



Are you ready...

to leave dieting behind?

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Just a little bit of housekeeping before you get started.

The ideas presented in this book come from my years of experience working with clients struggling with their eating and weight, as well as my research and study in this area.

I am presenting the information in this book as general information and for educational purposes and not to be a replacement for counseling or therapy. If you are in need of professional help with your eating or weight and you live in Montana, give me a call, and we can determine whether we would be a good fit to work together. If so, we could talk about the process and mutually decide whether to begin therapy. If you do not live in Montana, please contact a professional in your area.

I would love for as many people as possible to have access to this workbook and so I am happy to have you share it. If you want to share it, please share it through my website. There are share buttons on every page that will allow you to share through social media or email.

Exploring your history with dieting and weight..... Are you ready for a new approach?

I am so happy that you have decided to download this workbook! I feel a great deal of passion around helping women (and men) make the transition from focusing on dieting to focusing on self-care. I realize that this may be scary for you to even think about with all of the pressures, from just about everywhere, to diet. What I have found is that, at a certain point, people realize that trying to lose weight through dieting isn't working and may, in fact, be causing more problems in their lives. At this point, they are ready for a switch. This workbook is designed to help you determine where you are in this process.



I put these questions together to help you think more closely about: how you have approached your weight and eating; what has worked and what hasn't; whether an approach focused on self-care would be beneficial for you; and whether you are ready to make this switch.

Take your time with these questions. You may want to read the questions and let them percolate a bit before coming back to them. Or, for some of you, it might be better not to over-think them. Approach this in whatever way works best for you. This assessment is a part of the work that we would do together in a first session, so you will have a jump start if you decide to work with me.

Once you have answered the questions, I will share with you some additional information to help you further explore your answers and to determine whether you are ready for a new approach. Finally, I will share with you some information about dieting and how it compares with a focus on self-care.

There is hope and another way!

Okay, are you ready?

What are your goals for your eating and your weight?

What have you tried in the past?

For the things that you have tried, what were the pluses and minuses in your life?

What do you believe about your past failures with dieting?

How true is this statement for you? "If I could just find the right diet, I could lose my weight and maintain it."

How has your history of dieting impacted your mood and self-confidence?

What kinds of things do you say to yourself when you have eaten something "not allowed" or when you "fail at your diet"?

What makes it hard for you to stick to a diet?

In what ways does food help you to cope?

Do you categorize foods into "good foods and "bad" foods? How does this affect your eating and how you feel about yourself?

What happens for you after the diet is "over"?

In what ways does the number on the scale impact your mood?

What messages did you receive as a child, teenager, and young adult about food and weight?

What do you say to yourself when your weight is where you believe it should be? How about when it is higher than you believe it should be? What impact do these messages have? Please take the time to think about both positives and negatives.

In what ways does the scale serve as a measure of your success? How does this impact your life?

What are your concerns about your weight and your health?

In what ways has dieting impacted your health?

What activities do you put off until you are thinner? How does this impact your life?

Take a moment to look back on your answers and, to summarize, what you have learned.

you may be ready for a switch
if your answers revealed.....

- repeated cycles of losing and gaining weight through dieting
- a belief that you can't trust yourself around food
- you feel either "good" or "bad" about your eating and those judgments extend to your beliefs about you as a person
- your experience with dieting has led to low self-confidence or feelings of inadequacy, hopelessness or failure
- food is a way that you cope with stress or difficult emotions
- food is a way you take care of yourself
- a focus on weight results in you feeling "not good enough", as you are now, or "frantic to maintain your current weight"
- you realize that your focus on losing weight increases your stress and hasn't positively impacted your health, in the long-term
- focus on losing weight has prevented you from getting involved in other activities that would bring you joy or that would support your health ("I'll do that when I am thinner")

If the above were true for you, it sounds like you might be ready for a new approach! On the next page, you will find some information about dieting and how it compares with an approach focused on self-care. My hope is that, if you have failed at dieting, this information will help you to realize that the problem isn't you but the method.

Comparing Dieting with a Focus on Self-Care

Dieting and Weight Loss

Finite - has a beginning and an end.

Very high failure rate. Only 5% succeed in the long-term.

Decisions are based on external sources - what you "should do".

As a result, there are many "shoulds" "I should eat less sugar...fat, etc.

Foods are either "good or bad" which leads to cravings for unallowed foods and over-eating once these foods are eaten.

This categorizing of foods and actions often leads to the "I've blown it now - I'll start again tomorrow - so in the meantime I might as well eat" - syndrome.

Focus on Self-Care

Life-long - focuses on skills that will become a part of you.

There is no "failure" with this approach. Everything that happens is simply information that helps you to take better care of yourself.

Decisions are based upon your internal wisdom (hunger, fullness, satisfaction, feelings and needs).

There are no "shoulds" or "right and wrongs". You decide what works for you and your body.

No foods are considered "good or bad". Decisions about foods are based upon how foods feel in your body; how they meet your body's needs; and how well they satisfy you.

Because there is no "blowing it", this cycle is eliminated. In addition, with a focus on self-care, each moment is considered a new opportunity for self-care.

Repeated cycles of blowing it" lead to feelings of failure and inadequacy.

Does not offer any means for dealing with emotional eating.

Goal is weight loss.

Weight loss as the measure of success leads to stress, helplessness and weight cycling.

It also leads to stress about current weight. This stress often leads to:

difficult feelings dealt with by eating;

putting activities on hold until thinner which decreases joy and pleasure leaving food to meet these needs;

feelings of helplessness to be healthy until the weight is lost.

Skills of self-compassion and acceptance foster self-trust and confidence.

Strong focus on the ability to deal effectively with stress and difficult emotions.

The goal of weight loss is "put on the shelf" for work on more sustainable, health enhancing goals, such as mindful eating, joyful body movement and ability to identify feelings and needs.

Weight/body acceptance and self-compassion decreases stress levels which decreases cravings.

Activities no longer need to be put on hold until thinner.

There is the recognition that health is not determined by weight - thin does not equal healthy. This recognition frees you from the helplessness around being healthy, even if you haven't lost weight.

I hope this experience has offered you new insights and awarenesses!

Again, the information that I have provided is for educational and informational purposes and is not intended to replace counseling or therapy, for these issues. My hope is that this information will prompt you to think about what has worked and what hasn't around your eating and weight, what support you might need and that it will help you in moving forward on your journey healing your relationship with food.

If you are ready to leave dieting behind and would like to focus on self-care, it is often helpful to get some support in making that switch. I feel a great deal of passion around helping people with this transition. If you live in Montana and would like to begin this work, give me a call, and we can determine whether we are a good fit to work together. If so, we could discuss the process and mutually decide whether to begin therapy. I work with people individually and in my on-going women's group *Flourish*.

If you don't live locally and would like to pursue therapy, please contact a professional in your area.

If you are not seeking therapy and would like additional general information on this topic, be sure to check out my blog posts. These posts often contain information about a variety of aspects related to creating peace with food and body acceptance.

I wish you all of the best on your journey healing your relationship with your and your body!