

# Eating Well without Dieting Guilt

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Feel Your Personal Best  
**Mini Guide**

Healthy Lifestyle Mini Guide  
on  
**Eating Well without Dieting Guilt**  
with Alice Greene

Welcome,

This mini guide is a quick and easy way to gain a new perspective to healthy eating. There are many ways to be and feel healthy, and even more ways to eat well that is satisfying and breaks free of the dieting rules that hold you hostage.

Instead of feeling limited by rigid guidelines, I will introduce you to the idea that you have choices and you can give yourself permission to do what is enjoyable for you and your body.

This guide has 5 short sections, each about 2 pages long. Each section will challenge conventional thinking and offer a holistic, positive and individual approach to healthy eating. You will discover that the very things that may have kept you from succeeding or feeling good about your ability to succeed are beliefs that you can change.

Along with each section is a place to write down ideas, things that you realize are true for you or things you want to try or consider in making some changes in your life.

What makes changing eating habits and sustaining them so difficult is as much having a resistant and perfectionist mindset as it is a physical limitation. Once you have permission to listen to your own body, change your beliefs, go at your own pace and choose things you enjoy - without fear of judgment, then you can start to move more easily and successfully.

By reading this mini guide on Eating Well without Dieting Guilt you are taking a step to change your lifestyle. You are also opening your mind to the possibility there is a better way to make that change.

I think you will be pleasantly surprised by what you discover.

  
America's Healthy Lifestyle Coach

Conscious Awareness ☉ Self-honoring Choices ☉ Life long Results

### Selection of Topics

- Gaining Control Over Food 3 – 5
- Controlling Your Appetite & Portions 6 – 7
- Getting Over Wasting Food 8 – 9
- Handling Halloween Candy Differently 10– 11
- Avoiding Thanksgiving Day Stuffed 12 – 13

## Gaining Control over Food

Many people overeat on a regular basis.  
Are you one of them?

Do you find it easy to overeat or to eat when you aren't  
even hungry?

### Gaining Control Over Food is Possible

More than half of all Americans are overeating on a regular basis and many of them are overeating nearly every night. If you answered yes to either of the first two questions, now you know you aren't alone.

Anyone can gain control over food and it isn't as hard to do as you might imagine. I used to overeat fairly regularly myself and while I didn't really like how it felt afterwards or the impact it had on my weight, I felt that I didn't have that much control over it. But that changed when I learned how to eat in a balanced, intuitive way.

### Gaining Consciousness and Satisfaction

It all starts by being conscious of your hunger levels and realizing that your body is communicating with you. When you are hungry, your body is letting you know that your metabolism needs to be fueled and that your body sugars are falling. When you are satisfied from eating, you know intuitively that you've had enough. You can see this easily when around young children. They know when they've had enough and don't overeat (unless told to finish their food). And then there is the feeling of reaching fullness, when your body is letting you know that your body sugars are going up and your metabolism has been over fueled with calories that will only be turned into fat.

To get a better handle on your hunger levels it helps to have a reference or a hunger scale. Think of a bar going left to right, with 0 on the left and 10 on the right. At the far left, 0 represents being ravenous (perhaps to the point that you no longer feel hungry). At the far right, 10 represents being excessively and uncomfortably full. In between you will experience getting hungry at a 2, being satisfied around a 6 or 7, and reaching full at an 8.

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### Eight Common Reasons for Overeating

The question is why would you be inclined to eat past a 6-7? There are eight common reasons for this.

[The first](#) is being ravenous when you start eating. When you are extremely hungry, even if you don't feel it, you will inevitably overeat. This is driven by a physical need for food to refuel your body's need for energy and by an emotional need for food after having being deprived.

[The second](#) reason is eating just simple carbs at your meal. These refined, sugary foods get digested nearly as fast as you are eating it, so it doesn't fully register until you've gone too far. Unfortunately digesting isn't the same as burning it off, so you end up consuming far more calories than you need. You can also be driven to overeat later in the day if you've eaten mainly simple carbs during the day, because your blood sugars have been elevated, triggering both an insulin and cortisol hormonal response, and these all lead to craving more simple carbohydrates.

[A third](#) reason is mindless eating. You just aren't aware of the quantities you are consuming because you are focused on something else like watching TV, using your computer, talking, driving or reading. You only realize you've overeaten when you find that your bowl, bag or plate is empty and you discover that you feel full.

