100 Days of Weight Loss

The Secret to Being Successful on ANY Diet Plan

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I hope you enjoy the book and find it helpful in your life goals!

Linda Spangle
Author of *100 Days of Weight Loss*

Also, author of *Life is Hard, Food is Easy*
Welcome!

I think I know why you’re here. Somehow, you want to be able to change your future. I’m guessing that you’d love to get control over food, lose a bunch of extra pounds and then maintain your weight for the rest of your life.

Well, you’ve come to the right place. Over the next 100 days, you can achieve phenomenal progress toward reaching these goals. But the amazing part is you will feel like it was easy. Here’s how it works.

Each day, you will complete one mini-lesson related to some aspect of managing your weight. Then over time, you’ll learn how to slip these tools into your daily routines. Eventually, just like putting on your shoes or brushing your teeth, your new skills will become second nature. And when they do, you’ll have found the secret to long-term success!

Why it works

In my 20 years of working with overweight individuals, I’ve found that one problem shows up again and again. In spite of their initial enthusiasm, most people average just three to four weeks on a diet before they fall off the wagon. The reason? Real life gets in the way!

Like many dieters, you probably start out strong. But then you get worn down by life challenges such as family, work, stress, finances or even emotional struggles. At some point, the need to feel better becomes stronger than your desire to lose weight. Before long, you slip off your diet and reach for a piece of chocolate cake or a bag of potato chips.
Once you’ve messed up, you may have a hard time getting back on your diet. Eventually, you just give up on your goal of losing weight—at least for a while.

Does this sound way too familiar? If so, you may need a whole new approach for managing your weight. While a healthy diet and exercise plan can certainly help, sometimes it takes more than that. What you really need is an easy set of tools that will help you to calm, nurture and energize yourself so that food doesn’t have to do it for you.

In my book, Life is Hard, Food is Easy, I showed readers how to stop using food as the solution to their emotional needs. Now I’ve divided these skills into small, bite-sized pieces, so you can easily fit them into your hectic days.

Many of these lessons will simply remind you of things you already know. But others will pull you deeper, helping you cope more effectively with issues such as weak motivation, low self-esteem and emotional eating. As you complete these one-a-day lessons, you’ll build a solid weight-management framework you can stand on forever.

How to do the 100 Days Program

Because this book is designed to work with any diet plan, you get to choose your own method for losing weight. So decide on the program you want to use, then simply follow these steps to a successful 100 days!

**Step One - Choose your best diet plan**

Think carefully about what works for you. Do you enjoy going to weight-loss groups or do you prefer meeting one-on-one with a counselor? Maybe you’ll go to a commercial diet program or hire a personal weight-loss coach. Or you might even design your own system using a new diet book, an Internet resource or a plan that you’ve followed in the past.
After you’ve chosen your diet plan, make sure you know your recommended daily calorie levels or the number of servings for each of the food groups. You’ll also want to think about how you’ll monitor or track your food intake to see whether you’ve met your diet plan’s requirements.

Take the diet quiz
If you need help with choosing a diet plan, take the quiz at www.thedietquiz.com

Based on the amount of weight you want to lose as well as your age, history, body type and personal preferences, this quiz helps you pick the diet plan that best matches your needs and gives you the greatest chance for success.

**Step Two - Do your plan for 100 days**

Plan to complete one lesson from this book each day, setting a goal of staying on your weight-loss plan for 100 consecutive days. If for some reason, that’s not a realistic time frame, you can space the lessons any way you want.

If you take a vacation or slip off your diet for a few days, don’t start over at Day One. Just pick up on the lessons where you left off and continue moving forward. Remember, your goal is to log a total of 100 days, even if it takes you longer than that to accomplish it.

100 days is a magical amount of time. Because it forces you to stay focused and consistent, your efforts will last far longer than they might otherwise. Any time you struggle and you’re tempted to go off your plan, use the goal of reaching 100 days as a way to strengthen your resolve.
Step Three - Track your progress

Before you begin your 100 Days, purchase a special notebook or journal for tracking your progress. With each day’s lesson, record your answers to the “Today” assignment as well as any other insights or ideas that will help you in the future.

In addition, come up with a visual way to track your 100 days. You might write each day’s number on a calendar or on a wall chart. Or maybe you can record them in your daily planner or on a graph you create on your computer. Then watch as the days accumulate, moving you closer toward your goal.

