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The Five Keys to Healthy Eating Part II

By Jeremy Likness

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In Part I, we covered two keys to healthy eating: enjoy what you eat, and believe in what you are doing.

In Part II, we explore the remaining three keys to healthy eating.

3. Practice moderation

Moderation is the key to everything. Many people operate in an either/or mode - either they are following a program perfectly, or they are simply going wild with their eating habits. A true lifestyle plan will be easy to follow because you won't have to worry about counting calories or weighing foods. Why? Because you are operating from a zone called moderation. This zone is tough for many people to find, and sometimes it requires going through a strict dietary regimen in order to create the control you deserve to have over food, instead of allowing food to control you.

Moderation simply means permission to enjoy without excess. When you want a glass of wine, you pour one and savor it. You do not suddenly feel guilty and then punish yourself for having it. If you are having a slice of pizza or ice cream, you don't create a license to eat until you are stuffed. Instead, you have a slice or two and enjoy it. If you are full, you are done. If not, then you might share a dessert with your spouse or someone else at the table.

Those who are successful at keeping their weight off don't overeat and they don't create limits. Some people truly enjoy healthy foods and eat these all of the time. Others have a balance they create. What is common is that they do not become a victim when they cannot eat a certain food - if a special occasion arises, they are happy to enjoy a piece of cake. The key is that they are in control and don't overdo it ... and when it is done, they don't allow guilt to override their success.

4. Be flexible with new ideas

Change is tough. Change is scary. If change were easy, there would not be millions of dollars in books about how to face change being sold. Change in your nutrition or health is no different than change in

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other areas of your life. Embracing a new style of eating can feel uncomfortable and unfamiliar. I know - I have been there and done that myself.

The key to success, however, is not to become so boxed into your comfort zone that you cannot open to new ideas. For example, I had been conditioned to combine protein and carbs at every meal, that when my wife suggested I attempt food-combining (a concept where you do not eat proteins and starches together - for more information, read "Fit for Life" by Harvey Diamond or "Total Health Makeover" by Marilu Henner) I simply resisted. "No way - that's not right! I've learned that ..."

Eventually, however, I came to my senses. No matter how much I have read or learned, the reality is experience. You can argue with me all day long about what color the sky is - but if it is blue in my reality, then that is the reality I will embrace. Everything productive in my life has come from being able

to embrace change and try out new things. I discard what doesn't work, and embrace what does. This ability to not fear the unknown allowed me to try food-combining even though it did not fit into my existing reality. What I found was an eating method that gave me more energy and helped me feel more comfortable. By stepping outside of my comfort zone and trying something new, I was able to integrate more freedom into my eating plan.

Don't be afraid to try new programs, new dishes, and new recipes. Don't pre-qualify your decisions by going to research and reading about calories and studying the fat content. Instead, just try it. Keep a journal. Record your feelings in the journal. Observe how your body reacts. Create a dialogue with food that works for you rather than living in someone else's system. Don't fear change - change is required to move from overweight or obese to healthy and lean!

5. Learn to hear your body

Most of us tune out our body's protests. It is a requirement in modern society. When we are constantly stuffing our bodies with foods that damage and harm us, our bodies cannot continue to sensitize us to the pain or we would be in a constant state of suffering. So instead, the brain tunes out the signals like background noise. We no longer realize the harm that we are doing to ourselves. We confuse cravings with hunger. We think we want sugar when our body is screaming for healthy fats. It creates a state of constant stress that we are not conscious of, and it impacts the core of our health.

This is why I believe it is great to quiet and calm things down. Don't be afraid to juice fast for a few days. Try a "5-day high-fiber cleanse" to reconnect with your own health. Don't listen to your friends who will scream "starvation" and swear you are going to lose pounds of muscle. Muscle doesn't disappear overnight, and starvation is when you have NO food, not when you go on a modified fast that provides nutrients but gives you the ability to break out of a cycle of cravings and self-abuse that modern, processed foods create.

Learn to eat when you are ready, not when it is time. This doesn't mean that if your preferred style of nutrition is consuming six meals per day that you stop. What this means is that you get in tune with your body. If you are not hungry when it is time for meal two, go back and adjust meal one so that it doesn't fill you up so much. If you are starving by meal two, change meal one so that you are satisfied

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- increase the portion size, add healthy fats, or introduce new foods.