[Fourth](#) is related to being deprived. If you have been deprived of enough food or your favorite foods – say from doing a diet, then you will overeat (and likely binge) as soon as the diet or deprivation ends. This happens a lot when you deprive yourself of foods that you think you shouldn't have. But inevitably you get them in the house or you find yourself around them, and the next thing you know you've over indulged and feel out of control. The flip side occurs when you know that you will be deprived in the near future. This happens when eating out. When served a fabulous meal, part of you believes that you won't get this meal again. So you eat all of it, even if that means feeling sick.

[A fifth](#) reason is emotional eating, when you turn to food as a coping mechanism and a way to avoid dealing with your feelings. This isn't often conscious, but what feels like the easiest answer at the time. Yet food (or drinking or soda) doesn't solve what is driving your food or drinking behaviors, even if it feels that way. You will still have unmet needs, unresolved issues and repressed emotions. Until you have a way to validate and express those feelings

and to get your needs addressed, you will continue to bury yourself in food or drinking.

Sixth are food associations. Whenever you automatically pair food (or a specific food) with another food or a specific situation, you are creating a subconscious association. You don't think about whether it makes sense; it is something you always do. This might be having a piece of cake on someone's birthday, having an ice cream cone the first day your local ice cream shop opens, having hotdogs at a ball game, having Oreos with milk, or any other tradition you have done over the years. You don't stop to consider if you are hungry or really want this food; you just eat it.

The seventh reason is subconscious beliefs. This is similar to food associations, yet broader in scope. Throughout your life you are told many things, and many of them you assume as the truth. These become your beliefs that guide your behaviors, and often you don't even realize what those beliefs are. You may believe you have to eat everything on your plate, even if you are full. Or you may believe carbs are bad, you should always get your money's worth, and it is better to eat food than throw it away. Rationally, you may now believe something else or can see these no longer make sense, yet subconsciously be over-ridden by these more entrenched beliefs.

And the eighth reason is feeling pressured to eat by those around you or by someone specifically encouraging you to eat something or eat more. Just because they want you to eat, doesn't mean you have to do so. You can find ways to say no thanks, without offending someone or hurting their feelings. This can be difficult if you are conditioned to please others at your expense, yet you can change that belief.

#### Observe and Learn without Judgment

The way to deal with these drivers is to be aware that you are overeating by paying attention to your hunger levels, and instead of judging yourself, look to see what is driving your behavior. That is what will help you to understand what is happening and to create strategies that will help you deal with similar situations in the future.

This week notice when you overeat and if it stems from one of the eight most common reasons, and then see what you can learn from this.

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## Controlling Your Appetite & Portions

### There is a Reason Appetite Suppressants Don't Work

Have you been reading about leptin, the latest attempt to create a better appetite suppressant? It is being called the new thing in dieting, but in fact it's been around for quite a while. The problem is that it hasn't worked well in the past, so scientists are trying to figure out why and to come up with something that does work. And they think they are close to an answer.

If they would only ask me, I could tell them why it hasn't worked in the past and probably won't work in the future. Leptin is a hormone, made by abdominal fat cells, that signals the brain to stop eating. That is why it is called an appetite suppressant. What causes the most confusion is that the more fat you have, the more leptin you have. So it would seem that if you are heavier, you would have no appetite and would not be eating very much. But that isn't what happens. The belief is that those who are overweight have a form of leptin resistance, which inhibits their brains from getting the signal. But no one seems to understand why that would occur, and there is lots of research going on to figure it out.

### Ignoring Your Fullness Signal

But I believe the "resistance" is actually quite simple to understand. It isn't that the brain doesn't get the signal, it is that the signal gets ignored. From my experience working with lots of people that struggle with their weight, they all have something in common. They eat past the point of getting full on a regular basis, and they are not alone. Most people over eat and don't control their portions. When was the last time you kept eating, even though you knew you had had enough? How often do you feel full each week? Do you know why you couldn't stop?

### Denying Your Hunger Sets You Up to Overeat

There are many reasons for eating to the point of fullness, which is a clear appetite suppressant indicator by the body to stop eating. The most common reason is not getting enough food earlier in the day and being ravenous by the time you eat. When you skip meals and don't get food when the body needs it, there is both a physical and psychological response to overeat when you get your next meal – as if food has been denied and you can't get enough of it fast enough. In the haste of eating the larger portion, you don't notice the fullness and eat right past the signal.