Create a vision for the future

Think for a minute about why you want to lose weight. Do you have any immediate goals such as feeling better or wearing certain clothes? Maybe you hope to decrease your back pain or lower your blood pressure. Perhaps you want to set a healthier example for your children.

In your 100 days notebook, write down at least 10 reasons why you want to lose weight and maintain your success. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Feel better; have less back and knee pain
- Have more energy; be able to exercise more easily
- Be healthier; lower my blood pressure/cholesterol
- Improve my self-esteem and my confidence
- Wear a bathing suit without embarrassment

Tape copies of this list to your mirror and your refrigerator. Write your list on a small card and carry it with you. Read it daily for at least the first week or two of this program.

Any time you feel discouraged or tempted to give up, review your list again and remind yourself, “This is why I’m doing the 100 Days Program and I’m absolutely sticking with my plan.”
To build your vision of success even stronger, try to picture yourself at a healthy weight. Pull one of your favorite outfits out of your closet and hang it where you can see it often. Try on a pair of jeans that are too small right now, then imagine how you’ll feel when they fit perfectly.

If you have trouble with seeing yourself thin, think about how you’ll feel once you’ve lost weight. For example, picture moving gracefully through narrow store aisles or fitting comfortably into theater or airplane seats. Use these images to help keep your motivation strong and focused.

**Using the scale**

Do you have a love-hate relationship with your bathroom scale? In reality, the scale is an important tool in your program. If you pretend that you don’t own one or you avoid weighing yourself because you’re afraid of what the scale might say, you may need to change the way you approach this area.

First, think about how often you want to monitor your weight. During this 100 Days Program, I recommend that you weigh yourself every day. But if you prefer, you can get on the scale once a week or use whatever time frame works for you.

In addition to using the scale to monitor your progress, notice the changes in how your clothes fit. Take body measurements at intervals, then calculate the number of inches you’ve lost. Also, pay attention to all the improvements in your actions, your learning and your daily personal growth.

For most people, there’s no reason to avoid using the scale. But if weighing yourself makes you feel upset or affects your self-esteem, get rid of your scale or hide it in the closet. You might even choose to stay off the scale for the entire 100 Days Program. Do what seems to work best for you.
How to keep yourself going

At the end of each set of ten lessons, you'll find two divider pages that include a list of the next group of topics. If you ever feel tempted to stop your program, skip to one of these pages, where you’ll see the following message:

You’ve come this far in your 100 days...

*Don’t stop now.* If you’re struggling to stick with it, push yourself to finish *one more day.* You’ll immediately be another day closer to achieving your weight-loss goals.

**Just do one more day!**

Each time that you complete another day on your 100 Days Program, you’ll have moved further on the road toward your new life. Remind yourself you are a valuable and worthwhile person and that you deserve to be at a healthy weight. Stay dedicated to your dream—and *make it a great 100 days!*

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**Take the challenge!**

Sign up to participate in the 100 Days of Weight Loss Challenge

[www.100DaysChallenge.com](http://www.100DaysChallenge.com)

This special challenge is designed to keep you on target with your weight-loss efforts for the entire 100 Days Program. As a member, you’ll receive weekly e-mail tips as well as regular teleclasses, bonus materials and other great resources.
Days 1-10

Set up for success

Day 1 I used to be that way...
Day 2 Interested or committed?
Day 3 Do it anyway
Day 4 Boundaries, not diets
Day 5 Magic notebook
Day 6 Protect your program
Day 7 I can do it!
Day 8 Help me, please...
Day 9 Here’s what I want
Day 10 Appreciate good support
Day 1
I used to be that way...

You are so determined to make this program work. This time, you really want to stay on your weight-loss plan and reach your goal. But deep inside, you may be afraid you haven’t changed at all and that you’ll quit your program long before the 100 days are up.

Perhaps a tiny voice is reminding you of your past failures with dieting. In the beginning, you’re always very excited and motivated. But after a few weeks, your enthusiasm drops, and without meaning to, you slip up.

Maybe you sneak an extra candy bar or a bowl of ice cream at the end of a bad day. Then you reason that, since you’ve already blown it, you can go ahead and eat more. Soon you get discouraged with your behavior and eventually you quit your diet completely, just like you always do.

Change your thinking
Stop right there! Your past does not determine your future. In fact, your previous failures have absolutely no effect on your ability to succeed now. Starting today, eliminate the belief that things always go a certain way or that you never stay with your goals. Whenever those doubts creep back in, immediately give yourself this new message:

I used to be that way, but now I’m different!

