Smaller Size Bigger Life
Success Guide

WITH REGISTERED DIETITIAN HEATHER K. JONES

8 Proven Steps To Reach And Maintain A Healthy Weight
Without Diets Or Deprivation
1. Make Peace With Where You Are

There’s this crazy idea in the world of weight loss that if we hate ourselves enough, torture ourselves enough, and shame and guilt ourselves enough, that somehow we’ll end up happy, thin and confident.

But this is NOT the path to happiness.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned working as a dietitian in the weight loss industry for the last 20 years (and overcoming my own food struggles), it’s that you cannot solve your body and weight problems with the same hateful mindset that got you here. It just doesn’t work.

By accepting and loving yourself exactly as you are right now, you’re not giving up. You’re empowering yourself to feel good now, so that you can take positive actions towards your goals with confidence.

Start now by forgiving yourself for the past. You did the best you could with the weight loss resources you had at that time, period. Release the past and begin again.

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2. Listen To Your (Very Wise) Body

Feeding yourself according to external cues—the clock, the amount of food on your plate, or a rigid dieting plan—goes against your bodies’ natural instincts and internal wisdom. And if you skip meals or underfeed yourself, you trigger your primal drive to overeat.

Your perfectly designed body instinctively knows exactly what it needs to thrive and naturally reach its ideal weight—you just have to get in tune with it. (Find out more about Intuitive Eating HERE.)

And if you think your body is broken or your metabolism is ruined (common complaints from my clients), know this: You can’t permanently damage your metabolism. Your (incredible!) body will bounce back so much faster than you think.

Instead of fighting, underfeeding, and abusing your body, be amazed by it. It’s working hard to keep you alive, and it deserves your appreciation and respect.
Food is a life-giving necessity and eating should be fun and enjoyable.

Diets, however, make you feel like food is the enemy. Food restriction also triggers binge eating, increases anxiety, and slows your metabolism. Diets rob you of the pleasure of eating and keep you locked in a self-imposed food prison.

Plus, if you only consider yourself “worthy” or “good enough” when you eat less, weigh less, or stick to an unattainable set of dieting rules, you set yourself up for a never-ending cycle of self-hate and frustration. Stop eating for weight loss, and start eating for health. (Ironically, the positive by-product of eating for health is weight loss.)

Also, as often as possible, eat REAL foods.

Real foods are those that are unprocessed, unrefined, whole and fresh, free of additives, colorings, flavorings, sweeteners and hormones. They’re as close to their natural state as possible. And when you eat real foods (rather than highly processed ones) you’ll notice that you just feel so much better, as these are the foods that provide your body with what it needs to function at its best.

In fact, one of the BEST ways to love and respect yourself is to provide your body with nutrient-rich foods that make you feel your best…and to drink (lots and lots!) of water. And if you think you’re too busy to eat healthy real foods, try THIS.
4. Actively Appreciate Your Life

I’m not suggesting we deny or avoid the challenges in our life, not at all. But we also don’t have to incessantly complain and obsess about the bad stuff.

When you focus your attention on what you DO want and on what is already good in your life, you create feelings of hope and possibility. And this moves you forward in positive ways. Because…

**Helpful Thoughts = Good Feelings = Helpful Choices**

So starting today notice the many blessings you have in your life right now and all that you have to be grateful for. Look for the good, really search for it, and I promise you will find it.

Also start highlighting and appreciating all the things that make you so uniquely and wonderfully you. Recognize that you are SO much more than your body. Self-appreciation is really one of the easiest ways to begin healing your relationship with yourself.

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5. Cultivate Eating Consciousness

Hunger is the need for food. It's a physical reaction triggered by low-blood sugar and hormones that is designed to keep the body properly fueled.

Appetite is the desire for food. It’s a conditioned response to food triggered by senses (usually after seeing, smelling, or thinking about something yummy), social situations, or emotions.

And it’s super easy to confuse wanting to eat with needing to eat. An easy solution is this: The next time you feel the urge to eat, pause and ask yourself, “Am I really hungry?” It’s not about deciding if you are in fact allowed to eat, it’s about raising your awareness around WHY you want to.