By learning your body, you can break out of the cycle of measuring and weighing foods. You come into contact with yourself, and learn to flow. When you feel it is time to eat, you eat. You don't eat a pre-allotted amount of calories. Instead, you listen to yourself. Think about whether you feel like having a lot of protein. If the thought turns your stomach, focus on salads, or fruit, or whole grains. Find what feels comfortable and then eat enough to satisfy you without leaving you stuffed. Practice this for a few weeks and you'll find that you can think yourself into the shape you desire without having to obsess over calories.

These are the five keys to successful, healthy living that I have observed. The people I know who have conquered their weight and are comfortable in their bodies used different methods. Some are vegetarians, some advocate low carbohydrate diets and others feel that high protein is important. Despite these differences, however, ultimately the plan they settled into addressed these five key points and allowed them to live in their health rather than having to work on their lack of it.

Jeremy Likness is a world-renowned Health Coach and author of the internationally-selling e-Book,

Lose Fat, Not Faith. A Certified Fitness Trainer and Specialist in Performance Nutrition, Jeremy lost over 65 pounds of fat himself before launching his company,

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with

the mission to transform thousands of lives one success story at a time. Jeremy specializes in lifestyle changes with a unique approach to health and wellness that starts on the inside.

The Five Keys to Healthy Eating Part I

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Healthy eating is about more than calories or following the latest dietary fad. Trends come and go. Healthy bodies have been around for thousands of years, before there were magic bullets for instant fat loss marketed on major television stations or promising easy weight loss in flashy colors on the pages of magazines. By embracing your individuality, and learning how to apply the five keys of healthy eating to your own lifestyle, you can transcend these temporary fads and ease into a lifelong habit of living lean.

1. Enjoy what you eat

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Whether someone is following the Atkins diet, the South Beach diet, the advice contained in Tom Venuto's e-Book, "Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle" or even a program of their own design, success depends on enjoying what you eat. When you don't enjoy your food, you resist it. Resistance creates stress and stress is counter-productive to fat loss. It is important to look at eating as a part of your life, not a chore that interrupts your life.

The question ultimately becomes, "How do I learn to enjoy healthy foods?" Most people did not enjoy their first cup of coffee or can of beer. What happened is that in their environment, external pressures - stress, fatigue, peer pressure - created a desire to enjoy that steaming hot espresso or to be able to chug down a draught of beer with the best of their buddies. Eventually, a strange thing happened - when the coffee cup was repeatedly associated with more energy or productivity, or simply the pleasure of settling down to read something while draining the cup, or when the beer became associated with fun times and great parties, they "acquired a taste."

You can acquire a taste for healthy foods. It is important to understand how you operate, to determine if it makes sense to go "cold turkey" or transition. Many people cling to diets that allow "free days" or "gorge fests" because they never really learn to enjoy the healthy food - they need the psychological crutch of getting comfortable again (if comfortable means bloated and nauseous from overeating junk food) and live from "free day" to "free day." Is this you? If so, you might start transitioning and looking for an alternative. Instead of a free day, how about this: have a few free meals and then focus on enjoying the food that you consume throughout the week. Experiment with new recipes. Don't like raw vegetables? Try steamed. Don't like them plain? Spice them up. As you lose weight and gain energy, focus on the connection between your healthy foods and your new physique. Before long, you might even "acquire a taste" for healthy foods.

2. Believe in what you are doing

Belief is an important component of any lifestyle. If you don't believe what you are doing will work, why should you continue to do it? Often times, the lack of belief is not in the program you are following, but rather in yourself. Food is an addiction that is no different than addiction to cigarettes, alcohol, or illegal drugs. To overcome this addiction, the first place to look is within you. Without faith, you are going to allow fear to maneuver you into a position to binge, overeat, and sabotage yourself.

When you don't believe, you simply "do." It is a frustrating concept, especially for analytical people, because they want to have a simple set of rules. It is easy as an analytical person to get into your comfort zone. Find an equation that spits out a number of calories. Get a "ratio" of foods - 40% protein, 40% carbs, 20% fat, right? Then you have that exact formula and you are ready to go. Unfortunately, if it were that simple, more people would be sharing their success story (and their formulas) with everyone else.

The fact is that it is not the calorie or the formula or the ratio that determines your success. It is you. Whether you are on a high protein, low fat, no-sugar, or other program, your success will be determined by the level of your belief. I have witnessed people achieve success using many different nutrition styles, and the common element that linked their success was belief. If you asked them, "Will you lose your weight," they would reply, "Absolutely." If you cannot state that without confidence, it is

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time to find something you can believe in ... and more often than not, it will not be a new program, but you. Believe in you.

We will cover the next three keys in part II.

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