This powerful statement completely ignores whatever you did before and instead, it promises you can change your outcome entirely. Rather than being fearful that you’ll repeat the past, build a new way of thinking.
Make up a new ending

Because now you’re different, you can do anything. You can even create different endings for your old negative patterns. Suppose you’ve been worried because you “always gain your weight back.” Come up with a new statement that describes what you can do to prevent this.

For example, you might say, “I used to give up on a diet after a few weeks. But now, I pull out my journal every day and use writing to keep myself on track.”

When doubts creep in, remind yourself that now you handle life differently. Go ahead and invent entirely new outcomes for your goals, then remind yourself often about your ideas. Over time, these patterns will become permanent, and your dream of success will actually come true.

Today

- Make a list of any fears or negative behaviors that have hurt your weight-loss success in the past. Read each one out loud, then say, “I used to be that way, but now I’m different.”
- Then write new endings for them by completing this sentence: I used to ___________ (fill in your old behavior), but now I ___________ (write in your new ending).
- Read these new outcomes often, then live in a way that makes them true.
Day 2

Interested or committed?

Debbie was discouraged. “Whenever I start a new diet, I’m so determined to stay on it until I reach my goal. But after just a few weeks, something comes up—a party, someone’s birthday—and next thing I know, I slip off my plan and give up.”

Do you feel totally determined to stick with your efforts, or do you entertain a few nagging thoughts about “having fun” instead of staying on your plan? If you tend to start and stop every time you diet, you may want to look at the difference between being interested and being committed.

**Interest slips away quickly**

With interested, you tend to stay with your plans only until something better comes along. For example, you may decide that you’re interested in losing weight, but when someone brings doughnuts to work, you quickly go off your diet.

When you’re just interested in dieting, you depend on seeing results to keep you on target. So, as long as the scale keeps moving, you stay motivated. But if you hit a plateau or you don’t see much progress for a few weeks, you may throw your program out the window.

Then, when you struggle, you blame everyone but yourself. You accuse your friends of ruining your diet because they eat potato chips in front of you. In addition, you fall into “if only” thinking, saying things like, “If only I had more time, more money, a new job or a supportive spouse, then I’d be able to stay on my plan.”
Committed means “no matter what!”

When you’re truly committed to achieving your goals, you have an entirely different outlook. Unlike being interested, where it doesn’t take much to detract you from your goals, being committed means you stick with it, no matter what.

Rather than depending on results to help you stay on track, you work on keeping your motivation strong, knowing that results will follow. You don’t blame circumstances or other people for your struggles. Instead, you stay on your diet in spite of not having enough money, time or supportive friends and family members.

Look carefully at your current efforts. If you tend to easily fall away from your weight-loss plan, decide if you’re taking the interested approach. If so, strive for being committed instead. Start adopting a “no matter what” attitude, then convince yourself you can stay with your goals regardless of your daily challenges.

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**Today**

- Decide that you will always be committed to your weight-loss plan, not just interested.

- In your notebook, describe how you will stick with your program, no matter what.

- Do at least one thing today that demonstrates you are truly committed. For example, take a walk or eat your vegetables—no matter what.
Day 3
Do it anyway

I don’t feel like exercising today! Does this sound familiar? Then what happens? Do you push yourself and exercise in spite of not feeling like it? Or do you give in and hang out on the couch because you don’t feel like making the effort?

Right now, you may be solidly committed to your goals. But what happens when you don’t feel like cooking healthy meals or following your diet plan? If you aren’t careful, you can easily slide back from being committed to just interested.

Committed means do it anyway

You don’t usually wait until you feel like going to work. You just go. The same thing is true for visiting your mother or changing dirty diapers. Because you consider these things to be important, you do them regardless of how you feel at the moment.

In the same way, you don’t have to feel like working on your weight-loss plan to stick with your program. To improve your commitment, learn to focus on your actions, not just your feelings. On days you’re not in the mood for exercising or eating right, tell yourself to do it anyway.

Then skip the leftover cake and eat your fruit instead. Get up off the couch and put on your workout shoes. If you’re really committed to your goals, you’ll make these choices no matter what, regardless of whether you feel like it or not. Each day, take a few steps that will move you forward, even if you don’t feel like it. Remember that when you’re truly committed, you do it anyway.
Here’s a summary of the differences between people who are interested in their goals compared to those who are committed.