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How often do you skip meals or wait to eat a larger meal and then end up over eating? Try eating more frequently during the day, so that you aren't starving yourself during the day and eating most of your food at night.

### Learning What Full Really Feels Like

Another common reason is the lack of awareness to feeling full. How often do you notice how full you are getting when you eat? Are you so accustomed to feeling full after you eat, that you don't really think much of it? I've discovered that most people feel full several times a week or more, but that it doesn't really register as something to pay much attention to. It just is. It is only when they pay attention to the feeling of being full that they discover they don't like it much and stop eating before getting the full feeling. Try experimenting this week with noticing your fullness level as you eat and after you eat. Then aim to stop eating before you get full, by stopping at the point you are satisfied. It may take a week or two to learn what that point is, but it doesn't take many people long to distinguish satisfied from full and to stop.

### Finding Comfort in Fullness

For some people the feeling of fullness is a comfort, and the overeating provides a temporary sense of contentment. This is because there is a difference between physical and emotional fullness. You can be full, but not feel emotionally filled. The trick is to start to recognize the clues as to which is physical and which is emotional fullness. Emotional eating is a way to cope with what is going on in your life using food. Food is a readily accessible and pleasurable way to be distracted, soothed, numbed and nurtured. Foods from childhood or other times in our life have associations with positive experiences, which make us feel better when we eat them. To address emotional eating, the first step is to be aware of when you eat past fullness, so you can stop right at that point and investigate what feelings or thoughts are driving you to want to keep eating. You can't stop if you don't notice you are full, and you can't address the emotions if you don't stop to find out what they are.

Do you think you may be an emotional eater? Try paying attention to when you eat past your fullness and check in with yourself. What are you feeling? What will better meet your needs, so that food isn't your coping mechanism?

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## Getting Over Wasting Food

Does it make you uncomfortable to throw out food, compelling you to eat it instead?

Did you grow up hearing kids are starving in Africa, to always clean your plate or that throwing out food is no different than wasting money?

### Reconsider the Beliefs That No Longer Serve You

Many of us did, but that doesn't mean those beliefs warrant eating food that you don't need or don't want. Instead it may be time to reconsider the benefits of wasting food rather than eating it.

If you stop and think about it, whether you finish eating something or you don't will not save starving children across the world and having a clean plate as an adult is really a habit and doesn't serve any real purpose. To address these beliefs requires a change in thinking and some techniques to change your habits.

It starts by looking at these beliefs and deciding if they still serve you or not. If not, what belief would make more sense for you now, such as "before I get full, no matter how much is on my plate, I will stop eating and determine the best thing to do with the remaining food." Sometimes the best thing is to save them as leftovers, mix them with new ingredients for another dish, or ask for a doggy bag. Or you could throw the rest of it out, if none of these are possible.

### What is the Real Cost of Wasting Food?

Throwing food away is more challenging for most of us. It really does feel like money is being wasted, but this needs to be put in perspective. If you can't see a way to save it, then you are faced with two options. Eat it or toss it. The cost of tossing it may be far cheaper than the cost of eating it – if you take a long term view rather than an immediate one.

Let's look at the cost of wasting it versus putting it on your waist. Often this issue comes up at dinner time, which is the most expensive meal of the day. If the meal costs \$16 and there is 25% more than you need, then the amount you don't eat is worth \$4. If this happens five times a week, and you can't find a way to reuse the food three of those times, the total cost for the week is \$12. Or perhaps you didn't eat

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half of the food on some of those occasions, so the total cost is \$20. How often do you spend \$20 a week on things you don't really need? Could you buy smaller portions of food, split portions with others or put less food out on your plate to begin with to avoid the extra expense?

### What About the Intangibles Costs?

Now consider eating all that food instead. If you eat a few hundred more calories than you need or than you burn off, you are putting on weight. As you gain weight you need larger clothes and you will likely contemplate starting a new diet. Both can be costly. How much have you spent in the last year doing a diet or on buying new clothes – either from gaining weight or yo-yoing down and back up?

In addition this weight gain often gets added around your mid-section, and this fat is the leading cause of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, insulin resistance and the need for medications. What are you spending in co-pays for doctor visits and medications related to these conditions?

And there is one more thing to think about. Overeating affects your energy level, your mood and your self confidence. What is it costing you to feel lousy and dragged down? Probably more than you think.

