



WEIGHT ★ NO ★ MORE DIET CENTERSM



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WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE ... DIETING WITH *THE ENEMY*

Want to really bring out the worst in people? Lose weight. Whether it's 10 pounds or a ton, just watch and see how you'll be showered with so much fattening food—by people who claim to love you! Why is that? When dieters fall off the wagon, they're always shocked to think that someone else may have had a hand in their failure. Then it dawns on them: Oh yeah, the apple cake that Mom just baked and set out on the counter, the surprise box of candy from the usually unthoughtful husband, the coworker who left the late-afternoon Krispy Kreme doughnuts on your desk. "Why is that?," they always ask.

The answer: Diet saboteurs. They're everywhere. In fact, in one survey, 24,000 overweight women reported that losing weight created problems in their relationships that regaining the weight would have resolved.

Friend or Foe? The problem usually starts because you're in change mode (and darned happy to be there), but your friends and family aren't. Rarely would a real friend intentionally and maliciously undermine your diet. They just do unconscious things to keep the relationship the way it was. And there are lots of reasons why.

1. **They feel guilty.** Your success makes them more conscience of the fact that they most probably should lose weight too. But for many, teasing you back to normal with "you're doing so well; a little won't hurt" is often easier. And if it starts an eating frenzy that ends in weight gain, sadly, that's secretly okay with friends like these. You've proven once again that weight loss is impossible; now they can relax and not try.
2. **They don't understand.** Other folks (and most often spouses!) who've never had a weight problem can't understand why you don't go back to eating normally now that you've lost that weight. And besides, they've suffered enough with all the changes around the house, and they want "this" to be over.
3. **They miss the old you** ... or, more specifically, the food experiences you once shared! Food is often how we express love. Baking cookies for your kids (and of course eating some together). Going to happy hour with co-workers.

How do you politely say "back off" to those you love? ... Make friends with the enemy! Researchers have figured out three classic actions likely to pave the way to long-term weight loss success and fend off sabotage, whether deliberate or subconscious.

1. **Start with exercise.** It builds muscle, burns calories, reduces stress, and, best of all, creates the positive mood that makes you strong enough to avoid saboteurs.
2. **Monitor your exercise and food.** Plan your workouts and meals, and write down every bite. This will keep you honest, and it may also help you recognize the people and events that do you in. Then you can develop strategies to deal with them.
3. **Creative a supportive environment.** It's important to ask for help. Asking is tricky because we really don't know how to do it. We tend to believe that if people loved us, they'd know what to do. Not true! Write a "Dear Supporter" letter to those in your life to whom it would best apply and state your needs directly. Whether you write it or say it, be specific. Even those closest to you can't read your mind. For instance, if being constantly asked how much you've lost will drive you to cheat, let people know. If you need support when the late-night munchies hit, ask your friend if it's okay to call.

There are some downright vicious saboteurs who work to undermine you. They may pressure you to eat the way they do in order to remain part of a group, not-so-subtly implying that you're no friend if you don't. Clearly tell them, "This is not helpful to me." They can't deny they've heard you, and you have a chance to recommit to your plan of action. You may have to avoid them for a while or find less toxic friends. If all else fails, "call a sponsor"—someone you know who will talk you through it.

If you've been direct in asking your spouse for help but don't get it, you may need to seek couples' or family counseling. Poor response often suggests something else is going on. Most family and friends will be glad to help if you nudge them in the right direction.

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