People who are interested in losing weight
1. Stick with it until something better comes along
2. Take action only if they “feel like” doing it
3. Need to see results in order to stay motivated
4. Blame people or circumstances for their struggles
5. Easily give up when they face challenges

People who are committed to losing weight
1. Stick with their plans no matter what
2. Take action whether they feel like doing it or not
3. Assume that if they stay motivated, results will follow
4. Take responsibility for their own actions
5. Keep going in spite of challenges and setbacks

Today

- In your diet or exercise plan, identify a task you don’t feel like doing, then do it anyway!
- Notice how it feels to accomplish a goal by taking a “no matter what” approach to it.
- In your notebook, make a list of actions you plan to stick with today, regardless of how you feel at the moment.
Day 4
Boundaries, not diets

You’ve probably heard people say that diets are bad for you and that you should “never diet again!” In truth, the problem isn’t usually with diets themselves, but with the rigid, perfectionistic ways we use them.

If you’re like most people, when you’re on a diet, you try hard to follow it perfectly. Each day you strive to take in the exact number of calories, fat grams or carbohydrates allowed by the plan.

But if you slip up and eat a delicious (but forbidden) food, you figure you’ve blown it, so you might as well eat more. Soon you throw the entire diet out the window. This all-or-nothing approach never works because when you are off your diet, you cancel out the progress you made while you were on it.

Boundaries define your diet

Like it or not, to lose weight, you have to follow some type of system. Your plan can be quite rigid and meticulous or as simple as deciding you’ll eat less and increase your level of exercise. Instead of getting stuck on the word diet, learn to think of it as boundaries for your eating plan.

Picture your diet program as a road or a path. You can define the boundaries of your diet road based on the number of calories, points or other factors you choose to follow. As you walk on the road each day, your goal is to stay between the sides of the road. Unlike strict or rigid diet plans, boundaries stay flexible. They provide guidelines, but at the same time, they allow for common sense and good judgment.
During times when you’re strong and focused on your diet, you move the boundaries closer together, making the road narrower. When you take a break from your program or work on maintenance, you widen the boundaries and allow more variety in your plan. But even on a really bad day, you never eliminate the road or get off of it completely.

**Set guidelines, not rules**

Boundaries should give you benefits, not punishment! They should provide guidelines for you to live by, but not burden you with rules. You can define boundaries for any type of diet or weight-loss approach. Depending on your needs, you can simply adjust the edges of your plan to match where you are in life. By doing this, you’ll be far more successful than if you punish yourself every time you step off the road.

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**Today**

- In your notebook, draw a line down the middle of the page, creating two columns.
- Label one column “Narrow road,” for your actual diet plan. Label the other “Wider road,” for your maintenance or alternate eating plan.
- Under the titles, define your eating and exercise plans for each of these roads. Then decide on ways you can be flexible with them without losing sight of the healthy road you want to follow.
Every night before going to sleep, Judy pulled out a spiral notebook and recorded her thoughts from the day. When she looked back over her progress during the past year, she concluded, “When I journal, I stay on track. It helps me catch the times when I’m slipping into emotional eating or getting discouraged with my efforts. Then I can make changes and correct these issues right away.”

Get a “magic” notebook

For many people, recording personal thoughts or actions each day provides a lot of insight. It also serves as an outlet for emotions and struggles around weight-loss efforts. If you enjoy writing, experiment with tracking your thoughts and ideas around food and eating. Feel free to write as little as one sentence or as much as several pages.

On the other hand, if you don’t find it helpful to write things down, don’t force yourself to do this. But do keep a notebook handy as a quick tool for jotting down ideas about managing your eating patterns.

Eat it another time

Just because you think about a food doesn’t mean you have to eat it. Whenever Jennifer got a craving for a specific food such as cheesecake, she wrote it in her notebook. She said, “By writing it down, I take it out of my head. I tell myself I don’t have to think about it anymore because it’s recorded and I can always return to it later.”
When a food thought crosses your mind, remind yourself that you don’t have to act on it. Instead, write down the name or even a description of the food, then anticipate the pleasure of eating it sometime in the future.

Practice the skill of observing food cues, then letting them go. When you walk into a movie theater, notice the smell of popcorn, then forget about it. If it helps, record these cues in your “magic” notebook. Tell yourself, “That popcorn smells good, but I’m not going to eat any right now. I’ll simply postpone it until another day.”

