



## **Progression Not Perfection For Holiday Dieting**

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With the holiday season on the horizon, food becomes an even more significant issue for those whose objectives are weight loss. It is almost certain that you will not "stick to your diet." Especially during the holiday season and if it is the initial starting of a diet program. It is usually expected since you have not reprogrammed or reconditioned your usual behavior. The key is to not allow this step back to prevent you from continuing with your program.

Often dieters will lose five pounds and gain two back during the holiday season. And instead of acknowledging the affirmative experience of losing three pounds they obsess over the two pounds gained. Or they might say "I was doing great until Saturday night and then I blew it!" They are focusing on that one-day even though they may have spent two weeks making healthy choices. If you accidentally backed into a tree with your car, you wouldn't continue to back into the tree to create more dents because you had already dented it. The idea would seem silly to you. Much in the same way to say that one day or one event denotes a global failure on your part is just as ridiculous.

This mind set is about focusing on the failures. And you will get what you focus on. Slender people don't beat themselves up when they overeat during the holidays. They don't say, "What's the point? I'm destined to be overweight" or "I knew this was too hard!" Slender people simply notice they are full and have become physically uncomfortable. They notice and say, "Next time I'll stop before I feel this way" or "This is great motivation to exercise more." Focusing on failures doesn't serve anyone. Focusing on progression and your ultimate goal serves all. Focusing on progression leads to more positive results. Remind yourself that if you have had these bad eating habits for many years, they won't be changed over night.

Now I'm not saying that an upcoming event (a Thanksgiving Dinner?) is an excuse to predict failure. You should take 100% responsibility for your choices. Create an easy to follow plan to overcome each situation. Do not look at the holiday season as a roadblock or a stumbling point. Instead as an opportunity to shift your mindset and relearn new habits. After all, habit patterns are things you learned. And if you learned them you can unlearn them.

You can help retrain yourself by repeating certain new habits such as eating slowly. Not only chewing your food slowly but also placing your utensil down between each bite and do not pick it up until you have completely chewed and

swallowed each piece. Make a commitment to eat only at the table and do not pick at the food while it's cooking. You can serve yourself on a smaller plate and leave at least a bite of each item on the plate. This will help you train yourself to stop eating when you are full. And before you go for seconds ask yourself "How will I feel after I have this?" Get into the habit of asking this question. Think your choices through. Behavior modification works only if you are consistently repeating new behaviors.

And don't look for 'formula' excuses for your behavior. "It was the office Christmas party." You need to be honest with yourself in an effort to recognize the situations and circumstances where you need to retrain yourself. During these times focus on what you will be gaining by remembering and acknowledging why you are making an effort in the first place. No matter how much you enjoyed your job you wouldn't do it if you didn't get a paycheck and/or other payoffs. So ultimately there must be a reward for your efforts. With weight loss you must remind yourself how much better you will feel, how healthy you will be, how fit you will look, how your confidence will grow as you start on your path of reaching your goal. Focus on the many benefits of being more selective, exercising discretion and the necessary discipline will arrive more readily. The payoff is actually much more than what you are giving and shows itself in many more ways than just losing weight.

If you are looking for that overnight magic solution for your weight problem you will be disappointed. Consider how long this has been an issue. How long have you been repeating old patterns? Simply remember you are reprogramming yourself. You are learning new behaviors that will stay with you for the rest of a very long and healthy life.