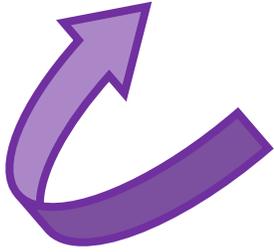


Five Essential Guidelines For Weight Loss

From someone who has eaten her way
up and down the scales!

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Introduction

If you are tempted to rush past this introduction then you may be like many people who have tried, succeeded and failed at weight loss. You want the answers and you want them NOW. I get that. AND I'm urging you to take a few minutes and read what I have to say.

I created this book as a reference for people who are exhausted, confused and/or feeling hopeless. I am offering it free because I believe most people who are on this journey are vulnerable and I feel compelled to gift even a little bit of wisdom to others. I want this book to be different; to be a tool to help you learn what I've learned. And that is ...

I've learned that my relationship with food is eerily similar to the one I have with other behaviours that keep me from feeling. From my own experiences and from the work I've done with clients over the past twelve years, I don't think I'm alone. **My bold assertion is that the majority of people who have issues with food are doing what I have done: numbing from what we don't want to face and sometimes what we don't even know we don't want to face.** The reasons we do it may be varied yet the impact is usually negative. To me, the solution is simple. ***Where have you heard that before?***

I don't claim to be an expert. I do, however, have a lot of experience, intuition and other training that has served me well in helping people as a Life Coach and Women's Wisdom Retreat leader. I know that there are people who need medical help for conditions that impact weight and they should definitely seek a doctor's advice. This book is not for them.

It's for YOU and ME.

We are the ones who have ...

Hidden food, *lied about what we ate*, **restricted food**, criticized ourselves for what we ate, **ate more than we needed or wanted**, ate until we felt ill, made excuses for overeating, blamed someone else for our overeating, made jokes about our overeating, ate something without being hungry, ate because everyone else was eating, pretended we didn't care about our excess weight, ate something we didn't want, avoided people who challenged us about our weight, ate in secret, denied we had health risks because of our weight, avoided people who ate healthily, **regretted telling people we were on a diet when we didn't lose weight or we gained it back**, kept a stash of food 'just in case', cried when we looked in the mirror, promised ourselves that "this time will be different."

DO any of these behaviours sound familiar to you? If so, you may find what I have to say worthwhile. If you are still convinced that you need a product, membership, surgery, piece of equipment, diet plan, a week at a spa, a drill sergeant or other 'external' resource, then I invite you to step out of your comfort zone and consider something different. While there could be merit to any of these tools, if you don't address these Five Essential Guidelines for Weight Loss, you may find yourself back on the roller coaster of weight management ... ***again!***

NOTE: If these guidelines don't resonate with you, you can always go back to your original beliefs. I challenge you to consider the possibility that what I'm suggesting might be the best foundation you can build on.

Please read this book with a fresh set of eyes. You may have heard what I'm saying before, AND if you are reading it now, it's because you are ready to hear it with a new openness. I tell my clients over and over to trust the process.

Now it's your turn.

#1

Forgive yourself for all the times you started a weight loss plan, gave up, started again, lost hope, sabotaged your success, blamed yourself, blamed someone else, spent money you didn't have, wasted an opportunity, embarrassed yourself, lied to yourself, lied to someone else and everything in between.

Shaming doesn't create change. Author Brené Brown says, **"Shame corrodes the very part of us that believes we are capable of change."** And by ending the cycle of self-shaming you create space in your heart for more love and acceptance.

You are not perfect. I am not perfect. No one on this planet is perfect. We all do the best we can, based on the knowledge, experience and emotion we feel at the time. What I've witnessed is that people who struggle with their weight are seriously lacking in self-acceptance and extremely self-critical. Self-acceptance requires forgiveness when we do something we know does not serve our bodies or our higher good.

As old and cliché as it sounds, we cannot change the past. What we can do is change the present moment - Right here; Right now. See yourself as moving forward and let the past rest.

