

## CHAPTER 8



# What's to Eat?

My clients drive people crazy at parties. We seem to eat all the wrong things. We'll have drinks and steak and pizza and desserts. We don't eat just salad and fish and chicken. We don't abstain from the things we like. It doesn't look like we're dieting; but, we *are* losing weight.

"Now, don't cheat!" they'll say. "You've done so good!"

What we do defies their reality. We just love partaking in what we like, what they think is the forbidden fruit. We tell them "This *is* my diet!" while they look in bewilderment at our plates of the "wrong" things.

Different ideas come to mind when you talk about dieting. Most people think of it as a different way of eating that you do for a while to lose weight. You "diet" to lose weight, and then when you're done, you go back to normal.

This does no good. In fact, it makes us worse, helping us develop more overeating habits. It makes us crave and overvalue some foods, and it conditions us to overeat without control, through an inadvertent application of those behavioral

principles I spoke of earlier. While you diet, you engage in a punitive exercise of deprivation and eating in a way you don't like. It's a form of aversion "therapy." It trains you to hate and be repelled by eating in ways to make you lose weight. Then you stop dieting, and you start thoroughly enjoying eating what you like, without limit, which conditions you to overeat and triggers drives to addict you to compulsive overeating. Dieting, in this sense, doesn't work—or I should say that it makes things worse. It's a perfect system to create an overeater, a food addict.

With The Anderson Method, we have no diets of what you have to eat, and what you can't eat. If you are going to succeed, you have to like what you eat, and you have to learn how to eat what you like. With my method, you don't eat things you don't like, and you eat all the things you *do* like, in ways where you won't become overweight. Believe me, there are very few things that must be given up for all time.

Sometimes when people use the word "dieting," they mean eating responsibly or eating with self-control. When they "diet," they eat in a healthy, self-controlled way, and when they are not "dieting," they practice no self-control. They eat with wild abandon, sometimes off on a rampage, compulsively, continuously, "foraging," and bingeing.

With my method, there are no lists of foods that are OK or not OK and no rules about when to eat. There are no silly edicts about chewing twenty-eight times, or against eating and watching TV at the same time. There's nothing about avoiding all food that's white, or about needing to eat a big breakfast. You can eat after 7:00 p.m., if that's what you want.

But you do learn self-control. You *can*, and to succeed, we need to practice this self-control for the rest of our lives. This *can* be done, when it is rewarding, rather than punitive and repulsive. It can become habitual, and enjoyable, and self-sustaining. Our goal is not as much about learning how to lose weight or diet, as it is about learning how to eat and learning

how to control your weight. It's about changing what you do when you act natural, what you feel like doing. It's about making eating with self-control what you feel like doing.

We will not solve our problem by doing something weird for a while and then going back to “normal.” The old “normal” is what made us fat. And “dieting” is what made our “normal” behavior worse.

To succeed, we need to learn how to eat, to *undereat*, not “diet.” We need to learn how to live in a way where we will lose the weight and then control it. To succeed, we need to do this forever. To succeed, there is no going back to “normal.”

You will succeed by getting trained, or by training yourself, to eat what you like, and everything you like, in a way that will make you lose your excess weight and keep you at the weight you want to be. There *is* a way. It *can* be done. My clients do it every day. You can do it, too.

To lay the groundwork for this, you will need to become acquainted, or reacquainted, with the facts related to weight control from the physical sciences. So, prepare for a little bit of scholarly study.

## WHAT WE KNOW FOR SURE ABOUT HOW TO LOSE WEIGHT

There is no mystery about the physics of weight control.

Your body is a machine that runs on fuel—the food we eat. If you live in a way where you take in more fuel in any given month than you burn, you'll store it, in the form of fat, and gain weight. If you burn more than you've taken in, you'll burn some of your stored fat and lose weight. If you live in a way where at the end of the month you've only taken in the amount you burn, you'll stay the same. This is irrefutable, reliable, science.

The fuel in food is measured in calories. A calorie is the amount of energy required to heat a gram of water one degree Celsius.

Calories are units of energy measurement, like the BTUs you see on gas grills. The label on the grill tells you how much energy the grill can consume and put out, for instance, forty thousand BTUs. The BTU (British Thermal Unit) is the amount of energy it takes to heat a gallon of water one degree Fahrenheit. We measure energy for gas grills in BTUs, and we measure energy for people in calories.

If you eat more calories than you need, you'll gain weight. Period. The only way to lose weight is to eat fewer calories than you need. Period. There is no avoiding this reality. It is no more avoidable than the law of gravity. If you try to fight it or fool it, you will lose. You can only succeed by living with it rather than trying to get around it.

