



## Think Like a Scientist Guide

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***Scientist: Deliberate. Open Minded. Not attached to an outcome. Willing to change and adjust for a desired outcome.***

***Dieter: Emotional. Deprived. Always judging choices. Quick to react. Feels guilty often. Expects an outcome and left disappointed if it is different.***

The goal is to shift from a dieter's mind to a scientist mind to get you more in touch with hunger and fullness cues, likes and dislikes, and the health choices that work for your life and body.

In this guide you will have the most common dieting struggles and how to approach it like a scientist. There is also a list of common questions you can use to guide yourself through the process when you feel lost.

# Common Dieting Scenarios

## **1. Coworker brings in tray of cookies. You want one but can't decide if it is because of taste or emotion like boredom.**

D: I can't eat it. If I eat it I will never stop. Oh man but if I don't they will all be gone and I will be feel deprived. If I feel deprived I will binge. Just one. Ok two. Oh forget it just keep eating them.

S: Is this a time of day where I typically use symptoms? Yes- then no matter how I eat the cookie it will be triggering. Plan times to have a dessert that you LOVE during happy safer times

Is this the most amazing awesome cookie on the planet? Did I want food before the tray came in? Can I have a taste and throw it out if it is not worth it? If the answers are no, pass on the cookie. Remind yourself food is everywhere. You are not saying no because you can't control yourself but because it does not serve you and how you want to feel.

## **2. Fear if you say no to food you will feel deprived later**

D: I have to eat it to prove I can eat it. If I say no to a food I dwell on it and obsess over it, which leads to more eating later!

S: Making a choice now is ONLY about now. I can't predict the future. I believe in myself to reach my goals and the tools I have, so when the time comes I will figure out the answer. It is not my job to decide the future ahead of time.

## **3. When you feel full, you feel guilty and "fat"**

D: I hate feeling full! I always eat too much! How will I lose weight or control my weight when I don't stop until I am so full!

S: Why do I feel guilty over food, did I steal it from a poor person? No! I feel full. Often I get too full but I eat fast and do not pay attention. I can work on not multi tasking and enjoying my meals more. Feeling full is a good thing. My body tells me to stop eating. If I tune in more and get comfortable knowing how long I can go before getting hungry again it will help. If I feel full, it will pass but I will go longer before I eat next. If I eat less and do not feel full, I will get hungry and eat again sooner. Both are ok, what feels better to me?

**4. You don't want to go to a party because you don't feel good about your body or there is someone going you always envy.**

D: I can't go. I am going to feel uncomfortable all night. Why make myself feel worse comparing myself to every skinny put together person there. I have nothing to wear! If I go I better not eat all day since I know I will eat way too much anyway.

S: I deserve to have fun right here right now. I won't decide how I will eat ahead of time. I am going to wear something that makes me feel comfortable and joyful. Instead of envying people I am going to friend them and learn more about them. They are more than just a weight just like me.

**5. I always crave sweets at a specific time, i.e. after lunch, afternoon, or dinner.**

D: I will never change. I can't lose weight if I eat dessert twice a day but the cravings are so strong so I have to listen or I feel deprived.

S: There is a reason I am craving sweets after meals. I will test a few different alternate ways to cope and see what works best. I am allowed to have it but if it is always after meals it is a pattern or habit based on a need. I can try brushing my teeth, a cup of tea, having more satisfying meals, jumping straight into action after a meal, and calling a friend to connect. I will check off one thing at a time and see if my cravings decrease with any new activity.

**6. I will always want sweets!**

D: I am weak. I have no willpower. I will always fight to say no to sweets. Maybe I am addicted and I just need to cut it out forever.

S: Anytime we use never it is from a place of emotion. My habits I formed coupled with the lack of belief in myself are keeping me stuck because the food is serving a purpose. I am not addicted to sweets but they taste good. Maybe they let me zone out and quiet my mind even for a minute when life is racing by. Maybe they are what I perceive as enjoyment and something to look forward to during a routine boring stressful day. I am here to figure out why and watch them lose their power. Yes it will always taste good but it will not always be a distraction, excitement in a day, and it definitely is not making me feel good past the first bite. Yes, it may not be today but soon I will replace them with healthy habits that get me to my goals. I will be able to have one bite and savor it without guilt. I will turn down desserts that are not the best I ever had because that is what I deserve.

Karen Diaz RD  
www.thefreelife.com

### **7. If I leave food on my plate I am wasting food!**

D: I feel so guilty leaving food. I don't know when to stop eating unless my plate is empty or I feel too full to eat more.

S: Throwing out my food will not feed the poor. When I leave food on my plate I am controlling when the meals ends. After years of diets where you count calories and finish all you have I got disconnected from my internal hunger cues? I can relearn them. I will relearn them. It starts with throwing out one bite.

### **8. I want food at night, but I can't tell if it is emotional or hunger.**

D: I am afraid to eat much during the day, as I know I will lose it at night. I struggle with the pantry and wanting to eat. I can't tell the difference between emotional and physical hunger.

S: If it is physical it will not go away. It will keep getting stronger in your stomach. Use the questions. Also, do you want to put the snack on a plate and eat it at the kitchen table? Would anything satisfy you? If yes, enjoy your snack. If it is only a specific food and it is mindless with the television then it may be more emotional. I will have to work on what feeling I am seeking at night and replace it so I don't crave food. Do I struggle to just be at night? Do I need to be doing something constantly?

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www.thefreelife.com

## **Questions to ask yourself if you are struggling to know what to do:**

Before a Meal:

1. How am I feeling? Do I need to address any emotion (stress, anger before I eat)?
2. What will taste good? What will feel good?
3. What are my options? If I am limited, the meal is just for nourishment; less for enjoyment and that is ok.
4. When will be my next opportunity to eat? (This will judge how full you should be)
5. What distractions do I need to clear away?

After a meal:

1. Do I feel satisfied? If no, why?
2. Am I comfortably full?
3. Was I present at my meal?
4. Did I leave food on my plate? Could I have left some or did I need it all? Answer will vary

When stressed....

1. Delay. Do not eat
2. Use alternate coping skill. Journal, listen to music, vent, take a walk, etc.
3. Am I still hungry?
4. Is it reasonable to be hungry based on when I last ate?
5. Am I craving a food to relieve stress or will many options work?
6. Can I be present when eating, if no but need to eat for physical reasons make sure it is portioned and do not eat out of a bag or take out with large portions, as you will always finish in this state.

Beginning of the day:

1. What is my day like?
2. What times am I going to be able to eat?
3. What meals should I plan for now?
4. Do I need to carry an emergency snack around?

End of the Day

1. How did my meals go today?
2. What would I do differently looking back?

3. Was my hunger controlled throughout the day?
4. How long in between meals before I feel hungry?
5. What did I want to do?
6. What were the benefits to not following my urges?

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[www.thefreelife.com](http://www.thefreelife.com)