By answering this one simple question you’ll empower yourself to make a conscious eating choice. And that is a very big deal! Make this an everyday habit, and you’ll not only drastically cut back on mindless and superfluous eating, you’ll also start to unravel your emotional connections to food. And that brings me to step number 6…
Eating is a seductive distraction that immediately soothes negative feelings. And certain foods (sugar and carbs, I’m looking at you!) trigger a release of feel-good chemicals in the brain. But, as you know, the relief found in food is temporary. In fact, it lasts all of five seconds—then you go back to feeling sad or stressed… and now you also feel guilty, stuffed, and disgusted.

The truth is this: If your food craving doesn’t come from physical hunger, then you can be sure that eating is not going to satisfy it.

The next time you have an intense emotional food craving, first take a few deep breaths and really acknowledge any accompanying feelings of fear, anxiety, or whatever. Once you make yourself aware of your feelings, simply say to yourself, “OK this is how I’m feeling right now, and that’s OK, I have a right to my feelings.”

And then for ninety seconds (set a timer) just sit with the feelings. Honor and allow the feelings and let them just pass through you.

Then take a few more deep breaths and say, “I choose to feel peace instead.” Concentrate on your breathing and just repeat this mantra until you feel a little calmer. This begins a powerful new habit of accepting and releasing your fears instead of stuffing them down with food. (For more help with emotional eating, go HERE.)
7. Stop Criticizing Yourself

As women, we tend to tear ourselves apart and see the worst about ourselves. We notice the negative. But we need to do the opposite. We need to build ourselves up and notice all the good.

In fact, I believe it is our responsibility to do so. No one is going to treat you better than you treat yourself. And it’s not up to anyone else to do it—it is up to YOU.

Think about it this way: If criticizing yourself worked, you’d already be thin and happy, right?

Pay attention to your thoughts and eliminate the negative and nasty ones. Start talking to yourself the way you would talk to your best friend or your daughter – with kindness and compassion. Concentrate on just this one thing each day, and your life will get better and your weight loss journey will get easier, guaranteed. (I have a 30-day challenge HERE that will help you do exactly this.)
8. Seek Support And Positive Mentors

The people that we invite into our lives greatly influence our success and happiness.

Over the past ten years I’ve worked with life coaches, business coaches, intuitive coaches, and a wonderful therapist. I’ve taken dozens of online courses, read countless personal development books, and attended a lots of wellness events.

I purposely find mentors, coaches, and like-minded people to support me on my journey. And you should too. None of us has do it alone.

For example, if you think you might have food sensitivities or allergies, work with a dietitian who specializes in integrative nutrition (Danielle Omar is an awesome choice!). And if you struggle with emotional eating, overeating, or body image issues and you want to learn how to lose weight from a place of love instead of fear, please check out my Smaller Size Bigger Life group coaching program (you can hop on the waitlist and sign up for a free weight loss class HERE).

Remember, no one is going to treat you better than you treat yourself. So please take back your power and invest in yourself and your happiness.

XO,
Heather

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Heather K. Jones is a registered dietitian and the founder of HeatherKJones.com, a weight loss website about healing and hope instead of diets and deprivation, and the creator of Smaller Size Bigger Life, an online program for women who struggle with emotional eating, binge eating, overeating or body image issues.

Specializing in nutrition communications, weight management and behavior change therapy, Heather has spent the last 20 years assisting people who struggle with diet and food issues.

She is the nutrition expert for the New York Times best-selling book, *The Skinnytaste Cookbook* (Potter, 2014), and the author of *The Salt Solution* (Rodale, 2011), written with the editors of Prevention Magazine, and *Drop 5 Pounds* (Sterling, 2010), written with the editors of Good Housekeeping. She has also contributed to numerous health and nutrition books.

Heather has had hundreds of articles published in healthy-living magazines, including *SELF, Fitness, Redbook* and more, and she is regularly featured as a nutrition expert in a variety of media outlets. She also spent more than seven years working for the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) and its award-winning newsletter, *Nutrition Action Healthletter*.

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