

Nourishment
WITHOUT
OBSESSION
GUIDE



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Note: The content shared here is for informational purposes only and not a substitute for professional medical or psychological advice. If you have an eating disorder or mental health concerns, please consult a qualified healthcare professional.

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About



Hello!

I'm Rhea Jassal, an Empowerment Coach dedicated to helping women feel truly liberated in their bodies and around food, so they can embrace their most confident and authentic selves.

For over 12 years, I struggled with my relationship with food and my body. It wasn't until I embarked on my healing journey that I uncovered the limiting beliefs shaping my choices around food and the impact they had on my life. Through this journey, I've learned to trust my body, listen to its signals, feel freedom around food, and gain confidence in my body.

Staying true to my mission, I've created a guide that explores diet culture, its effects on us, and how we can reframe our thinking around it. Additionally, you'll learn how to reconnect with your body as the ultimate source of empowerment, along with tools to support you on your healing journey.

I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I loved creating it!

With love,
Rhea

THE DIET

Mentality

The diet mentality is the belief that diets will 'save us' and solve all our problems. Diets provide us with a set of rules for eating, giving us structure when we feel we can't control our eating habits.

Labelling food as 'good' or 'bad' creates boundaries that may seem logical, but does a less nutritious food item truly deserve the intense 'bad' label that we give it? While some foods are more nourishing than others, dieting often conditions us to think in labels of 'good' or 'bad'. Instilling fear that we must always choose 'good' foods and reserve 'bad' ones for special occasions or cheat days otherwise there will be repercussions (which will be uncovered in this guide as limiting beliefs in section 4).

Diets place us in a mode of restriction, promising weight loss through controlled eating. If we follow the plan, results seem guaranteed.



However, the real question is: how easy is it to stick to these diets? And even if we do stick to them, how sustainable is it to live such a controlled lifestyle? Additionally, how healthy is the fear of 'good' or 'bad' food? When we are trapped in the diet mentality, we expect life to be hard and eating to be a constant challenge. Imagine living with the belief that there is only one correct way to eat, and anything outside of that is wrong, leading to guilt and shame when we stray.



THE EFFECTS OF *Dieting*

Diets can benefit certain individuals, such as those with heart disease or specific health conditions requiring dietary adjustments.

However, in today's society, diets are often prescribed universally, promoting the idea that everyone needs to look the same and that we cannot be trusted to manage our eating habits. Below are some effects that dieting can cause in our lives.

1. Setting Ourselves Up for Failure.

Diets often make us believe that 'junk food'—or as I prefer to call it, 'less nutritious food'—is something we constantly crave and should only enjoy occasionally. This restriction often backfires, leading to increased cravings and making these foods occupy our thoughts and the forbidden fruit effect takes hold. When our bodies are deprived of calories and conditioned to eat only certain types of foods, cravings intensify. Eventually, we give in to the cravings, promising ourselves it's the last time. But it rarely is. This is how the cycle of bingeing and restriction begins, a pattern that feels impossible to break.



2. Builds a poor relationship with food.

Diets tend to rigidly categorise food as either good or bad. But why can't food just be food? Many of us turn to diets with the aim of losing weight and improving our appearance. We're conditioned to believe that eating 'bad' foods will lead to weight gain (a concept we'll explore further in Section 4). This fear fosters an unhealthy relationship with food, causing anxiety about our choices.

Yet, we're human—naturally drawn to a variety of flavours and cravings. Enjoying less nutritious foods doesn't make us bad and this also brings us back to the forbidden fruit effect. Diet culture not only shuns these foods but also amplifies our fear of 'bad' food, by making us feel shameful when we indulge. This cycle makes us question our self-control and self-worth, further deepening the struggle we face when it comes to our control around food and causing a deeper dent with our relationship with it.

3. We become detached from our hunger cues.

Our body communicates with us through hunger cues. That empty feeling in our stomach? That's our body signalling that it needs food. However, dieting often disconnects us from these natural signals. We lose touch with when we're truly hungry or satisfied. Hunger cues guide us on when to eat, how much to eat, and when to stop.

When we follow a diet, we're told when, what, and how much to eat. This external control overrides our body's natural communication. As a result, we may not recognise whether we're eating more or less than we should. When diets restrict us too much, we might mistake our body's natural hunger for an addiction to food, convincing ourselves that we're at fault.

4. We Lose Trust in Our Bodies.

Losing trust in our bodies is closely linked to ignoring our hunger cues, but it goes much deeper than that. Our bodies are incredibly smart and intuitive. If you consume junk food consecutively, your body will eventually start craving something more nutritious. It knows what it needs to feel balanced and strong.