### Looking at Your Options

While wasting food is not ideal, it is better to look at your options than to carry a black and white belief about waste. The next time you find yourself with more food than you need or want, consider what your beliefs are, if you think they make sense, and what would be better. You have the power to challenge and change your beliefs around food if you stop and look at them.

The next time you eat food because you don't want to throw it away, consider what your beliefs about wasting food are costing you.

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## Handling Halloween Candy Differently

Do you find yourself unable to stop when it comes to Halloween candy – or any other sweets?

### Candy is Comfort Food

There is always concern about how much candy kids are eating at Halloween, but what about parents who consume nearly half of what the kids are bringing home? Candy is a comfort food for many of us, and when lying around in bowls and bags, it becomes a temptress greater than most adults can resist.

Instead of gearing up for a binge fest and worrying about how you are going to handle having all that candy around the house, consider what is driving you to overeat and crave it and then put some strategies in place to help yourself eat much less of it.

### The Power of Putting Candy on the Forbidden List

Some of the most common reasons people can't seem to stop at a few pieces of Halloween candy start with feelings of deprivation. Candy for most people is considered junk food or a food they should not have, and for them candy is on the forbidden food list. When they eat it, they believe they are being bad and falling off their diet, so they have to finish it and get it out of the house to be in control. Then they strive to stay away from it until the holidays get underway and they find themselves right back in the same place, struggling to avoid the next round of bingeing on sweets and striving (but failing) to be in control. It is a never ending cycle that continues right through Valentine's Day. Does this happen to you?

### Understand Your Dueling Inner Voices

What does this have to do with deprivation? Everything. When you believe that you shouldn't have something, you want it all the more. And the more you try to control the urges and deprive yourself, the more you obsess and overdo it when given the chance. This is human nature, and it is easy to see in children. We tend to forget that as adults we aren't any different. Like kids we rebel against harsh rules and restrictions that are depriving.

We want our candy – or what it represents, but we are determined to apply willpower to resist it. This creates an internal battle between our Enforcer voice and our Rebel

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voice. Very often the Rebel wins out. But because of the loud Enforcer in the background, harshly criticizing you for what you are doing, you begin to feel guilt and shame, which triggers emotional eating and an all out binge. Next thing you know you've eaten more pieces than you want to admit and you feel uncomfortably sick.

### Negotiating with Yourself

What if you created an agreement with your Enforcer and Rebel voices by allowing yourself a bit of candy every once in awhile, agreeing that it isn't forbidden and that if you really want it you can have it in moderation. Now you have calmed down the Rebel voice that will have a tantrum by overeating if it doesn't get its way. The trickier voice to negotiate with is the Enforcer. This is because the Enforcer is the one that enforces your beliefs.

When your beliefs are black and white and don't allow for some grey, then the Enforcer will instigate the Rebel. If you allow for moderation and satisfaction along with some guidelines for restraint, then the Rebel and Enforcer will both quiet down. If you also throw out the candy when the family has enjoyed it and had enough, everyone wins.

### Strategies to Help You Through Halloween

To put this in practice, try the following guidelines (or strategies) to help both the Enforcer and Rebel trust that their needs (meaning your needs) will be met. The first guideline is to eat candy along with a meal so that you aren't eating it alone and driving up your blood sugar levels, which in turn leads to cravings. The second guideline is to pay attention to when you are satisfied or the first signs of feeling a bit full and stop eating. If you know you want some candy with dinner then make room for it instead of eating it when you are full.

Third, pick just 2-3 pieces of candy that you know are your favorites and savor them, so that you achieve satisfaction. And fourth, tell yourself that you can have more at your next lunch or dinner, so you know that you won't be deprived and can still enjoy this once-a-year candy fest. After a few days, you will all have enjoyed having a bit of candy and you'll be left with candy that isn't your most favorite or you will be tired of it. Now throw what is left out. You won't miss it, because you've let yourself enjoy it. And if that Rebel acts up, tell it that there is always more at the grocery store if it really wants to have it again before next Halloween.

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## Avoiding Thanksgiving Day Stuffed

### [Getting Stuffed is a National Tradition](#)

It is such a tradition to eat until you are as stuffed as the bird that you may not even realize how full you get. Few escape the need to unbutton their pants or loosen their belts by the end of Thanksgiving Day. Why is that? I'll share three possible explanations you may not have thought of.

