

Help! My Family Culture Is Sabotaging My Weight Loss

The challenges that arrest weight loss progression is highly documented in published magazines or literature. One of the idiosyncratic reasons for barriers to weight loss is the extreme plight to turn down Nonna's handmade pasta e Fagioli, Mama's rustic enchilada, or Mawmaw's baked apple pie. Those are general illustrations, but the message is straightforward. If you are stuck in a weight plateau because food is an essential component of your identity, family, and culture, you are not alone.



Food Is Cultural, Not Just Mere Nutrition

Imagine a scene of a long-anticipated family gathering on a holiday that is sparkling with moments of warmth, love, and laughter. The centerpiece of the wholesome and abundant table spread is a thick, delicious chocolate cake your aunt made lovingly for at least half a day. It's a calorie bomb and despite having politely rejected the cake for the sake of your diet, feelings get hurt because you refuse to partake in a slice of family tradition.

So, why then do family tradition and culture grasp an intense level of dominance over our diet? Whether it's a conscious or subconscious behavior, culture permeates nearly all aspects of your life, including your emotional attachment to food, tendency to exercise, and body image. If you grow up eating and celebrating ethnic food, the sight of those foods evokes recollections and even sentimental attachment to the person who made them. Furthermore, in many cultures, food has a ceremonial and social role; with some delicacies saved only for special holidays or religious feasts. It is not an exaggeration then that food is a form of your self-identity as part of a member of a culture and as a channel of love from those who made them. Denying yourself the

comfort of these foods would subsequently result in a series of unwelcome reactions for both the dieters and non-dieters.

Overcoming Cultural Pressure When Losing Weight

The takeaway from the above-mentioned subject is you are not alone when you develop guilt from turning food down. Logical and complex rationales lie behind the formation of such stigma despite your good intention to optimize your health. If you find this article relevant to you, here are 3 tips to face the cultural pressure in your weight loss journey:

1. Respectfully verbalize your steadfast intention to lose weight to your surrounding loved ones. Confidence is key when communicating your goal and while you may be faced with resistance at first, your impending progress will shatter their doubts.
2. You can still enjoy that food that places a wide and jubilant smile on both your face and your mom's. Weight loss is not a form of punishment and is not intended to make you miserable. Eat in moderation and enjoy the journey.
3. Celebrate yourself! Saying no to a list of food occasionally does not make you less of a family member or a cultured individual. You are more than the food you eat.

Weight loss is challenging, so do not feel defeated. The key to sustainable healthy eating is to focus on moderation, not restriction. This includes finding the moderation and balance between indulging in your cultural food habits and your ideal nutrient requirements. As long as you keep going and do not stop, progress is incoming.