Coming back to the example of junk food: when we eat it, our bodies often feel bloated, sluggish, or lethargic afterwards. That's your body's way of saying the food you consumed didn't suit it. Do we really need a diet to tell us that nourishing foods are good for us when our bodies are already giving us those signals?

At the same time, we're human—and cravings are a natural part of life. It's okay to honour those cravings and give yourself permission to eat the foods you desire. What is key is prioritising the nourishment you are providing to your body and eating with your hunger cues in mind.

Diets strip this power from us, making us believe that we need control in our lives to be 'healthy' but in return, we end up forming toxic relationships with our food and body.



5. Makes us feel guilt and shame.

Diets play on our emotions of guilt and shame. They manipulate us into believing that if we stray from the diet, we're doing something "bad" because we will gain weight and we have failed to follow the rigid rules they set for us. This creates a restrictive box that leaves us feeling overwhelmed.

For example, if we eat something outside of our diet plan or more than usual, we often feel shameful, as though we've done something wrong. This shame can sometimes lead to a spiral where we wallow in those emotions and adopt an all-or-nothing mindset. This mindset can then result in binge eating, leaving us overwhelmed by guilt.

It's important to note that for women especially, hunger levels can fluctuate depending on hormonal changes. But if you eat more one day compared to another, does that make you a "failure"? Is it fair to feel guilty or shameful for simply responding to your body's needs?

SECTION 4

FROM LIMITING BELIEFS TO

Empowering Reframes

Limiting beliefs are ideologies we adopt based on our experiences, societal norms, and what we've been taught.

Below are some empowering reframes of the limiting beliefs that often keep us stuck in the diet cycle when we're trying to pursue our dream body.

1. Food Will Nourish Me.

Instead of: Food will Make me gain weight.

Diets impose strict control over food, making it seem as if food is the enemy. They create the belief that if we don't consume food in controlled amounts, we'll gain weight. In this mindset, food is equated with substances like alcohol or drugs as it is perceived to be an addiction. But in reality, food is a necessity—something we need to survive and thrive.

This diet-driven narrative instils so much fear around food that we start perceiving it as the enemy and the reason for weight gain.



However, the truth is that if we want to create food freedom it is not the quantity of food itself, but our relationship with food that we should be working on. The ironic part is that the more we try to control our intake of food through dieting, the more harm we do to that relationship.

What if, instead of jumping on the next diet, we focused on healing our relationship with food and understanding why we feel compelled to eat the way we do? When we stop viewing food as an addiction, the perceived control it has over us will also begin to fade.

2. My Body Is Unique, And A One-Size-Fits-All Diet Won't Support It.

Instead of: Every Diet is suited for me.

As humans, all bodies are very different. Diets are prescribed like magic pills to us. However, it's important to note that what suits one person may not work for the other. We need to start educating ourselves on what suits our body and what doesn't which we cannot find out from a standardised diet. Especially for some who are trying to heal their relationship with food.

3. I Can Trust Myself Around Food.

Instead of: I can't control myself around food.

Because of the diet culture and the way knowledge is being spread through social media or advertising, we are made to believe that we cannot trust ourselves around food and as humans we only crave food that is 'unhealthy' or 'bad'. We are stripping away our own ability to make food choices.

When you have a rule book like a diet to follow you don't become curious about food. You do not ask yourself why you consume the food you are consuming and what's the reason behind your craving.

Your actions become robotic, you eat what has been prescribed to you and when you falter, you feel guilty.

As opposed to the fact when you address food with curiosity you allow yourself to consume the supposed 'good' and the 'bad' food and assess your body's reaction. You build trust between your body and the food, you replace deprivation with curiosity. You break the bitter barrier between food and your body by giving yourself the permission to eat what you want to intuitively and trusting that your body will guide you through the process (more about this will be addressed in section 5 - Understanding your body's signals).

4. My Body's Needs Change Daily, And I Trust Myself To Nourish It Accordingly.

Instead of: I need to eat the same amount of food everyday to be healthy.

Tracking calories has become a popular trend in recent years as many of us aim for a 'calorie deficit.' This approach often makes our actions feel mechanical- consuming X calories and burning X calories to 'lose weight.' In the process, we completely stop listening to our intuition.

Think about it—haven't you had days when you're really hungry and others when you just don't feel like eating much and prefer to nibble throughout the day?

