of the empowering type that moves you forward in life. No, this keeps you anchored and chained in your life. Once again, we see the diet-mentality is something that 'takes from you.' It doesn't 'give to you.' Only the self-compassionate mind is going to 'give to you' in a way where you can develop order, discipline, and self-control in ways that enhance you through healthy self-expression, self-love, and self-acceptance. Contrarily, self-rejection, self-denial, self-deprivation – and the mindset of resistance are the path of the diet-mentality. How can that possibly be sustainable for a long-term way of living? How can that possibly be healthy for you?

Isn't it time to reflect and then nurture the realization of where your feelings of inadequacy come from? Doesn't the whole mistake of confusing 'weight-control' with 'losing weight' come from personal feelings of inadequacy? And where does that sentiment come from? It comes from the constant cultural bombardment you receive that you should compare, contrast, and compete with others. Your feelings of inadequacy come from conditioned responses to toxic environments – environments like commercial 'systems' of weight-loss masquerading as self-empowerment courses – only they rob you of that very thing. Toxic environments like air-brushed photos of celebrities and cover-models. And you say you are above all that and it doesn't affect you – but you underestimate the ingrained effects of cultural messages telling you to use your body and your beauty to compare, contrast, and compete with everyone else. Otherwise, why would you feel inadequate at all – or inadequate in a way that makes you think that weight-loss is the solution to this feeling of

inadequacy? It's senseless – only you never, ever take the time to think it through this way, do you?

It's time to reflect and then nurture the realization of where your self-respect and self-assuredness come from. And these come from a reflection of your true and authentic self – and contentment with being that person. Only from this starting point of self-compassion and self-empowerment is weight-loss and weight-control something even worthy to aspire to. The diet-mentality robs you of these things – and then sells them back to you as 'solutions' – false solutions that you can 'feel better about yourself' so many pounds from now – but not until then. But the truth exists in what the diet-mentality steals away from you. The truth is you will never know what it truly feels like to feel good living from 'inside' your body, if you can only conceive of your body from its 'outside' packaging.

Look at this email I received and then we'll discuss it:

Hi Scott- I have read a lot of the online articles you have written for women (cravings, comfort foods, metabolism recovery, etc.). Where do you think the best place to start is for someone in need of help? My weight has yo-yo'd up and down most of my teenage and adult life (I'm 36), although it's been more on the heavy side than the fit side. I've had two children (6 and almost 3). I haven't done completely radical diets but I have down ones that were too low calorically for my body most likely as well as overtraining/too much cardio. I want to get my body in very fit shape and healthy to be a role model to my girls, get my self-confidence back, and to live a long life (and look good). I guess I'm confused on how many calories I should be eating and how to get to that point (I know I'm probably eating too few now considering my weight and that I work out 6 days a week) without putting on more fat. I want to get a baseline established/get my metabolism healthier so that I can start losing fat correctly (and not losing muscle). I have about 50-55 lbs. to lose. I love your mind/body approach to everything (training/nutrition/body and mind issues) and I know your reputation for success

I highlighted some of the above in red. After all that we've discussed thus far, can you see in the above example how the diet-mentality controls this lady's mind and her thinking? First her weight has gone up and down most of her adult life. That NEVER happens by chance. The body does not work that way. This can only happen with frequent dieting and of course it's inevitable failure. So the diet-mentality has had a grip on her a long time. Notice how she equates "looking fit" with "being healthy." This is another false insinuation of the diet-mentality. What is worse of all is that she says she wants to be a good role model for her daughters, but her diet-mentality leads her to thinking and feeling she can only do that based on her weight and her outer appearance. The diet-mentality has robbed her of her self-compassionate mind – the exact thing that she 'should' want to role-model for her children. Notice how she ties her self-confidence to achieving weight-loss goals – 'down the road.' She loves my mind/body/spirit approach to everything – but she can't see her own diet-mentality-bias within what she writes. The diet-mentality has her believing that her self-confidence is a matter of body-weight, body-fat, and calories-control. She can't see that self-confidence has absolutely nothing to do with these other variables – except in thinking it to be true. She doesn't see that treating her body with respect and compassion is an inside-out job – not an outside-in one.

Many of you will read what I just said above and agree with it. But even within yourself, what do you do? Like her, you look at your body's outer-appearance and then reject yourself. And then like her

you tell yourself that your 'true' self-confidence is 20, 30, 40, or in this case, an arbitrary 50-55 pounds away. This is a mindset of self-rejection. Self-confidence cannot co-exist with self-rejection. The mindset of self-rejection doesn't ever help you – it hurts you. And you don't just get it back by thinking it is something you must prove to yourself first. You get it back by letting go of the self-rejection and you start by just 'approving' of yourself – no matter what your starting point may be. Self-confidence does not suddenly come from calories-control. If you re-read that last sentence again, doesn't it even sound ridiculous? Self-confidence exists or doesn't exist in the spiritual plane. Struggling with calories control cannot ever give you self-confidence. But restoring your self-confidence will lead to calories-control becoming a non-struggle and non-issue! Can you not see how the diet-mentality turns right thinking upside down and then distorts it?

But just like with the lady in the above letter, isn't it true that you keep thinking that diets and dieting and weight-loss will connect you back to yourself? Can you not see how this line of thinking is what keeps you separating from yourself to begin with?

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Summary Thus Far

I get email letters all the time from people who were dieting along just fine but then report that they've "fallen off the wagon." I say, good! But more importantly if you've been absorbing all the salient points presented thus far then you know falling off the diet-wagon is inevitable once you adapt the faulty mindset of the diet-mentality. But the message of this whole project is the 'anti-diet' approach to weight loss and weight-control. The message I want to get across in this project is that you can't fall off a wagon if you never jump into it to begin with!

So is this your purpose in life then? - To monitor your food and your diet and your weight? If not, then why do you live as though it is your purpose? And if so (sadly), then I say you may have a purpose but now you have no real life to fit it into to. These are the essential questions and deliberations you need to ponder in order to be able to subdue a diet-mentality that may be controlling you.

How about learning instead to truly focus more on health and well-being and less on feelings of success/failure or competition with yourself – competition associated with how the numbers on the scale move, or don't move? You need to find other means to '*feel*' achievement and success within yourself – instead of falsely measuring and judging and emotionally intensifying these feelings within the self-recriminating mindset of the diet-mentality.

You need to restore and live by the truth of the notion that your body houses an amazing spiritual treasure – NOT the other way around, as the diet-mentality twists you into thinking and feeling. And until you actually get that – you will never properly and positively connect or re-connect to your body and get 'it' working 'for' you. Instead, you will just continue the disconnecting and misguided course of thinking that 'you' can work 'on' your body. Well, your body '*is*' you – and you are it. And you must reconnect to these truths in order to be able to let go of the diet-mentality that creates faulty and mistaken thinking and feeling in you – about weight-loss and weight-control.

You need to come to grips with the fact that your life and your world are not served by a leaner you – but by a happier you. So the obvious question then is – Is your diet pursuits and dieting attempts and dieting process creating a happier you – while attempting to create a leaner you? Isn't this an important question to ponder and think about and 'feel' about? Isn't it true that the diet-mentality has you confusing a leaner you with a happier you? But doesn't the whole amplified emotions of the diet-mentality – and the mindset of 'resistance' it sets in motion – don't these things actually prevent a happier you from manifesting as you attempt to become the leaner you?

Yes indeed – you can never fall off a diet-mentality wagon if you never jump into one to begin with!

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