How many calories does your body need? Your body didn't come with a label like the gas grill, but it is a simple thing to find out how much energy you burn in the course of a day. They call it your "metabolic rate." It's almost like the mileage rating on a car. If you're a six foot tall man of average activity, your metabolic rate is about 2,700 calories per day. If you are a five foot, four inch woman of average activity, your metabolic rate is about 1,800 calories per day. (Sporty, little, efficient cars use less than big, lumbering SUVs.)

We have very accurate methods to estimate a person's metabolic rate. Incredibly, most of the information you will get on the internet about your metabolic rate is horribly inaccurate, even from sources you'd assume were legitimate. Also a surprise: Many doctors and even "nutritionists" are completely mistaken about how to estimate a person's metabolic rate. If you wanted to get an actual clinical measurement, that can be obtained, too. There are several methods, using devices called "calorimeters," which can physically and scientifically measure how much fuel you burn. Your doctor can refer you to an endocrinologist who can arrange a test, if you'd like an exact measure of your individual rate. (If you think you have a strange metabolism,

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I strongly advise you to get tested. Most of the time, you'll find out that you don't have an unusually slow metabolism, but some do, and they need medical treatment. Those who are normal, but who were convinced that their body had a "slow metabolism," need a reality check so they can be confident that eating fewer calories will have the desired effect.)

There is no way to alter your metabolic rate if you don't have a metabolic disorder. There are no pills or foods that will speed up your metabolism. Exercise will burn more calories, but not really that much, relative to what you can eat. Exercise is useless as a help to lose weight if you don't control your eating; and people who control their eating to lose weight can do just fine without exercise. Exercise is a separate health issue, and it is really unrelated to the obesity problem we have. Our weight problems are because of the way we eat, and the solution is in changing the way we eat.

We can measure the fuel value in all the foods we eat, and there are countless sources of data available, so we can know very accurately the number of calories in all the foods we eat and the number of calories we put in our body each day and over time.

Clients engaging in The Anderson Method go through a training process where they end up eating what they like, habitually, in the amounts of calories to maintain the weight they want to be. It's a lot of work at first, but the goal is to make it so you have a new "normal," not by eating diet stuff, but by eating what you like in a way to get the weight off and keep it off.

Clients learn to *undereat*, rather than overeat. They develop a way to eat during the week and on the weekend, a way to eat at restaurants, a way to go to parties, a way to have Thanksgiving (including the pumpkin pie). The goal is for undereating to become the new normal, so that when you do what feels good, you are doing what gets you to your target weight and keeps

you there. Rather than doing without things, like ice cream or bacon, for instance, we develop a way to work it into a healthy behavioral pattern that will keep us fit. We train in it until it becomes our new normal, and any other way would be uncomfortable.

It's not rocket science. It's simple in concept, though complex in execution, and it is irrefutable and utterly reliable. You will lose weight, without question.

There are many details of the therapy that are complex and beyond the scope of this book, but you will be exposed to the essence that is at the core.

## NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

You may be wondering “What about carbs and fat, and what you eat at night turning to fat?” Let me help you change a bad habit you probably have, hopefully forever.

The physics and nutrition science we are involving here is not subject to opinion, like opinions about what are the best foods to eat. It has not really changed in the last twenty years.

These facts regarding your weight being a result of the number of calories you eat are not up for debate. There are scientists who study these things at all our universities, and they all agree. It doesn't really matter what time of day you take in your calories, or even what day. It doesn't really matter if you get your calories from carbs or protein, or junk food or diet food. If you eat more calories, on average, than you use, you will gain weight. Period. Accumulate 3500 calories of excess, and you've gained a pound of fat.

If you eat fewer calories than you use, by undereating, you'll lose weight. Period.

Stop reading goofy articles by people who are not qualified. Stop listening to diet gossip. Rid your brain of all the nonsense you've accumulated.

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If you want a factual answer about the science involved here, go to an R.D., a Registered Dietician. They are the scientists who have specialized in the physical sciences regarding food, your body, and weight. They will tell you “a calorie is a calorie is a calorie.”

I trust R.D.s regarding the science, though I still don't like them telling me what to eat and when, which they seem to like to do. I know there are reasons they think their way of eating is better, but it often has nothing to do with what I want, which is my happy successful weight control. They are experts in the physical sciences, not psychology and behavioral science. So, you don't have to believe all their opinions about how to live, but trust them with the physics. If you live in a way where your calorie balance is *negative*, because your habits automatically make it so in the long run, you'll master your weight control. You will never be overweight again. That's what my clients are able to do with the practice of my method. It just becomes the way they live their life, week in, week out.