As an antidote to self-diminishment, I have an assignment I give my clients (and one I also use as needed). It's called the Acknowledgement List and is the last thing you do before falling asleep at night. The list is a summary of all the things you did throughout that day which you were proud of yourself for. It's very easy to end our day with an inventory of what we did wrong – didn't eat right, didn't exercise enough, didn't drink enough water, didn't follow through on our commitment, etc. Most of us recognize the pattern of needing to be perfect when we are on a 'plan'. Life is about progress not perfection. If you have a habit of self-criticism, this action tool is for you.

It's important to note that this is NOT a gratitude journal. It's an Atta Girl/Boy, Well Done, I'm Proud of Myself list. You put on the list the things that matter to you and that you would 'beat yourself up' for not doing. Do not judge how big or small the thought or action was.

Some of my personal examples are:

- a) flossing my teeth
- b) folding laundry as soon as the dryer buzzer goes off
- c) looking in the mirror and saying a positive affirmation
- d) wearing something I feel good in
- e) putting away something I've been stepping over for days
- f) being patient with my husband
- g) finishing something I started
- h) eating a healthy lunch

The list is done in a journal or notebook and includes lots of things that you might not think are related to a weight loss discussion. However, it is our self-criticism that often leads us directly to food. I insist on a minimum of 20 entries every day because it usually requires some forethought and intention from the time we wake up in the morning. Why do this? Because you need to counterbalance the "I'm not good enough" list that sneaks up on you!

One of my favourite quotes is by Mary Pickford who said, **"If you have made a mistake, there is always another chance for you. You may start fresh at any moment you choose, for this thing we call failure is not the falling down, but the staying down."** Sometimes I find myself taking a deep breath and remembering that I don't have to 'stay down.'

Self-criticism creates enormous internal stress. In my research of how stress affects us physically, mentally and emotionally I have found a variety of sources that conclude stress slows down our metabolism and ignites food cravings which is detrimental to weight loss.

Start today by getting up and giving yourself a well deserved hug.

Key Learning: Self-acceptance relieves stress, helps us feel better and supports positive decisions for weight loss.

#2

There has to be a compelling reason to lose weight.

Reasons that DON'T qualify are:

- a) Special events (including weddings, reunions, vacations, etc.)
- b) The number you see on a scale
- c) An outfit you have or want to purchase
- d) Looking for a romantic relationship
- e) Pleasing your partner
- f) Keeping up or fitting in with your friends
- g) Competing to get revenge or look better than someone else
- h) Believing you will be happier when you are thin
- i) To win a bet (or contest)

All of these could kick-start or motivate us to lose weight yet many people design their weight loss program as if it was a marathon with a clearly defined finish line. They know what they think they want and what they think they have to do to get it. The unfortunate part is that once they have reached their goal (attended the wedding, hit the magic number, worn the outfit, found the partner etc.) the reason for losing weight is gone.

A well-publicized example of this happened in 1987 when Oprah pulled a wagon onstage with the equivalent of the 67 pounds of fat she had lost. Within two weeks she had gained ten pounds. Oprah learned, as most of us do, that milestones are temporary. They may be motivational in the beginning; however, dramatic interventions and/or life changes are not always sustainable.

So what might a compelling reason be? People who have been successful at losing and maintaining a healthy weight say that they:

- a) Wanted to feel better in their daily activities
- b) Did not want to rely on medication resulting from weight issues
- c) Wanted a more active lifestyle with family and friends
- d) Wanted to avoid surgery for weight related issues
- e) Wanted to reduce their risk of serious health issues
- f) Wanted a lifestyle free of self-loathing, drama and shame

For those who struggle with finding a deep, committed reason, it's easy to say that we would all embrace the above examples. **However, knowing the way is not going the way.** Knowing what we want won't get us what we want. If we do indeed believe that these are the reasons, then they have to feel compelling to us. For me, the word 'compelling' means it's a 'no matter what' **lifetime oriented reason**. We are too quick to make excuses so there needs to be something that cuts right through to the vulnerable point of contact that lies deep within us. The words we whisper to God (or our Higher Power; Source; our Creator, etc.) in our quietest moments of truth. This isn't about perfection; it's about having a solid anchor to hold onto when we are triggered to eat unhealthily.

