

Quit Sabotaging Yourself

Don't be your own worst enemy

Many people who have trouble changing their problematic eating behaviours don't realize that it may be their own beliefs about food and eating that are creating their biggest stumbling block. They have certain expectations that they are unwilling to give up. They don't want their efforts at change to have an impact on anyone else. It is having these personal principles that can result in a multitude of excuses that make change challenging.

As the participants become more aware of their own list of self-imposed eating rules, they can begin to use thought changing strategies and problem solving to help bend them. They are in charge of how they are thinking.



Facilitator's Notes

Pose the following question to the group –

“Do you have any self-imposed expectations or rules about food and eating?”

Read out a few of the following examples to get the discussion started.

Examples

I can't refuse food when I'm a guest in someone's home.

No one else should be denied their favourite treats just because of me.

It's not polite to make special requests in a restaurant.

I should always make extra food, in case someone wants second helpings.

It's important to keep candies on my desk at work, as a treat for my co-workers.

I should never throw out any uneaten or leftover food.

paraphrase

Whether you were taught these rules or you have made them up yourself, rules like these can be broken. Your beliefs about eating can sabotage your efforts to make behaviour changes. You may be your own worst enemy.

Point out to the group that it can be more difficult to change your behaviour when you know that there will be an impact on others. If examples of this have not already been shared by the group you could describe the following scenarios.

Imagine saying the following to your teenager –

“I'm really trying to get more exercise and the time that works best for me is after work. The trouble is that I'm having a hard time getting supper ready. Could you help me with the cooking a couple days of the week?”

Or

Here's what you might say to your spouse –

“I have to cut down on salty foods, so instead of getting out the chips or eating popcorn every evening, I was thinking we could just have them on weekends and eat less salty snacks during the week.”

Discuss that sometimes we have to deal with our own beliefs about what is acceptable. For example, if a mother feels it is her responsibility to prepare all the family meals, it will be hard for her to ask for help from her teenager.

Or, if the person's belief is that no one else should be affected by the diet changes they are making, it will be much harder to ask for support to decrease some of the food temptations, such as the chips.

paraphrase

Your beliefs will often be more noticeable when you try to be assertive in a situation. They may stop you from exercising your rights, or expressing your wishes or intentions.

Listen to the excuses going through your mind. Do they make sense? Are they based on your own personal eating rules? What would happen if you broke a rule, just once? Would bending one of your rules help you change your eating behaviour? Ask someone else what they would think if you broke your rule?

Remember, you are in charge of your thoughts. Don't be your own worst enemy.

Wrap up the session with the following “You are not alone” story.

You are not alone. . .

I always believed it was my obligation as a hostess to serve a sweet treat with coffee or tea to my guests. Inevitably, there would be leftovers that I would end up eating. I realized that I was the one setting these expectations, and therefore could be the one to change them.

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