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**Today**

- Whenever you think about a particular food you want, write it down in your notebook.
- Plan that you’ll eat it at another time. If you wish, add the amount you’ll have and how often you’ll fit it into your program.
- Stretch the times farther apart for eating this food. You may discover that after a while, certain foods don’t seem as important to you as they once did.
No one will ever care as much about your diet plan as you. So it’s your job to prevent people or events from pulling you off track. Instead of depending on others to help you be successful with your diet, make a commitment that you will **protect your program at all costs**!

Watch for ways to recognize and avoid situations that might cause you to weaken. Rather than assume you’ll be able to resist your mom’s apple pie or the potluck casseroles at work, don’t put yourself in the situation where you’ll have to test your willpower.

**“Not just yet...”**

Here’s a great way to protect yourself when you’re around other people. Anytime you feel pressured to eat something, you can sidestep the food pusher by hinting that you’ll eat later. Whenever someone offers you food, respond by saying, “Not just yet; I’m going to wait a little while.”

If you’re asked again, simply repeat this phrase or another variation of it such as, “Thanks, but I’ll still wait a little bit.” Saying “not just yet” gives you a gracious way to handle being pushed to eat when you don’t want to. Because this magic phrase convinces people you’ll eat eventually, they’ll leave you alone for the moment.

When you’re invited to take seconds or eat dessert, make it sound like you’ll have some later, then quietly slip away from the table. Anytime someone encourages you to eat, such as at baby showers, birthday parties or other social gatherings,
you can use the “not just yet” line again and again. Even if you skip food during the entire event, you’ll find that most people never notice you didn’t eat.

**Don’t discuss your “diet”**

Often it’s best to avoid getting caught up in conversations about dieting and weight loss. When people ask how you’re losing weight, simply tell them you’re following a *healthy eating program*. You can even respond to their questions by saying, “My weight-loss counselor recommends that we don’t discuss the program because talking about food makes us want to eat.”

Finally, protect your program during long, empty times such as evenings or weekends when it’s easy to start looking for food. Stay occupied by planning activities or pulling out some good books. When you’re tempted to give in and eat, recite the words, “I must protect my program at all costs!”

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**Today**

- Watch for chances to respond to food invitations by using the line, “Not just yet; I’m going to wait a little while.”

- Identify at least three high-risk times or events such as family gatherings or quiet weekends. In your notebook, write down how you’ll protect your diet program during each of these.

- Do at least one thing today that reinforces your determination to *protect your program at all costs.*
Day 7
I can do it!

Whew! You’ve made it through the first week! How do you feel right now? A bit excited? Hopeful? Scared? You probably feel some level of all of these. If you’ve struggled with your weight in the past, you may also be afraid you’ll repeat your same old patterns.

Kick those thoughts away! For the moment, squash your doubts about staying on your diet and exercise plan. Today, you are strong! You’re invincible! And nothing can stop you! This time, you’re going to do it!

Become your own cheerleader

To increase your success with this program, skyrocket your self-talk and create a strong belief you can do this. Become your own cheerleader, shouting out words of encouragement that will keep your motivation strong every single day.

To enhance your cheerleading, think about why you are so convinced you can be successful. Invent several phrases that reinforce your determination to stay on your plan for at least 100 days. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- I’m totally determined.
- I’ve done it before and I can do it again.
- I’m using a great weight-loss plan.
- I’m capable of accomplishing anything.
- Others have done it and so can I!

Recite these phrases every day, using them to reinforce your determination to make this program work.
Inspire yourself

Have you read any real-life stories about people who’ve lost a lot of weight and also maintained their success? Draw from these examples as well as from friends or colleagues who’ve accomplished phenomenal goals. Let these people inspire you and help keep you motivated to stick with your efforts. Tell yourself, “If they can do it, so can I.”

Practice saying the words “I can do it!” over and over. Write them on sticky notes, then post them on your mirror, your computer screen and your car dash. Read them many times a day, maybe even 100 times. Push them deep into your mind and use them as a powerful affirmation that you will succeed with your plan.

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Today

• Tell yourself “I can do it” at least 10 times. Use this to cheerlead yourself through the entire day!

• In your notebook, write “I can do it because…” then add a few supportive phrases such as “I’m capable of doing anything.”

• Read your phrases often, using them to reinforce your goals and build your enthusiasm.