A vision board (a collage of images and words that represent your dreams) or some tangible reminder of what you are aiming for can be helpful tools to keep us focused. Evidence has shown that consistently visualizing what you want for yourself is a powerful support in achieving your dreams. Louise Hay has built a dedicated following with her belief that how we think affects the outcome of our lives. Even if that feels like a stretch for you, imagine how much more enjoyable your day might be if you spent 30 minutes appreciating the good things in your life and the possibilities of your dreams instead of crying behind dark glasses.

Finding your reason can seem like a big challenge and I highly recommend you work with a professional. I believe there are times when we benefit from the objectivity of someone who isn't attached to us through biology, friendship or community. Find a therapist, coach or mentor who will help you drill down to the place within where you don't hide from yourself. **Important Note:** If you feel any shaming, judgement, criticism or coercion, you have the wrong partner. This relationship can be firm and loving, directive and supportive without leaving you feeling empty or alone.

Key Learning: A goal with a life-long impact will sustain you throughout the weight loss process.

#3

Do NOT do anything you are not willing to do for the rest of your life.

How many times have I watched people on a diet avoid or deny themselves carbohydrates (substitute whatever you typically restrict) only to binge on them when they have a 'day off'? Or worse, when the diet is over, they resume their old patterns of eating and regain the weight. When people completely eliminate something (for any reason other than medically required) it requires strong attitudes and beliefs to maintain their commitment when the diet time frame is over. If you have dieted more than once, you probably know how a lack of willpower can suddenly diminish your self-esteem.

Research shows that forcing anything out of your daily menu – carbs, protein, sugar, fats, meat, etc. – isn't necessarily healthy. Yet, this is what many diet plans require. Jumping between different plans can be a full time job and besides being hard to keep track of, switching diet plans can drive your body into hibernation as it tries to cope with the plan of the month!

When we decide to eliminate a food from our diet merely for the sake of losing weight, we tend to crave what is missing. We become acutely aware when people around us are consuming the forbidden 'fruit'. Our bodies typically develop a dependency on the foods we eat consistently so removing them sets us up for withdrawal. Many people are not willing to go through the discomfort of eliminating food dependencies. Yet, people who maintain a healthy weight don't have to avoid any foods. They eat what they want and stop when they are satisfied.

You've probably heard the saying "**what we resist, persists**" and that's a recommendation my homeopath has given me every time I went on a new restrictive diet. Before you start purging your kitchen of 'evil' temptations, remember to ask yourself if you are willing to make a long-term commitment to this change. If not, think again.

Key Learning: Only make changes that you are willing to make a life-long commitment to.

#4

Set yourself up for success.

You might be surprised how many people embark on a weight loss program without planning ahead for how they will handle the inevitable challenges. Lots of us think that getting the 'bad stuff' out of the house is all it takes. We naively assume that we can always eat healthily when we are away from home because we live in a world where 'safe' options are plentiful. Not so fast. What about those dinner invitations, social functions and business meetings? Unless you are willing to only eat at home for the rest of your life you will face having to choose meals that may not fit your ideal plan. We teach our kids to be prepared and we should be to.

I want to emphasize here: Taking time to pack a snack is far more satisfying and easier on your stress levels than succumbing to whatever food is available throughout your day. People on diets love to blame someone else or their circumstances by saying things like:

- a) There were no salad options on the menu
- b) The hosts didn't even consider my eating preferences
- c) The produce department was under stocked
- d) It was a birthday party so I had to eat the cake
- e) I had to grab fast food because I ran out of time for lunch
- f) The leftovers had to be eaten and not wasted

There are lots more excuses and I'm sure you could add a dozen of your own. Every one of these assertions has a victim perspective that says "poor me; it's not my fault." All diets and most health websites have suggestions on how to prepare yourself for success. You might have overlooked these because you were lured by the miracle cure that so many plans promise. Don't ignore the critical advice on how to create long term success.

Five Essential Guidelines for Weight Loss

As you create your own structure, make sure it fits for you. Just because someone else is willing to get up at 5:30 a.m. for a workout doesn't mean that's ideal for you. If having a short walk and light snack at mid points during the day is what keeps you on track, then do it. Use your past successes in other areas of your life to glean an understanding of what works for you. Ask yourself "How did I manage to do that? Why was I able to follow through on that?" Think of the accomplishments you have mastered and draw on the knowledge, skills and inner strength that got you through. Build on the successes of your past to support whatever you decide to do now.