Consuming the same amount of calories every day isn't sustainable because we either end up depriving ourselves or overeating. Instead of sticking to a rigid caloric target every day, what if we focused on honouring our hunger levels—eating when our bodies signal hunger and stopping when we feel satisfied?

5. All Foods Can Have A Place In My Life.

Instead of: I need to eat healthy food everyday in order to lose weight.

Focusing on eating nutrient-dense foods that support your body's well-being is wonderful. However, when this focus turns into an obsession, it can lead to a fixation on "healthy" eating that becomes harmful. This obsession can cause extreme restriction and control over food choices even making it difficult to enjoy social settings.

For example, before going to a restaurant or attending an event, you might find yourself obsessively studying the menu or even skipping a meal because the food isn't deemed "healthy." This behaviour often leaves you feeling irritated, hungry, and frustrated, and you may even choose to opt out of social gatherings. Over time, this can damage your relationship with food, making you resentful toward it due to the stress it brings into your life.

Balance is key- even when it comes to food. Allowing yourself to eat a variety of foods that encompass health, taste, and comfort is the only way to improve your relationship with food. While the fear of losing control is understandable, it's important to remember that your body is always communicating with you. The challenge lies in learning to listen.



TUNING INTO OUR *Bodies*

A fair bit of this guide has focused on allowing yourselves to eat a variety of food through balance, not counting calories, and eating according to our body's signals. But what does that really mean? The belief stems from the idea that your body will guide you when it comes to food through hunger cues and other signals.

As mentioned earlier, if you give yourself permission to indulge in your cravings, your body will eventually crave something nutritious to balance the indulgence. Similarly, if you've had a heavy lunch, you may notice you're not as hungry at dinner and may choose something lighter to satisfy that gentle hunger. These are just a few ways your body is communicating with you.

Eating in alignment with your body means being aware of these signals and listening to what your body is trying to tell you. But in today's world, with all the distractions and the constant flow of information, we're often so consumed by the clutter that we forget—or don't even realise—that our bodies are speaking to us.

One of the best ways to start tuning in is to experiment the next time you sit down for a meal. Try sitting in silence with no distractions (no TV or laptop in front of you—big no-no!) and eat slowly, taking breaks between bites.

Ask yourself these questions between each bite:

- ◆ How hungry am I?
- ◆ How does the food feel in my stomach?
- ◆ How does it taste in my mouth?
- ◆ Am I satisfied, or do I want more?
- ◆ Am I going for more food because I'm hungry, or because it tastes good?
- ◆ If it tastes good, can I eat it again tomorrow?
- ◆ On a scale of 0-10, how hungry am I now?

Note: These questions may feel overwhelming at first, but with practice, they'll become second nature to you!

These questions can also be helpful on days when you give in to a craving. It's completely normal to crave food that isn't necessarily nutritious. The issue arises when we over consume these foods out of guilt and shame. On those days when you're having pizza or a burger, try to normalise the experience. Don't categorise it as a 'cheat meal' - this removes the pressure. Simply enjoy it while asking yourself the questions above, and stop when you're satisfied. Remember, this isn't the last time you'll have pizza or a burger; you can always come back for more when you feel like it.

The next day, don't try to make up for eating that pizza or burger by skipping meals or working out longer. Instead, eat normally, keeping your hunger cues in mind.

Additionally, sometimes we crave food because we are emotionally hungry, not stomach hungry. So when you feel a craving, ask yourself: Am I actually hungry? Is my stomach talking to me, or is it my emotions seeking comfort?

Curiosity is key!



EMPOWERING

Affirmations

Here are some affirmations below that can help you heal your relationship with food and your body.

- ◆ My worth is not defined by my weight.
- ◆ I choose to nourish my body with foods that support its well-being.
- ◆ Food nourishes my body not harms it.
- ◆ I am grateful for my body.
- ◆ I trust my body for its wisdom and honour its needs.
- ◆ Every food that I put in my body is an act of self-love to nourish my body.
- ◆ I empower my body with nutritious food, rest and movement.
- ◆ Listening to my body is my priority.
- ◆ My purpose is to protect my body.
- ◆ I choose to not let food scare me but rather empower me.

SECTION 7

JOURNAL

Prompts

Below are some journal prompts that can help you in your journey of building a strong relationship with your food and body.

Why am I scared of food?

What is the worst thing that can happen to me if I allow myself to eat whatever I want?

What would happen if the worst thing came true?

Why am I so attached to diets?

What would happen if I stopped attaching myself to diets and I started trusting my body's signals?

Why am I scared to trust my body's signals?

How can I start listening to my body's signals?

Thank You!

Want to know how you can
work with me?

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