### [Thanksgiving Only Happens Once a Year](#)

First is because we only get this meal once a year. Thanksgiving dinner includes fresh cut turkey, stuffing, pies and all the family recipes that get pulled out for this special occasion. When we finally sit down to dinner we know that this is a one-time thing, not to be repeated for another year. That is a long time, and we feel we have to get it now while we can, because we won't get it again any time soon. So we sit down to dinner having been deprived of it for the past year and knowing we will be deprived of it again for the upcoming year. This sets the stage for overeating, often to the point of feeling sick. Did this happen to you last year?

The way to avoid this is to plan on having a turkey dinner again in the near future. It doesn't have to be a 12 pound bird. There are lots of ways to purchase and prepare turkey that takes very little time. Then pick some of your favorite holiday recipes to go with it, without going overboard. In this way you can have a scaled-back, but equally similar and enjoyable meal without waiting a whole year. It also helps to have a mini Thanksgiving meal the day after, so that during the big meal on Thanksgiving you know that you will definitely have the meal again – the next day – so you don't feel a need to eat so much of it all at once.

### [Mindless Anticipation is Built into the Day](#)

Second, the meal takes hours of preparation and we gather ahead of time to socialize, nibble and wait for the big event. During this time we are impatiently waiting and at the same time often bored, doing preparation chores or talking with family members with whom we may not be that fond or we may not have much to say to. So we eat mindlessly to keep our feelings of frustration, boredom or annoyance at bay or to give us a reason for a diversion. Or we could be having a great time, often accompanied by some alcohol, and again mindlessly eating from the dozens of hors d'oeuvres that surround us. By the time dinner is served, we've already had a fair amount of food and it doesn't take

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much more to push us past the point of full. Do any of these scenarios match your typical Thanksgiving Day?

### Consciously Balancing When to Eat During the Day

To minimize the amount you eat ahead of the big meal requires some consciousness and a bit of planning. If the meal will be served at 1pm and you have breakfast, then be aware that you may want to eat a bit of food in the late morning to tie you over until 1pm. If you are at home, have a balanced snack. If you are at someone else's home, be selective about the hors d'oeuvres you select as your snack. You don't have to deny yourself, but plan on just a few and scan what is available to pick the ones you really think you will enjoy the most. If the meal is later, such as 4pm, then have a balanced lunch around noon. Then you can enjoy a few of the best hors d'oeuvres just before the meal knowing you won't be ravenous or overdoing it. The point is, eat ahead of time so that when you nibble before the meal it is limited and based on what you really want the most.

### Recognize What You are Feeling

The third explanation is you may be feeling alone and wish you were with family or you are with family and wishing you were somewhere else. This can create emotions that are difficult to address and food is an easy way to push the feelings away. Food is a comfort and a coping mechanism for emotions. Do you anticipate some emotion during the Thanksgiving holiday?

The way to deal with emotional eating is to let yourself experience the feelings instead of turning away from them. Instead of numbing the feelings out with food, be aware of what you are feeling and how it is tied to your eating. You may want to do this the day before by journaling, letting the emotions out and understanding that this can be a challenging holiday for you. If you don't address it, you will overeat and the feelings will simply be repressed only to surface again at another time.

### Stay Conscious and Enjoy Your Choices

This Thanksgiving be conscious of your hunger levels, find ways not to feel deprived, plan your day so you don't get to the table filled up on hors d'oeuvres, and recognize if you are having some emotions so you can address them without turning to food. Then enjoy all your favorite things about the holiday meal.

## Next Steps

Once you have had some time to reflect on what you have learned about yourself and your options, consider what steps you want to take next. Certainly this guide has given you a lot of things to think about and insights about how to move forward on your own. Be sure to take advantage of your new resolve and make one small step today to put yourself and your health first.

You may also want some specific guidance and hand-holding, and I encourage you to consider the additional guidance available to you.

## Additional Guidance

Articles and guidance on my blog

[www.feelyourpersonalbest.com/blog](http://www.feelyourpersonalbest.com/blog)

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I wish you the best in feeling better and creating a healthier lifestyle that really feels good to you and fits your needs and interests. Remember to always listen to your body and your heart, instead of getting caught up in what others are promoting. You know yourself best, and you also know that quick fixes don't lead to long term results.



Conscious Awareness ☉ Self-honoring Choices ☉ Life long Results