There are many strategies for creating a successful experience but none of them will work if you don't follow the previous guidelines I've outlined in this book. Having a temporary goal has you focused on a short term outcome and while it can motivate you to eat well no matter where you are, it won't take long to feel you are giving way to the frustration of deprivation.

Key Learning: You are the creator of your life's opportunities, not a victim of circumstances.

#5

Trust yourself. You know what to do.

The company, Marketdata Enterprises has been following the diet industry for over 24 years and they estimated that Americans spent over **Six Billion** dollars in 2010 on products and services to help them gain control of their expanding waistlines. **SIX Billion. That's Billion with a B.** Imagine how many people have to consistently purchase from this supply to reach that number. Yet, obesity rates are continuing to rise. How is this possible?

In our frustration to figure out what to do on our own we are easily persuaded by the next expert plugging **THE ANSWER**, even when we know, deep down inside, these programs are typically unsustainable. We want to believe that this time will be different. How can it not work? Our friends are doing and it and celebrities are endorsing it so it must be good, right?

The goal of marketing is to convince people they need something. This can seem manipulative and in my opinion, is especially true in the weight loss industry. These companies know how painful it is to fail over and over again. They know how we envy lean bodies and how badly we want to enjoy all the things we think we can't when we are overweight. It's no wonder we keep buying books, DVDs, special drinks, meal plans, and everything else they suddenly discover is the answer. How many more surprise berries, seeds and nuts can they find in the rainforest or through ancient cultures? How much more research is really necessary to convince us that we don't know what we are doing with our own bodies?

And in spite of what other people tell us about their weight loss success, we never know the whole story. Our metabolism, lifestyle, job, family dynamics, community, resources, attitudes, etc. are unique to us. It's not reasonable to compare ourselves to others or copy someone else's version of the 'best' plan. Even this book is meant to be a reference only because when you strip away everything else, YOU really do know what is best for you.

Five Essential Guidelines for Weight Loss

Many people have lost their ability to trust themselves. I hear it repeatedly from the women who attend my Women's Wisdom Retreats hoping for a miraculous intervention that will transform their lives. When they relearn the skill of going within they realize that they can trust their own instincts and listen to their inner wise counsel. Similarly, when we listen to what our bodies are telling us, we learn to recognize our body hunger signals and ultimately how to satisfy body hunger.

Everything counts: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Begin a serious conversation with yourself – through meditation, journaling, mirror work or whatever supports you. Listen to the dialogue that guides you from within. That's how you build trust in yourself to act with integrity. And when you make a mistake ... go back to #1.

Key Learning: Trust yourself to take the time to learn what your body and soul really need.

About the Author:

Ms. Daryl Wood has always been curious about why we do the things we do. She began intensive studies through a variety of sources after finding herself in mid-life and unable to avoid the clear messages that something had to change!

Since the early nineties Daryl has followed her passion for learning and sharing spiritual and emotional healing. After years of focus on writing, weekend workshops and Certification as Life Coach she developed the Women's Wisdom Retreat program that she offered from her waterfront home in Tobermory, Ontario.

This is where the magic took place for Daryl and for the women who came to unplug from daily distractions and plug into their wise inner selves. The results were remarkable and last a lifetime. The retreats were 'retired' in 2017. Now, Daryl's Life Coaching work is focused on issues of relationships, self-worth and recovering from drama. Her coaching is especially supportive to women in mid-life because Daryl knows that this is when we realize we can't outrun the stuff we have been avoiding or suppressing.

Daryl's greatest gifts are her compassion, intuition, love, humour and full commitment to the work she does. She is not afraid to go to dark places and is equally joyful about celebrating the light.

While our world seems to be moving quickly to embrace virtual connections, Daryl is committed to doing what she can to accommodate her clients. And whenever possible, Daryl fiercely defends the power of face to face, person to person experiences in a stunning natural setting that invites your soul to speak up.

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